

Figures of Thought and Figures of Flesh: “Jews” and “Judaism” in Late-Medieval Spanish Poetry and Politics

By David Nirenberg

“Who is a Jew?” The question has been asked countless times and by diverse peoples, ranging from ancient prophets to modern politicians. There was even a time, a short century ago, when tourists to certain European cities were exhorted by their guidebooks to wonder of each stranger that passed them in the streets: “Could he be Jewish?” The query was not innocent, the acts of inclusion or exclusion it precipitated rarely without purpose or consequence. Within the medieval lands we now call Spain, its tremendous power was most famously displayed in the discriminations of the Inquisition. Modernity did not attenuate that power. “I determine who is a Jew”: the claim, coined by the Austrian politician Karl Lueger in the late 1890s and later adopted by Hermann Goering, makes clear the stakes. It makes clear, as well, that the relationship of the question to its object is not simple. As Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno put it in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “[to] call someone a Jew amounts to an instigation to work him over until he resembles the image.”¹

“What is Jewish?” This second question, the adjectival form of the first, was also a question of power in the Middle Ages as in modernity. Both eras found it easy to imagine their histories in terms of a struggle for emancipation from “Jewishness”; both classified any number of religious, aesthetic, economic, philosophical, and political positions as “Jewish.” Even as medievalists we are, of course, all familiar with the important role that polemical questions about “Jewish literature,” “Jewish atheism,” “Jewish socialism,” “Jewish modernity,” and “Jewish materialism” played in producing the twentieth century’s turbulent history. We think less often of the complex relationships these modern questions have to the medieval ones we study. And we are often barely conscious of the ways in which the long history of these two questions, “Who is a Jew?” and “What is Jewish?” has animated the practices of scholars.

A century ago few scholars questioned the possibility of determining the degree of “Jewishness” of a given phenomenon, though they may have disagreed on the

This investigation was begun in response to a lecture invitation from the Medieval Academy and was completed during a fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Along the way many interlocutors gave of their patience and their knowledge. Gratitude is especially due to Joachim Küpper, who read it early and reformed it, and to Rafael Mérida Jimenez, Julian Weiss, and the anonymous readers for *Speculum*, who read it late and disciplined it once again.

¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York, 1972), p. 186. On Karl Lueger’s (1844–1910) political use of the claim see Carl E. Schorske, “Politics in a New Key: An Austrian Trio,” in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1979).

determination itself. Max Weber, for example, was as convinced of his ability to prove that European capitalism was not the product of "Jewish rationality," as Werner Sombart was convinced of his ability to prove that it was.² The murderousness facilitated by this logic eventually gave reason for pause. Some tools for the detection of Jews and Jewishness (racial theories, for example) were felt to be contaminated and cast aside. Others were scanned and rescanned for traces of "essentialism." In the First World (though not in the Second or Third) it became unfashionable to talk of the "Jewishness" of ideas like capitalism or socialism. But "cherchez le juif" remains a scholarly maxim, in the study of Spanish histories as in many others. What relationship is there between the questions we ask as modern students of Spanish (and other) histories and cultures and those that produced the "Jewishness" of Christian converts in the fifteenth century? The following pages will crash those two inquiries together with exaggerated violence. From the wreckage I hope to rescue (if there are any survivors) only a scarred methodological self-consciousness about the questions "Who is a Jew?" and "What is Jewish?"

In 1391 rioters attacked the Jews in numerous cities across the several kingdoms of Spain. Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of Jews were killed, and many thousands more converted to Christianity. In the city of Valencia, for example, so many Jews sought baptism at once that the clergy feared running out of chrism as the day drew long. But in parish after parish priests returned from supper to find vessels that they had left empty now miraculously overflowing, so that they could resume their sacramental efforts. "Consider for yourself," the city council wrote the king, "whether these things can have a natural cause. We believe that they cannot, but can only be the work of the Almighty."³ If so, the Almighty did not cease his labors. In the second decade of the fifteenth century tens of thousands more Iberian Jews were baptized, inspired this time by the marvelous eloquence of St. Vincent Ferrer, as well as by a campaign of total segregation, forced disputation, and compulsory attendance at Christian sermons. Many Christians, including St. Vincent, saw in these conversions miraculous proof that messianic times were at hand.⁴

² This particular example is developed in my "The Birth of the Pariah: Jews, Christian Dualism, and Social Science," *Social Research* 70 (2003), 201–36.

³ See the list of miracles in Archivo Municipal de Valencia, Lletres missives, g3–5, fols. 20v–22v, dated July 14, 1391, published in José Hinojosa Montalvo, *The Jews of the Kingdom of Valencia: From Persecution to Expulsion, 1391–1492*, trans. Stephanie Nakache, *Hispania Judaica* 9 (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 332–34, no. 11.

⁴ On St. Vincent's mission to the Jews see Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, "San Vicente Ferrer, predicador de las sinagogas," *Salmanticensis* 2 (1955), 670–76, repr. in *Miscelánea Beltrán de Heredia*, I, Biblioteca de Teólogos Españoles 25/B5 (Salamanca, 1972), pp. 225–33; Antonio C. Floriano, "San Vicente Ferrer y las aljamas turolenses," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 84 (1924), 558–80; Juan Torres Fontes, "Moros, judíos y conversos en la regencia de Don Fernando de Antequera," *Cuadernos de historia de España* 31–32 (1960), 60–97; Francisca Vendrell, "La actividad proselitista de San Vicente Ferrer durante el reinado de Fernando I de Aragón," *Sefarad* 13 (1953), 87–104; eadem, "La política proselitista del Rey D. Fernando I de Aragón," *Sefarad* 10 (1950), 349–66; José María Millás Vallicrosa, "En torno a la predicación judaica de San Vicente Ferrer," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 147 (1958), 189–98; and especially Pedro M. Cátedra, *Sermón, sociedad y literatura en la edad media: San Vicente Ferrer en Castilla (1411–1412)* (Salamanca, 1994).

By the end of that century the mood was very different. Many now believed that the converts and their descendants were not Christians but hybrid monsters, motivated only by ambition and a hatred of Christians. The converts' goal was to poison true Christians in order to marry their spouses and stain their "clean lineages" with Jewish traits. These traits were genetic, encoded in blood, the product of natural history: not even God's miraculous grace working through baptism could wash them away.⁵ Inter-marriage between Old Christian and New was thought to have spread these traits throughout the noble houses of Castile and Aragon. In this sense the converts seemed to pose a far greater danger to Christianity than the Jews had done before them. Because "Jewishness" was now linked to blood, Christian society could fear the spread of "Jewish" tendencies long after the Jews themselves were expelled in 1492. Hence Spanish Christians established the Inquisition to root out Judaizers, and they filled vast archives with apotropaic genealogies. Yet each of these prophylactics only increased the conviction that shades of Judaism lurked in every corner of Spanish society and culture.

What are some of the "Jewish" attributes the converts (sometimes called *Marraños*, *conversos*, or "New Christians") are said to have brought into Christian culture? "Inquisitorial fanaticism and recourse to slandering informants . . . , frantic greed and plundering, the concern over purity of blood . . . , the concern with public reputation . . . , the desire of everyone to be a nobleman . . . , somber asceticism . . . , the negative view of the world . . . , disillusionment, and the flight from human values," all of these were the "poisons . . . that seeped into Spanish life, Spanish Christendom, in the increment of forced converts."⁶ This list was produced in the mid-twentieth century by Américo Castro, perhaps the most influential advocate for the study of Jewish and Islamic influences on Spanish culture. Not all scholars concurred with every item on it, but even Castro's most famous opponent agreed with him on the more negative: "The Jewish contributed to the forging of the Hispanic not along avenues of light, but by dark and shadowy paths . . . , and it can claim no debt against us, since the inheritance it transmitted to us was to such a degree one of deformations and decadences, and damaged our potential development and our historical credibility."⁷

⁵ Many of these claims were first put forth explicitly in the polemics surrounding a revolt in Toledo in 1449. They are edited in Eloy Benito Ruano, "El memorial contra los conversos del bachiller Marcos García de Mora ('Marquillos de Mazarambroz')," *Sefarad* 17 (1957), 314–51; and "La Sentencia-Estatuto de Pero Sarmiento contra los conversos toledanos," *Revista de la Universidad de Madrid*, 4th ser., 6 (1957), 277–306. The first of these texts will be discussed further below, p. 422.

⁶ The quotations are from Américo Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History*, trans. Edmund L. King (Princeton, N.J., 1954), pp. 542–43 and 569. In a review of the Spanish version of the work (*España en su historia*) Yakov Malkiel observed that Castro's approach resembled theories of cultural transmission discredited by association with National Socialism. In 1965, on the other hand, Francisco Márquez Villanueva praised these pages as "the most acute and fruitful of [Castro's] oeuvre"; see the revised version of his essay, "El problema de los conversos: Cuatro puntos cardinales," in *Hispania Judaica*, 1: *History*, ed. Josep Solà-Solà, Samuel G. Armistead, and Joseph H. Silverman (Barcelona, 1982), pp. 51–75, here p. 69.

⁷ Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *España: Un enigma histórico*, 4th ed. (Barcelona, 1973), p. 284: "Lo judío contribuyó a la forja de lo hispano no por caminos de luz, sino por sendas tenebrosas . . . , y ningún crédito puede alegar contra nosotros, a tal punto nos legó deformaciones y desdichas y dañó nuestro despliegue potencial y nuestro crédito histórico." The passage is also cited in José Luis Abellán,

Many in the generation after Castro dedicated themselves to the uncovering of these hidden currents of Judaism, haunting Spanish archives in search of lineages that might tie a given literary style or innovation to a Jewish ancestry. If, for example, Inquisition records preserve the trace of a suspicion that a given author "Judaized," descended from converts, or even merely dined with people suspected of such faults, then scholars felt justified in positing a "Jewish" or "*converso*" flavor to his style. Of course, this "Inquisitorial" approach to cultural production has always had its critics, and the voices of these critics have become louder over the past decade. Such criticisms, however, do not quite break free of the "essentializations" they decry, even as they assign to them an alternative history or a different name.⁸ As is the case with many "Jewish questions," the difficulty stems from the fact that in medieval Spain (as in our own age) "Judaism" was not only a religion practiced by living adherents but also a basic epistemological and ontological category in the thought of non-Jews. We therefore need to focus upon the bonds between these "Jewish" figures of thought and figures of flesh. It is through the tensely productive relationship between the two that Spain became, as Rodrigo Manrique put it in a letter to his friend the humanist Luis Vives in 1533, "a land of envy, pride, and . . . barbarism. For now it is clear that no one can possess a smattering of letters without being suspect of heresy, error, and Judaism."⁹

Empirically, these two figures are inseparable: the ways in which our sources and their authors represent the "Jewishness" of their world cannot be emancipated from the concepts through which they (or we) think about that world.¹⁰ Within a

"Función cultural de la presencia judía en España," in Ángel Alcalá, ed., *Judíos, sefarditas, conversos: La expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias* (Valladolid, 1995), pp. 395–407. In the same work Sánchez-Albornoz endorsed Castro's theory on the Jewishness of the Inquisition. On this convergence of opinion see also B. Netanyahu, *Toward the Inquisition: Essays on Jewish and Converso History in Late Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1997), chaps. 1 and 5.

⁸ Early critical voices include Peter E. Russell, "La historia de España, túnica de Neso," in *Temas de La Celestina y otros estudios, del Cid al Quijote*, Letras e Ideas, Maior, 14 (Barcelona, 1978), pp. 481–91; Nicasio Salvador Miguel, "El presunto judaísmo de La Celestina," in *The Age of the Catholic Monarchs, 1474–1516: Literary Studies in Memory of Keith Whimom*, ed. Alan Deyermond and Ian Macpherson (Liverpool, 1989), pp. 162–77; and Paul Julian Smith, *Representing the Other: "Race," Text, and Gender in Spanish and Spanish American Narrative* (Oxford, 1992), here p. 29. More recent is the "Critical Cluster" of articles under the rubric "Inflecting the *Converso* Voice" gathered in *La corónica* 25 (1996), together with a "forum" of responses in *La corónica* 26 (1997) and a further flurry of debate in *La corónica* 28 (1999). See also Gregory B. Kaplan, *The Evolution of Converso Literature: The Writings of the Converted Jews of Medieval Spain* (Gainesville, Fla., 2002), which elaborates a specific *converso* "code" and "semiotics" produced by the "unhomeliness" (the term is borrowed from Freud via Homi Bhabha) of "the boundaries of a marginal condition imposed by an oppressive majority" (p. 33).

⁹ Henri de Vocht, "Rodrigo Manrique's Letter to Vives," in *Monumenta humanistica Lovaniensia: Texts and Studies about Louvain Humanists in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century*, Humanistica Lovaniensia 4 (Louvain, 1934), pp. 427–58, here p. 435. See also Enrique González González, "Vives: Un humanista judeoconverso en el exilio de Flandes," in *The Expulsion of the Jews and Their Emigration to the Southern Low Countries (15th–16th C.)*, ed. Luc Dequeker and Werner Verbeke, *Medievalia Lovaniensia* 1/26 (Leuven, 1998), pp. 35–81, here p. 77.

¹⁰ This is partly why I do not here adopt the helpful but somewhat misleading distinction between "hermeneutic" or "discursive" and "real" or "sociological" Judaism that has developed in some fields of Jewish studies.

laboratory setting, however, we can cultivate an analytical distinction, albeit one that is highly artificial. My experiment requires two stages. The first stresses with exaggerated clarity the importance of the Jew as a figure of thought rather than flesh in the creation of Christian literary culture in late-medieval Castile. The goal of this exaggeration is not polemical but therapeutic: an Aristotelian corrective to ingrained habits by inclination toward their contraries. The second stage of my experiment will aim more for the mean: it is a brief exploration of how the interpenetration of "Jewish thought" and "Jewish flesh" produced a politics of "purity of blood" that bound "Jewish" culture ever more tightly to "Jewish" genealogy. The end product of my analysis will not be a new certainty about what or who is "Jewish" in medieval, modern, or postmodern cultures. It will rather be a heightened sense of why these questions are so difficult to answer, and so dangerous to ask.

For the first stage of the experiment we could ask for no better subject than the *Cancionero de Baena*, a work sometimes called the "first critical anthology" of Castilian poetry and often interrogated for Jewish origins. This collection of poetry, compiled by Juan Alfonso de Baena, contains some six hundred poems composed in the courts of four Castilian kings, ranging from the late fourteenth century to roughly 1430, when it was presented to King Juan II. The anthology is critical, in the sense that each poem is preceded by a short editorial introduction noting merits and demerits, and the whole is prefaced with a meditation on the function of poetry and the nature of the poet's art.¹¹

Baena's collection dates to a period well before Spain's genealogical treasuries were so enriched by the establishment of the Inquisition, but this has not slowed the search for "Jews" in its pages. In the absence of trials and autos-da-fé, the lineages of its poets have been exhumed from the rich loam of the poems themselves. The task is seemingly easy, for Juan Alfonso clearly agreed with Aristotle

¹¹ All references are from the *Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena*, ed. Brian Dutton and Joaquín González Cuenca (Madrid, 1993), henceforth *Cancionero*, and are cited by poem and page numbers, with line numbers where needed. Poems from *cancioneros* other than that of Baena are cited according to the numbering system in Brian Dutton's *El cancionero del siglo XV, c. 1360–1520*, Biblioteca Española del Siglo XV, serie maior, 1–7 (Salamanca, 1990–91), henceforth Dutton; see vol. 7 for an index of the poems. On the dating of Baena's life and composition, see Alberto Blecua, "Perdióse un quaderno . . .": Sobre los cancioneros de Baena," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 9 (1974–79), 229–66; Manuel Nieto Cumplido, "Aportación histórica al Cancionero de Baena," *Historia, instituciones, documentos* 6 (1979), 197–218; and idem, "Juan Alfonso de Baena y su Cancionero: Nueva aportación histórica," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Córdoba* 52 (1982), 35–57. Two recent collections may serve as a starting point for the vast bibliography on the *Cancionero*: *Poetry at Court in Trastamaran Spain: From the Cancionero de Baena to the Cancionero general*, ed. E. Michael Gerli and Julian Weiss. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 181 (Tempe, Ariz., 1998); and *Juan Alfonso de Baena y su Cancionero: Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre el Cancionero de Baena*, ed. José Luis Serrano Reyes and Juan Fernández Jiménez (Córdoba, 2001). Those interested in attitudes toward Jews and converts in the *Cancionero* may begin with (in addition to the works cited below) Stanley Rose, "Anti-Semitism in the 'Cancioneros' of the Fifteenth Century: The Accusation of Sexual Indiscretions," *Hispanofila* 26 (1983), 1–11; idem, "Poesía antijudía y anticonversa en la poesía artística del siglo XV en España" (Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1975); and Gregory S. Hutcheson, "Marginality and Empowerment in Baena's *Cancionero*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1993).

on the importance of insult and invective as a function of poetry.¹² The *Cancionero*'s poets, nearly all Christian, are constantly defaming one another, and the accusation of Jewishness is prominent among the charges they hurl. Indeed the collection includes many poems that insult Juan Alfonso himself. His birthplace of Baena is impugned in one poem as a land where "much good eggplant" is grown; another mocks him for having "eyes of eggplant," yet another of eating "adefyna," these being dishes associated with Jews. Other poets refer to his "bath in the water of holy baptism" or to his sexual encounters with Jews both male and female (the Mariscal Íñigo de Astuñiga, for example, states that he is stuffed full of Jewish sperm). Even Juan Alfonso's dedication of the anthology to the royal family has been read as a marker. Did he sign himself "el judino Johan Alfon[so] de Baena" or "el judino Johan Alfon[so] de Baena"? The "unworthy" Johan Alfonso or the "Jew" Johan Alfonso? The grapheme in the manuscript can be read either way, as *n* or as *u*, and generations of critics opted for the second reading, though current philology agrees with the first.¹³

Juan Alfonso and his colleagues in the *Cancionero* accused each other of Jewish ancestry, of having too small a foreskin or too big a nose, of heterosexual and homosexual intercourse with Jews. They also accused each other of sexual intercourse with Muslims and prostitutes, of cowardice, ignorance, greed, and mendacity, of letting themselves be sodomized by shepherds and Muslim slaves, and even of renouncing their Christianity in favor of Islam. Critics often fasten, however, upon claims of Jewishness. If a poet is attacked as Judaizing, then he must be a *converso*. And if the attacker himself betrays knowledge of Judaism (for example, by drawing on Hebrew vocabulary, such as *meshumad* for apostate), then he, too, may be presumed to have a Jewish past. The result of such logic was the conviction that, as one critic put it already in 1871, the *Cancionero* is full of "half-converted Jews."¹⁴ From there it was but a short step to find in their poetry

¹² Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448b.

¹³ It is entirely on the evidence of these poems that Baena's status as a *converso* rests. The eggplant quotations are from poems by Diego de Estuñiga (no. 424, pp. 687–88) and Juan García (no. 384, p. 655). The reference to *adefyna* is by Juan de Guzmán (no. 404, p. 676), and the baptismal allusion by Ferrán Manuel (no. 370, p. 644). For allusions to Juan Alfonso de Baena's sexual encounters with Jewesses, see inter alia the poem by Juan García: "Con judía Aben Xuxena / o Cohena / bien me plaze que burledes . . ." (no. 386, pp. 656–57, lines 10–12). For the Mariscal's insult see no. 418 (p. 684). Allusions to interfaith sexual dalliance are very common in the *Cancionero*. Thus Juan Alfonso de Baena asks Gonçalo de Quadros: "nunca nombrastes la vuestra señora, / sy era cristiana, judía nin mora . . ." (no. 449, p. 704, lines 14–15). Most beautiful is the love poem by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino (no. 31 bis, p. 48, lines 1–3): "Quien de linda se enamora / atender deve perdón / en caso que sea mora." For the debate over "indino"/"judino," see the commentary in José María Azáqueta, *Cancionero*, Clásicos Hispánicos 2/10, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1966), 1:v, 4, and accompanying notes. Gregory S. Hucheson surprisingly takes "judino" for granted in "Pinning Him to the Wall: The Poetics of Self-Destruction in the Court of Juan II," *Disputatio* 5 (2002), 87–102, at p. 92. Juan Bautista Avallé Arce considered the possibility of a *morisco* as well as a *converso* background for Juan Alfonso in "Sobre Juan Alfonso de Baena," *Revista de filología hispánica* 8 (1946), 141–47. Dutton and González Cuenca begin by accepting such poetic evidence of Baena's *converso* status only "provisionalmente" but end by treating it as certainty: *Cancionero*, pp. xv and xviii.

¹⁴ Examples of this underlying logic are legion. In addition to the works already cited see Francisco Cantera Burgos, "El Cancionero de Baena: Judíos y conversos en él," *Sefarad* 27 (1967), 71–111; Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas, *Poesía de protesta en la edad media castellana*, Biblioteca Románica His-

all the ideas that "Judaism" encodes in the critical discourses of modernity: "Averroism," "irony," "hybridity," "rationalism," "skepticism."¹⁵

There is, in short, a long tradition of reading the *Cancionero* after the fashion of Inquisitors. In order to rescue poetry from genealogy, I will take a heuristically exaggerated step away from lineage and argue that *converso* Judaism in Baena's *Cancionero* needs to be treated as a literary product, not as the result of insincere conversion or clandestine Judaism. It is not about prosopography but about poetics, and we cannot understand why the accusation of Judaizing appeared so precociously in poetry, or what poets meant by it, unless we take seriously the problems of poetic language they confronted.

This is true at a number of levels of analysis. At a formal one, it is well known that the *Cancionero* poets drew on earlier genres of competitive poetic defamation such as the Provençal *tenso* and the Galician-Portuguese *cantiga d'escarnho e de mal dizer*.¹⁶ In this earlier poetry of insult, religious identity could be portrayed as ambiguous, as in the late-thirteenth-century Galician verses maligning the knight Joan Fernández. "Joan Fernandes, how badly you were cut" ("que mal vos talharon"), one poem mocks, simultaneously criticizing the cut of his clothes and of his penis, suggesting that he is circumcised. Another charges that he is committing the crime of interfaith intercourse whenever he lies with his (Christian) wife: "Joan Fernández, a Muslim is screwing your wife, at the same time that you are screwing her" ("fode-a tal como a fodedes vós").¹⁷ Fifteenth-century poets were engaged in a similar practice. Like their predecessors, they wrote entire poems punning items of clothing with foreskins, though the meaning of the allusion

pánica 6/25 (Madrid, 1968), pp. 216–24; and Cristina Arbós, "Los cancioneros castellanos del siglo xv como fuente para la historia de los judíos españoles," in Yosef Kaplan ed., *Jews and Conversos: Studies in Society and the Inquisition* (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 77–78. The quotation is from Théodore de Puymaigre, *La cour littéraire de don Juan II, roi de Castille* (Paris, 1871), p. 131. Cf. José Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España* (Madrid, 1848), pp. 425–27. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century this ethnic judgment usually coincided with the aesthetic one that the poems were unrefined, vulgar, and unworthy of literary analysis (see below, n. 46).

¹⁵ See, for example, the work of Charles F. Fraker, Jr., *Studies on the Cancionero de Baena*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 61 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1966), pp. 9–62, "Judaism in the Cancionero de Baena"; Hutcheson, "Marginality and Empowerment," p. 141 ("highly sophisticated blending of moralism and irony . . . points to possible Jewish ancestry"); and "Pinning Him to the Wall," pp. 92–95. See also the pages dedicated to Baena in Kaplan, *The Evolution of Converso Literature*.

¹⁶ John Cummins, "The Survival in the Spanish Cancioneros of the Form and Themes of Provençal and Old French Poetic Debates," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 42 (1965), 9–17; idem, "Methods and Conventions in the 15th Century Poetic Debate," *Hispanic Review* 31 (1963), 307–23; Kenneth Scholberg, *Sátira e invectiva en la España medieval* (Madrid, 1971); and Julio Rodríguez Puértolas, *Poesía crítica y satírica del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1981). The *recuesta* of Baena's *Cancionero*, however, cannot quite be reduced to any of these forms, as Hutcheson points out in "Pinning Him to the Wall," pp. 89–90 and 97.

¹⁷ *Cantigas d'escarnho e de mal dizer*, nos. 300, 229, and 51, ed. M. Rodrigues Lapa, rev. ed. (Galicia, 1970). On these poems see Benjamin Liu, "'Affined to Love the Moor': Sexual Misalliance and Cultural Mixing in the *Cantigas d'escarnho e de mal dizer*," in *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson (Durham, N.C., 1999), pp. 48–72, here p. 61.

was now a different one.¹⁸ The vanishing power of Muslim Granada and the increasing importance of converts from Judaism in Christian Spain had combined to make "Judaism," not "Islam," the preferred language of their mockery, but continuity of genre certainly contributed to the precocity and enthusiasm with which these poets took up the derogatory theme of Jewishness.

At a more materialist level of literary analysis, we can also see how the theme of Jewishness became useful within the shifting context of poetic production. The *Cancionero de Baena* has fruitfully been read as a staging ground for the competition between three classes of poet: the "full-time professionals" or "hired pens," like Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino (d. ca. 1420), whose verses scramble for patronage and who offer their employers marketable words ("palabras de buen mercado") to aim against their enemies; the *letrados*, members of an expanding class of scribes, bureaucrats, and other non-nobles engaged in the administrative business of the court (Juan Alfonso de Baena was himself of this class), for whom poetizing is something of an alternative career; and the aristocrat, whose poetics presents itself both as a morally edifying practice in the education of the nobility and as an index of that nobility's achievement.¹⁹ To Julian Weiss's elegant exposition of this extraordinarily complex contest I would only add the obvious: that the traditional language of "Jewish" materialism provided a weapon with which to deprecate "careerist" poets. The (admittedly later) attack by the noble Gómez Manrique against Juan Poeta provides a nice example: "You are a novice poet, / which is to say a convert. / I am anciently professed, / an hidalgo from the beginning / . . . / And because your rhymes are store bought, / as I say, . . . / they can do no harm to mine, / for yours are gross, and cold, / and of base metal."²⁰

For my purposes, however, the most productive explanation for the early rise and importance of "Jewishness" in Baena's *Cancionero* has to do with even more fundamental questions about the nature of language and of poetry, questions as old as criticism itself. Juan Alfonso's project should be seen as an important and uncharted tributary of a debate that flows mightily through the history of aesthetics, a debate over the nature of poetic mimesis. What is the status of poetry within a system of thought that distinguishes hierarchically between the life of the body and that of the soul, between the confusion of carnal perception and the

¹⁸ Villasandino's attack against Alfonso Ferrández Semuel in no. 141 (p. 165, lines 1–2) provides an early and lapidary example: "Alfonso, capón corrido, / tajarle quiero un vestido." The association of items of clothing with circumcision recurs constantly in the *cancionero* genre, with terms like "capirote" (little cape) becoming key words. Perhaps the wittiest example is the much later ditty by Juan Poeta in the *Cancionero general*, written upon receiving the gift of a small cape from a nobleman: "Vos no soys sayo ni saya / tajo frances ni morisco / ni soys funda dazagaya / ni ropa de san francisco / Soys beca de capirote / no se como soys cortada / soys embiada por mote / pese atal que no soys nada" (Dutton, ID6768, 11CG-996). For a dictionary of clothing vocabulary in the *Cancionero* see Alicia Puigvert Ocal, "El léxico de la indumentaria en el *Cancionero de Baena*," *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 67 (1987), 171–206.

¹⁹ See especially the study of Julian Weiss, *The Poet's Art: Literary Theory in Castile c. 1400–60*, Medium Aevum Monographs, n.s., 14 (Oxford, 1990), pp. 25–40. For "palabras de buen mercado," see no. 177, pp. 201–2, line 22.

²⁰ Dutton, ID3377, MP3-94. Among the many examples of poems awarded cash payment, see Villasandino's nos. 28–30 (pp. 44–46). The metallic metaphor as a measure of quality occurs in Baena as well (e.g., in no. 218, pp. 246–47, written in 1422).

clarity of spiritual cognition? For Plato and Aristotle, poetry was above all a mimetic genre: its first principle, as Aristotle puts it in the *Poetics* (1447a), is the imitation of the forms of nature, and its appeal is to the bodily senses. This is why Socrates and Phaedrus agree in their dialogue that poets are incapable of perceiving the higher reaches of truth (*Phaedrus* 247C).²¹ And it is why Socrates, in his hierarchy of reincarnations, assigns to the poet a soul just above that of the lowly farmer, whose job it is to extract bodily nourishment from the earth (248E). It is this very materialism that makes poetry politically and morally dangerous. As Socrates puts it at the end of his discussion of poetry in the *Republic* (595A–608B): “At all events we are well aware that poetry being such as we have described is not to be regarded seriously as attaining to the truth; and he who listens to her, fearing for the safety of the city which is within him, should be on his guard against her seductions and make our words his law.”

Of course, the problem was not simply a poetic one. It afflicted all language, insofar as the same words through which philosophers mounted to incorporeal truth also pointed literally to material things in the world. Hellenistic philosophers, Jewish as well as gentile, developed an anthropomorphic reading practice as one way of addressing the problem. Word and meaning were arrayed against each other in a hierarchy explicitly parallel to that of flesh and spirit. The task of a reader was to penetrate beyond the outer body (Greek *soma*) or literal meaning of a text and into its inner or spiritual meaning. The Hellenistic Jew Philo, for example, stressed the need to read Scripture for “the hidden and inward meaning that appeals to the few who study soul characteristics rather than bodily forms” (*On Abraham* 147).²²

At much the same time that Philo was writing in Alexandria, the first Christians were recasting these problems of language into their own distinctive terms. Many have studied this process.²³ Without repeating the insights of those scholars, I can extend their import by suggesting that the apostle Paul and his successors reconceived the challenges of language in terms of the passage from Judaism to Christianity. They did so, at least in part, because of the challenges posed by questions of conversion in their own day.

²¹ “The place beyond heaven—none of our earthly poets has ever sung or will ever sing its praises enough! . . . What is in this place is without color and without shape and without solidity, a being that really is what it is, the subject of all true knowledge, visible only to the intelligence, the soul’s steersman.” To the passages cited here add *Phaedrus* 245A. For a useful summary of the issue and compendium of texts (which slights, however, the *Phaedrus*) see Penelope Murray, ed., *Plato on Poetry* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996).

²² On Philo’s (and later Origen’s) Neoplatonic use of the analogy of body and soul for text and meaning I have found especially helpful David Dawson, “Plato’s Soul and the Body of the Text in Philo and Origen,” in *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period*, ed. Jon Whitman, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 101 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 89–107. I do not mean to imply here that this “spiritualization” of the word is in its origins a Greek phenomenon. It has deep roots as well in Hebrew biblical traditions and for Ernst Cassirer was even a fundamental characteristic of “all great cultural religions”: *Language and Myth*, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York, 1946), pp. 45–46.

²³ Most notable among them, for my purposes, is Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” in *Neue Dantestudien*, Istanbul Schriften 5 (Istanbul, 1944), pp. 11–71; English translation by Ralph Mannheim in Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York, 1959; repr. Minneapolis, 1984), pp. 11–76.

As is well known, many among the first generations of Christians were Jews, their flesh and their habits marked by Judaism and Jewish law. It is not surprising, therefore, that questions quickly arose about the Christian's proper relationship to Jewish law. The Acts of the Apostles suggests that, in the case of those who came to Christ from Judaism, early answers to these questions were relatively flexible. So far as we know, all the disciples, even at times Paul, continued to observe Jewish ritual law as Christians. Much more conflictual were questions involving the increasingly numerous non-Jewish proselytes. Should gentile converts observe the laws of Judaism? We know that there were communities of gentile converts who advocated at least a minimum of ritual observance (for example, circumcision). Paul saw such views as a horrifying symptom of literalism and incomplete conversion. It was in part to counter them that he developed the tension so predominant in his writings (particularly Galatians and Romans) between outer shell and inner meaning, letter and spirit, literal and allegorical. To give but one example from Rom. 2.25: "Being a Jew is not only having the outward appearance of a Jew, and circumcision is not only a visible physical operation. The real Jew is one who is inwardly a Jew, and real circumcision is in the heart, a thing not of the letter but of the spirit." When Christians circumcised themselves, they placed significance in the Jewish outer "letter of the law" rather than in its inner spiritual significance and thereby revealed themselves as "severed from Christ" by the "desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5.4, 16–18; cf. Rom. 8.6–8).

The style of reading through which Paul achieved this translation from promise in the flesh to promise in the spirit was not a novel one.²⁴ Like Philo and many other Hellenistic exegetes, he mapped word and meaning onto the hierarchy of flesh and spirit.²⁵ Paul's conclusions, however, could be surprising, as when he suggested that once the inner meaning was understood, the literal meaning could be dispensed with: "For when we were still in the flesh, our sinful passions, stirred up by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are fully freed from the law, dead to that in which we lay captive. We can thus serve in the new being of the Spirit and not the old one of the letter" (Rom. 7.5–6). Here (though not everywhere) it is not just the law that is left behind by the spiritual believer and reader but also the companions that Paul associates with it: the letter, and even flesh itself.

In his attempts to dissuade gentile converts from Mosaic practice, Paul sometimes drew sharp distinctions between Judaism and Christianity. He aligned the former with captivity, law, letter, and flesh; the latter with freedom, grace, inner meaning, and spirit; and he coined a new verb, "to Judaize" (Gal. 2.14, *Judaizare*), in order to characterize the dangerous slippage that could occur between them.

²⁴ See A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 44 (Tübingen, 1987), esp. p. 127.

²⁵ For Philo spiritual meaning increased, rather than lessened, the necessity of the bodily practice. See, e.g., *On the Migration of Abraham* 92–93: "We should look on all these [outward observances] as resembling the body, and [these inner meanings as resembling] the soul. It follows that, exactly as we have to take thought for the body, because it is the abode of the soul, so we must pay heed to the written laws. If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols."

For Paul this danger applied primarily to gentile converts, but it quickly shifted its focus to converts from Judaism. Already for the next generations of Christians, those who produced the Gospels, it was Jewish and not gentile converts (and particularly Pharisees like Paul himself) who symbolized the difficulties of true conversion. As in Paul, the problem of conversion manifested itself as a reading disability. Thus Jesus complains in the Sermon on the Mount that even those Jews and Pharisees sympathetic to him incessantly confuse outer appearance with inner truth. They are like tombs (Greek *sema*, punning with *soma*, body), attractive on the outside, repulsive within (Matt. 23.25–32). There is a complex historical movement from the frustrations expressed by the authors of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John (writing roughly in the period 70–100 C.E.)²⁶ over the pace and nature of Jewish conversion to later opinions like that of Gregory of Nicaea in the ninth century that “no Jew has yet lifted the veil [from his eyes], insofar as not one among them has converted legitimately.”²⁷ That movement cannot concern us here. I need only note a point so obvious that it has become invisible: the passage between Judaism and Christianity came to serve very early as an analogy for other passages, especially those between letter and spirit, body and soul. It was this analogical function that made questions surrounding conversion so productive in all sorts of arguments, like those about the nature of language, which had nothing to do with living converts from Judaism.

A particularly important example was the argument over the relative weight of literal versus spiritual or nonliteral (that is, metaphorical, allegorical, figurative, etc.) readings of the Bible. Many early Christian exegetes like Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome believed that conversion from Judaism to Christianity required a complete transformation of the convert. Any continuity of practice was dangerous insofar as it constituted Judaizing. But if this was true, then how should Christians read the many New Testament passages attesting to ongoing observance of Judaism by the apostles? Following Origen (ca. 185–252/53), many theologians argued that such biblical passages could not be understood literally but should only be read as allegories. Indeed these passages became very important in debates over biblical hermeneutics precisely because they served allegorists like Origen as the clearest evidence that some parts of the New Testament (and many parts of the Old) were literally untrue. Such a position struck other theologians as heretical,

²⁶ As with all things related to the New Testament, the dating of its books is much debated, but there is a scholarly consensus at which all revisions aim. (For the consensus, see, for example, Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee, rev. ed. [Nashville, Tenn., 1975].) That consensus has long placed the genuine writings of Paul first, circa 45–60 C.E. (For a revised dating of the letters see Gerd Luedemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* [Philadelphia, 1984].) The Gospel of Mark is thought to be the earliest Gospel, written shortly before or after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., followed by Matthew later in the first century. (William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* [Dillsboro, N.C., 1976], however, argues for reversing these two, since he sees Mark as an abridgment of Matthew.) Luke is often treated as contemporaneous with Matthew but is probably later, since Acts, written by the same author, is generally dated to circa 100 C.E. John has almost universally been treated as coming last and latest, though recent revisionists argue instead for its priority (see, for example, John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* [London, 1976]).

²⁷ Gilbert Dagron, “Le traité de Grégoire de Nicée sur le baptême des juifs,” *Travaux et mémoires* 11 (1991), 314–57.

insofar as it stressed spirit excessively over flesh and came perilously close to the critical style of Gnostic exegetes.²⁸ It is for this reason that Augustine focused on the question when he argued against Jerome that every word of the Bible has a literal truth in addition to a figurative one. According to Augustine, the apostles and their generation of converts from Judaism to Christianity had "retained the ceremonies which by the law they had learned from their fathers." Jerome responded violently. Augustine was "reintroducing within the Church the pestilential heresy" of the Ebionites and other Judaizing sects. Such opinions, Jerome warned, would destroy the Church: "If . . . it shall be declared lawful for [the Jews] to continue in the Churches of Christ what they have been accustomed to practice in the Synagogues of Satan, I will tell you my opinion in the matter: they will not become Christian, but will make us Jews" (*Epistolae* 75.4.13).

Of course, Augustine was not arguing that the Law was binding on the apostolic or any other generation of converts from Judaism. What he did say, most clearly in the treatise *Against Faustus the Manichee* of 398 as well as in his correspondence with Jerome, was that such observance was not prohibited to the apostolic generation, that it was understandable as the product of habit and custom, and that the apostles had favored it as a theologically advisable approach toward the Torah, "lest by compulsory abandonment it should seem to be condemned rather than closed" (*Contra Faustum* 19.17). His was a thoroughly historical response to dualist readings of these biblical passages about apostolic Judaism, one that articulated the legitimacy of Law and Judaism for converts in generational terms. Augustine developed a similar "conversionary" method of thinking, not only about specific passages like these, but about the nature of language itself. As he put it in *De doctrina Christiana* (3.5.9): "The ambiguities of metaphorical words . . . demand extraordinary care and diligence. What the Apostle says pertains to this problem. 'For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth.' That is, when that which is said figuratively is taken as though it were literal, it is understood carnally. Nothing can more appropriately be called the death of the soul than that condition in which the thing that distinguishes man from beasts, which is the understanding, is subjected to the flesh in pursuit of the letter." To read carnally, "to be unable to lift the eye of the mind above what is corporeal and created," was "a miserable slavery of the soul." This was in fact, as Augustine went on to say, the slavery of the Jews. But no Christian, at least none who utilized language, was immune to the potential slavery of reading carnally, with all its attendant risks of hermeneutic "Judaization."

This compressed outline of patristic thought should make plausible a basic point. Thinking about conversion from Judaism was for Christians an important way to think about the incompleteness of their own linguistic conversion from letter to spirit, an incompleteness that was as dangerous as it was unavoidable in this pre-apocalyptic world of flesh. The danger assailed all language, but because

²⁸ On Origen I have especially depended on Gerard E. Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis: Origen and the Two Swords* (Berkeley, Calif., 1979); Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, N.J., 1992); and Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 28 (Berlin, 1985).

of poetry's heightened association with sensual mimesis, it confronted Christian poetry in concentrated form. The view of nonbiblical poetry as lie or dangerous fiction was voiced by theologians across the Middle Ages, from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas.²⁹ Saints fanned the fear of secular poetry in the Spain of Juan Alfonso de Baena as well: Vincent Ferrer and Alonso de Cartagena (the *converso* bishop of Burgos) both preached about its dangers.³⁰ Of course, poetic fictions also had their defenders: Lactantius, Macrobius, and Isidore in late antiquity;³¹ Bernard Sylvester and the Neoplatonists in the twelfth century;³² Dante's defense of the spiritual truth-value of poetry (sometimes known as "theological poetics") at the cusp of the thirteenth and fourteenth;³³ Petrarch's and Boccaccio's rebuttal

²⁹ On Augustine's aesthetics see recently Joachim Küpper, "‘Uti’ und ‘frui’ bei Augustinus und die Problematik des Genießens in der ästhetischen Theorie des Okzidents," in Wolfgang Klein and Ernst Müller, eds., *Genuß und Egoismus: Zur Kritik ihrer geschichtlichen Verknüpfung* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 3–29, and *De Civitate Dei* 11.18; *De doctrina Christiana* 2.6 (7, 8) and 4.11 (26). Closer to the period of the poets discussed here, see Thomas Aquinas's assertion, in his *Quodlibetal Questions*, that "poetic fictions have no purpose except to signify; and such signification does not go beyond the literal sense" (7.6.16). Elsewhere Aquinas attempted to distinguish between poetic fictions and other, more salvific ones. See in particular his discussion in *Summa theologiae* I.I. 9, "Utrum sacra scriptura debeat uti metaphoris": "Procedere autem per similitudines varias, et repraesentationes, est proprium Poeticae. . . ." Here Aquinas concludes that, because mankind can achieve knowledge only through the senses, "unde convenienter in sacra Scriptura traduntur nobis spiritualia sub metaphoris corporaliū. . . ." See also I.II. 101 on the dependence of the ritual of the Mass on "aliquibus sensibilibus figuris." There his conclusion is that "sicut poetica non capiuntur a ratione humana propter defectum veritatis, qui est in eis, ita etiam ratio humana perfecte capere non potest divina propter excedentem ipsorum veritatem, et ideo utrobique opus est repraesentatione per sensibiles figuras."

³⁰ On these themes see especially Karl Kohut, "Zur Vorgeschichte der Diskussion um das Verhältnis von Christentum und antiker Kultur im spanischen Humanismus: Die Rolle des *Decretum Gratiani* in der Übermittlung patristischen Gedankengutes," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 55 (1973), 80–106; his "Der Beitrag der Theologie zum Literaturbegriff in der Zeit Juans II von Kastilien: Alonso de Cartagena (1384–1456) und Alonso de Madrigal, genannt el Tostado (1400?–1455)," *Romanische Forschungen* 89 (1977), 183–226; and more generally his *Las teorías literarias en España y Portugal durante los siglos XV y XVI*, *Anejos de Revista de Literatura* 36 (Madrid, 1973). On St. Vincent Ferrer, and on responses by *cancionero* poets to his preaching in Castile, see Catedra, *Sermon y literatura*, pp. 251–68. For Ferrer's Thomistic opposition to the allegorization of poetry, see Catedra's "La predicación castellana de San Vicente Ferrer," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 39 (1983–84), 235–309, esp. p. 278, citing Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, MS 9433, fols. 33r–43r.

³¹ Lactantius, *Epitome Divinarum institutionum* 11 and 12; Macrobius, *Commentum ad Somnium Scipionis* 1.2.11; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 8.7.10.

³² See esp. the work attributed to Bernard Sylvester, *Commentary on the First Six Books of Virgil's Aeneid*, trans. Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Maresca (Lincoln, Neb., 1979).

³³ Dante's poetics is articulated not only in his poetry but also in treatises such as the "Letter to Cangrande della Scala" (in Dante Alighieri, *Tutte le opere*, ed. Luigi Blasucci, 2nd ed. [Florence, 1965], pp. 341–52), where Dante draws a parallel between the multiple levels of meaning of biblical and nonbiblical poetry. (The example Dante uses is that of Ps. 113.1–2: "Qui modus tractandi, ut melius pateat, potest considerari in hiis versibus: 'In exitu Israel de Egipto, domus Iacob de populo barbaro, facta est Iudaea sanctificatio eius, Israel potestas eius.'") On these issues see August Buck, *Italianische Dichtungslehren vom Mittelalter bis zum Ausgang der Renaissance*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 94 (Tübingen, 1952), pp. 33–53; and Otfried Lieberknecht, *Allegoresis and Philologie: Überlegungen zum Problem des mehrfachen Schriftsinns in Dantes Commedia*, Text und Kontext 14 (Stuttgart, 1999), who discusses the debate over Dante's authorship of the letter on pp. 4–5. On the more general topic of the "fourfold meaning" of Scripture, Henri de Lubac remains fundamental: *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, Théologie 41, 42, and 49 (Paris, 1959–64).

of the theologians at the end of the Middle Ages.³⁴ It is within the context of this long struggle over the ontological status of poetry that we should read Baena's *Cancionero* and the poems it contains.³⁵

Like Dante, Baena and some of his colleagues claimed that secular poetry provided access to spiritual truth. They did so through a theory of "poetic grace" articulated in the prologue to the *Cancionero* as well as in its poetry. Two lines of Latin verse scrawled at the top of the first manuscript folio capture the general theme: "Unicuique gracia est data / secundum Paulum relata" ("To each one grace is given / according to St. Paul," a paraphrase of Eph. 4.7).³⁶ This "infused grace of God" was the prerequisite for and the inspiration of good poetry, and therefore good poetry could potentially provide knowledge of divine grace. These poets explored the potential for a "theological poetics" through various competitive exchanges. Theologians like Friar Pedro de Colunga or the Bachelor of Salamanca, for example, challenged lay poets like Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino (who often boasted of his lack of learning and elevated inspired poetry above "book knowledge") to answer obscure questions of biblical exegesis.³⁷ Lay poets,

³⁴ Giovanni Boccaccio's *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri*, ed. Vincenzo Romano, Scrittore d'Italia 200–201 (Bari, 1951), esp. the preface and books 14–15; Petrarch's *Invective contra medicum* (ed. Antonietta Bufano, in *Opere latine di Francesco Petrarca*, 2, Classici Italiani 4 [Turin, 1975]), *Familiars* 10.4, "de proportionem inter theologiam et poetiam" (ed. Vittorio Rossi, *Le familiari*, 2, Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Francesco Petrarca 11 [Florence, 1934], pp. 301–10), and *Collatio laureationis* (ed. Carlo Godi, "La *Collatio laureationis* del Petrarca nelle due redazioni," *Studi petrarcheschi*, n.s., 5 [1988], 1–58). On the relationship between these defenses of poetry, see A. J. Minnis's introduction to the chapter "The Transformation of Critical Tradition: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio," in *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1000–c. 1375: The Commentary-Tradition*, ed. A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1991), pp. 373–94; and above all Joachim Küpper, "Zu einigen Aspekten der Dichtungstheorie in der Frührenaissance," forthcoming in *Renaissance: Konzepte einer Epoche im Dialog der Disziplinen*, ed. Andreas Kahlitz and Gerhard Regn. On the Castilian career of these texts see inter alia Jules Piccus, "El traductor español de *De genealogia deorum*," in *Homenaje a Rodríguez-Moñino*, 2 (Madrid, 1966), pp. 59–75; and Hernando de Talavera, "Invectivas contra el médico rudo e parlero," ed. Pedro M. Cátedra, in *Petrarca: Obras*, 1: *Prosa*, ed. Francisco Rico et al., Clásicos Alfaguara 12 (Madrid, 1978), pp. 369–410.

³⁵ An influential master narrative of this struggle was penned by Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948), "Poesie und Theologie," pp. 219–32. For revisions to it see the works of Minnis and Küpper cited in the previous note, as well as *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, 2: *The Middle Ages*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge, Eng., 2005). So far as I know the only work to treat the *Cancionero de Baena* in this context is that of Karl Kohut, "La teoría de la poesía cortesana en el prologo de Juan Alfonso de Baena," in *Actas del coloquio hispano-alemán Ramón Menéndez Pidal* (Madrid, 1982), pp. 120–37, here p. 131, n. 27; and Wolf-Dieter Lange, *El fraile trovador: Zeit, Leben, und Werk des Diego Valencia de León*, Analecta Romanica 28 (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 101–2.

³⁶ *Cancionero*, p. 1. The rubric is discussed in a number of poems, most notably by Baena (no. 359, p. 639, lines 9–10) and Manuel de Lando (no. 253, pp. 451–52, lines 17–24; and no. 257, pp. 456–58, lines 81–88). For a good summary and revision of the scholarly debates over the meaning of this theme of *gracia* in the *Cancionero* see Weiss, *Poet's Art*, pp. 25–40.

³⁷ For the exchange between Villasandino and Fray Pedro, see nos. 80–83 (pp. 107–13). Pedro challenges Villasandino, as "grant sabio perleto / en todo fablar de linda poetria, / estrenuo en armas e en cavalleria" (no. 82, pp. 109–11, lines 1–3) to explain obscurities in the Apocalypse. In no. 136 (pp. 161–62, lines 1–2) he does the same again, referring ironically to Villasandino as "Poeta eçelente, profundo, poético / e clarificador de toda escuraleza." Villasandino's response comes in no. 137 (p. 162). For the Bachelor from Salamanca, see nos. 92–93 (pp. 119–20).

on the other hand, might elevate their inspired simplicity above the sophisticated learning of the theologian, as Ferrán Manuel de Lando did in his challenge to Friar Lope del Monte: "For God chose to reveal his secrets / to simple innocents, heavy and rude, / while he left the learned nude, / and hid from them his glory, / as Our Savior makes clear / in the subtle texts of his Gospel story."³⁸

Ferrán Manuel's charge provides a good example of the strategic deployment of accusations of Judaism within these debates insofar as it implicitly aligns the theologian with the negative example of the seemingly learned, but actually blind, rabbis and Pharisees in the Gospels. Friar Lope responds in kind. Christians are not obliged to study poetry, for there are no divine secrets to be found in it. Indeed the poet is associated with those who have never achieved knowledge of divine deeds: "... the gentile, the Jew, and the tax collector." In his final riposte Friar Lope turns Lando's "pharisaization" of theologians (that is, his accusation that those who seem clothed in learning are in reality naked and blind) on its head: "God makes bears with furry skins, / and makes the ignorant wise. / But few are the wise and truly learned, / who have hairy chests and thighs." Whatever the ontological uncertainties in this world, Lope implies, one thing is clear: in theological matters his rival Lando, a mere poet, belongs not only with pagans and Jews but with the ignorant beasts.³⁹

³⁸ "Aunque vos seades famoso jurista, / sabed que delante de sabios sotiles / ya fize yo prosas por actos gentiles, / maguer non só alto nin lindo partista. // Mas por aquesto non deven tomar / embidia los grandes doctores sesudos, / que Dios sus secretos quiso revelar / a párvulos simples, pesados e rudos, / e a los prudentes dexólos desnudos, / escondiendo d'ellos el su resplandor, / segunt verifica Nuestro Salvador / en su Evangelio de testos agudos" (no. 272, pp. 472–74, lines 21–32). The reference is to Matt. 11.25. For the moment I am concerned only with "Judaization" in debates about the relative value of secular poetry and theology. Accusations of Judaism are also made, however, in contests where both sides claim explicitly theological authority. In a debate (nos. 323–28, pp. 567–83) between Franciscans and Dominicans over the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, for example, Fray Lope accuses Diego Martínez de Medina of misreading (no. 324, pp. 568–74, lines 137–38: "La palabra mal entendida / mata e non da consuelo," a paraphrase of 2 Cor. 3.6), calls him a hypocritical Pharisee (lines 209–11), and suggests that "bueno vos será juntar / con esos de Moisés / e parientes de Cohén" (no. 326, pp. 575–77, lines 61–63). These strategies are revealingly similar to those used in Martin Luther's debate with the "Scholastics" over the same issue.

³⁹ "Nunca vi secretos de Dios en ditar / nin al tal saber non somos tenudos. / Los fechos divinos son a nos escudos / que non alcançó el flaco armador, / gentil nin judío nin arrendador, / que tiene tristeza con gestos çejudos. // El faze los ossos con cueros lanudos / e al que poco sabe ser grant sabidor; / pocos son los sabios de sabio valor / que tengan los pechos e lomos peludos" (no. 273, pp. 473–74, lines 27–35). Ferrán responds in no. 274 (pp. 474–75). Friar Lope attacks Villasandino on similar grounds in no. 117 (pp. 150–52, line 9), criticizing "Quien troba parlando, non seyendo letrado." The poem is an attack on political as well as poetic falsity, ending with a curse on those "hypocrites" who sow discord among the magnates and with the exhortation that princes "abhor Jews" and "honor good men" (lines 89–96). Even here Maestro Lope may be taking aim at the poets, whose inflammatory role in royal courts seems already a literary commonplace. See, for example, the first lines of Diego de Valencia's poem no. 227 (pp. 266–75) on the birth of Juan II (1405), regarding the "contiendas, roídos e daño muy farto" (line 6) that arise every day over the interpretation of figurative poetry. From a somewhat earlier period, see Alfonso X's condemnation of the violence occasioned by poetry in his *Siete partidas*, 2.9.30, and Ramon Llull's complaint in his *Libre de contemplació en Deu*, ed. Mn. Antoni Ma. Alcover, 3 (Palma de Mallorca, 1910), p. 98: "Los malvats juglars veem, Senyer, esser maldigols e malmescladors enfre un príncep e altre, e enfre un baro e altre; e per la mala fama que semhren los juglars, e per loy e la mala volentat que engentren enfrens alts barons, per so veem destruir emperis e regnats e comdats e terres, viles e castells."

Beyond such questions of the spiritual truth-value of poetry, the usefulness of accusation of Judaizing extended more generally to the development of a critical poetics itself. The aggrieved sense that bad poetry was often mistaken for good, and good poetry maligned as bad, could be powerfully expressed in terms of a "pharisaic poetics." Villasandino did so, for example, when he characterized graceless "metrificadores" as tax collectors, "arrendadores," and mockingly described the king rewarding them with "ropas con señales" (clothes with badges).⁴⁰ This sense of an ontological crisis of poetry approaches the apocalyptic in Villasandino's extended attack on the bad poetic form of Fernán Manuel de Lando: "According to the signs it seems that this world, / base and deceptive, is about to perish / . . . / for truth no longer has any power, / and lies are everywhere pushed up to honor."⁴¹ Poetically as in so many other ways, it seemed that Castile was slouching toward the millennium.⁴²

The poets did not give language up for lost. Instead they developed a critical framework within which to argue about its relative merits. The prologue to Juan Alfonso de Baena's *Cancionero* is in this sense an explicit poetic manifesto. I have already mentioned the "infused grace of God" as the primary prerequisite for good poetry. Insofar as Baena's colleagues understood the poet's state of grace as legible in the poetry itself, the poem became a literary marker of its author's place on the continuum between letter and spirit, with the bad poet, the misuser of language, understood as (among other things) a "Jew." Beyond divine grace there were, of course, other prerequisites for poetry: knowledge of rules of meter and form; subtle inventiveness; exquisite discretion and judgment; broad reading; knowledge of all languages; familiarity with court life; nobility, "fydalguía," and courtesy; and always appearing to be ("siempre se finja") a good lover, loving whom one should, as one should, where one should. The pages of Juan Alfonso's *Cancionero* were the lists in which the mettle of each poet and each poem were put to the test of this complex standard.

Juan Alfonso himself put this wittily in his poetic challenge to the poet Ferrán Manuel de Lando: "Ferrand Manuel, for the public display / of your marvelous skill / in this great court of the king of Castile / someone must give you a sting." It is out of provocation, according to Baena, that good poetry is born. But the substance of the provocation itself should not be taken too much to heart: "Ferrand Manuel, since to each / is given [poetic] grace doubled or simple, / don't let

⁴⁰ No. 96, pp. 122–23, lines 28–45.

⁴¹ No. 255, pp. 453–55: "Si el mundo mirades bien en derredor / veredes las gentes ser ledas e tristes, / e muchos que enfigen segunt enfengistes / e otros que comen su pan con dolor; / alguno se piensa ser grant doctor / que en toda su vida non es bachiller, / aqui se demuestra que es bien menester / la gracia divina del grant Senador. // . . . // mas pues van las cosas de mal en peor, / . . . / por qué en España suele contesçer / vençer el rectado a su rectador. // Quiçá este mundo, vil, engañador, / segunt las señales se va peresçer, / pues ya la verdat non tiene poder / e es la mentira pujada en onor" (lines 35–44).

⁴² Vincent Ferrer's messianic inspiration is well known. On apocalyptic currents in the peninsula see José Guadalajara Medina, *Las profecías del anticristo en la edad media* (Madrid, 1996), pp. 232–47; José María Pou y Martí, *Visionarios, beguinos, y fraticelos catalanes (siglos XIII–XV)* (Madrid, 1991); and most recently Robert E. Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 2001), especially chap. 7, on 1391 and Francesc Eiximenis's millenarian ideas.

your face turn yellow / because my tongue splashes or stains you." Insult is only a picador's prod, meant to stimulate the revelation of a poet's virtues.⁴³ In this case Ferrán responds with accusations, not about Baena's insufficient "Christianity," but about his deficiencies as a lover. Ferrán will, he claims, soften the womb of Baena's girlfriend. The exchange escalates along these lines, ending with Baena's (no. 363) infamous assertion that Ferrán's asshole is full of a shepherd's sperm. In the face of this response, reports the *Cancionero*, Ferrán abandoned the field to Baena.⁴⁴

Here the idiom of poetic criticism is primarily sexual. In the contest that follows, between Baena and Villasandino, the idioms are more diverse. Baena opens by challenging this "rotten old man, whose ribs are made of phlegm" to a contest of poetry. I quote Villasandino's response in full:

Sir, this vile ass with a branded face
twisted and stuffed with wine and garlic
I consider on account of his foolish frenzy
and crazed works a fine troubador.
This swells the head of the dirty Jew-pig,
he presumes to pick fights with his betters.
Whoever heeds the words of this grackle
must himself be blacker than a sea-faring crow.

He who is unworthy and incapable
of this knowledge and art that we pursue:
his arguments are not worth a straw
nor a lousy cucumber, not even a gherkin.⁴⁵

⁴³ No. 359, p. 639, lines 1–4 and 9–12: "Ferrand Manuel, por que se publique / la vuestra çiençia de grant maravilla, / en esta grant corte del Rey de Castilla / conviene forçado que alguno vos pique; / . . . / Fernand Manuel, pues unicuique / data est graçia doblada e senzilla, / non se vos torne la cara amarilla / por que mi lengua vos unte o salpique." Or as Baena puts it in the challenge he issued to Villasandino and Lando in 1423: "que pierdan malençonía / e tomen plazentería, / sin enojo e sin zizaña, / ca la burla non rascaña" (no. 357, pp. 637–38, lines 27–30). The function of insult in this poetry deserves to be studied in the light of Jean-Claude Milner's *De la syntaxe à l'interprétation: Quantités, insultes, exclamations* (Paris, 1978), pp. 174–223, but I have not been able to undertake the project (my thanks to G. Agamben for drawing my attention to this aspect of Milner's work).

⁴⁴ Lando to Baena, no. 360, pp. 639–40, here lines 6–8: "que yo nunca tenga la novia muy presta, / si a vuestra amiga non punço en la cresta / fasta que la madre se le molifique." Baena to Lando, no. 363, pp. 641–42, lines 1–8: "Ferrand Manuel, boz mala vos gique / diz' que vos dexó en la culcassilla / un chato pastor toda rezmilla / e fuese fuyendo al campo d'Orique. / Por ende . . . / medio puto vos queda el taxbique." Note Baena's assertion in this poem that insult specifically enables good poetry: "Fernand Manuel, por que versefique / donaires mi lengua sin raça e polilla, / sabed que vos mando de mula pardilla / dozena de festes en el quadruplique" (lines 9–12; *festes* 'horse turdlets'). The use of the word *raça* (race) to signify (poetic) defect deserves comment. See my "Race and 'Racism' in Late Medieval Spain," in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. W. Mignolo, M. Quilligan, and M. Greer, forthcoming, University of Chicago Press.

⁴⁵ Baena's challenge is no. 364, Villasandino's response no. 365; the exchange continues with Baena's no. 366, Villasandino's no. 367, and Baena's no. 368, to which Villasandino does not reply (pp. 642–44 for the entire exchange). The translation is of no. 365 (pp. 642–43): "Señor, este vil borrico frontino, / torçino e relleno de vino e de ajos, / sus neçios afanes e locos trabajos / es porque l' tengo por trobador fino; / en esto se enfinge el suzio cohino / e con muchos buenos levanta baraja; / e quien reçelasse su parlar de graja / más negro sería que cuervo marino. // Quien non es capaz bastante nin

Far from being the poet he pretends and presumes ("enfinge") to be, Baena is a donkey whose "villainy" is marked on his face and in his diet of wine and garlic. He is a "suzio cohino," a "dirty Jew-pig" (the word plays with the proximity between Cohen and *cochino*), with the voice of a cormorant, not a poet. He knows, in short, nothing of "this science [of poetry]," and his words are worthless.

"Cohino" here is redolent with poetic and ontological significance, but it is no more genealogical than any of the other assertions made in the course of this contest. Baena will respond by calling Villasandino (among other things) "swine sputum," a drunk, an apostate gambler ("tahir renegado"); Villasandino by calling Baena a bastard ("fornicino") and a pig ("tuerto chazino, gruniente cochino"). These charges drew their meaning and usefulness, not from the biography of their target, but from the rules of the poetic agon in which they were deployed, in which provocation stimulated vulgar poetry and that poetry revealed the relative "state of grace" of the competing poets.

It is this very vulgarity that made it difficult for early generations of modern critics to see much "grace" in the poetry.⁴⁶ That vulgarity was itself, however, the critical by-product of these poets' theology, a way of representing the lack in their rivals of any one of their multiple prerequisites for poetry. Judaism, poetic incompetence, ignorance, rudeness, sexual deviance, even animality were the negative poles of poetic virtues: divine grace, good meter and form, learning, courtesy, love, etc. Each of these virtues was, as the patristic examples suggested, closely related to its companions and expressible almost interchangeably in their terms. The same is true of their attendant vices. The overlapping of these variables made possible a space of play in which claims to poetic or theological "ciencia" could be both made and criticized in a language of extreme carnality (indeed, from the poets' point of view, the greater the contrast the greater the poem).⁴⁷

Judaism was, as I hope the patristic examples made clear, a key metaphor in this system of thought, a governing insult that carried with it a host of theological, linguistic, and physical implications. The same could be said of other idioms of opprobrium in the *Cancionero*, such as the frequent charges of homosexuality and sodomy, meant to imply of a poet that, as Villasandino put it, "you never served

dino / de aquesta çiençia de que se trabaja, / su argumentar non vale una paja, / nin un mal cogombro, tampoco un pepino."

⁴⁶ See, for example, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, 1, ed. Enrique Sánchez Reyes, Edición Nacional de las Obras Completas de Menéndez Pelayo 17 (Santander, 1944), pp. 372–73: "En el *Cancionero de Baena*, como en todos los de su clase, hay muchos versos y muy poca poesía. . . . [N]i una sola vez vienen a refrescarnos en las áridas y monótonas páginas del *Cancionero de Baena*, aquellas ráfagas de poesía que nos sorprenden en las *cantigas de amigo* o en las *de ledino*." Even Azáqueta (above, n. 13), who dedicated himself to an edition of Baena, was upset by the poetry: ". . . la bella forma de sus estrofas y el buen acabado de sus versos, a veces sirven para envolver pensamientos burdos, insultos groseros, palabras chabacanas. El Baena de los 'debates' resulta pendenciero, burlón y de baja calidad humana, y hasta presume la facilidad de su lengua para el mal hablar" (p. ix).

⁴⁷ See, e.g., no. 270, pp. 470–71, Alfonso de Moraña against Ferrán Manuel de Lando. The latter had written a love poem that placed his beloved among the heavenly spheres, the work of the Moon, Mars, and Venus. Alfonso responds by telling him that the planets and fortune are not enough to produce such beauty, that he will be loved (i.e., sodomized) only by Alfonso's Moor, and that he sins.

love, / nor were in its company."⁴⁸ Indeed these idioms were often combined. To the charge just cited, Alfonso Álvarez added that the target of his poem was an apostate Jew with a prominent nose, a *meshumad*. The Franciscan monk and theologian Diego de Valencia strove for the same derisive combination when he wrote a poem whose rhyme scheme was made up almost entirely of Hebrew words, accusing Juan de Espanha of having no testicles. Those critics who have focused on the poem's Hebrew vocabulary in order to argue that Fray Diego was a *converso* have missed the point.⁴⁹ In the world of Baena's *Cancionero* the discourse of Judaism, like that of sexuality or animality, was as much a language of literary criticism as that of meter and form. As such it was separable from the genealogy and religious orthodoxy of its object. It was even possible for a real Jew to possess the qualities of a poet, as when the same Friar Diego praised the Jew Symuel Dios-Auda for his charity, his courtesy, and his "fydalguía": "For your word never changes or wavers / . . . / these are the markers of a noble man / to say things and do them without any doubt."⁵⁰

In short, we could interpret the critical accusation of Judaism developed by the poets of Baena's circle in the years following the mass conversions as being about language, not lineage. Some of these poets may in fact have been converts, or descended from converts, but it is not at all clear that their "Jewishness" in poetry had anything to do with their "Jewishness" in life. Nor was theirs a "Jewish poetics," except in the sense that it was the product of a Christian theological linguistics that had long understood certain aspects of language (ranging from letter and literalism to mimesis and hypocrisy) in terms of Judaism and Judaizing. We should not doubt that the social and political consequences of the mass conversions lent new urgency and power to this linguistics. But neither should we ignore the extent to which these poets built both their "Jewishness" and their literary criticism out of the terms of Christian aesthetics, epistemology, and ontology.

Many readers, particularly historians of my generation who have been raised from infancy to be suspicious of the high history of ideas, will object that the previous pages pay too much attention to the conceptual tools of Christian linguistics and theology and too little to the social transformations wrought by the mass conversions. Am I suggesting, they will ask, that the fate of the *conversos*

⁴⁸ No. 140, pp. 164–65, lines 31–32, Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino against Alfonso Ferrández Semuel: "nunca serviste Amor / nin fuste en su compañía." For a suggestive study on the place of love in the production of poetry and nobility in Castile during this period see Julian Weiss, "Alvaro de Luna, Juan de Mena and the Power of Courtly Love," *Modern Language Notes* 106 (1991), 241–56.

⁴⁹ No. 501, p. 343. Cantera Burgos is among those who move from vocabulary to sociology: "Ya adelantamos que se ignora la ascendencia de Fray Diego y desde luego sorprende en él el amplio conocimiento que del vocabulario hebreo hace gala. Nada nos chocaría, pues, que . . . poseyera amplios contactos judaicos, quizá incluso familiares" ("El Cancionero de Baena" [above, n. 14], p. 103). Fraker's phrasing and conclusion are almost identical: *Studies on the Cancionero*, pp. 9–10, n. 2.

⁵⁰ No. 511, pp. 355–56, lines 13–16: "ca vuestra palabra jamás non se muda / . . . / Éstas son señales de omne fidalgo: / dezir e fazer las cosas sin dubda." Of course the possibility of an ironic allusion to Jewish "literal" understanding should not be dismissed here. Cf., however, the Marqués de Santillana's comment on the writings of Rabbi Shem Tov de Carrion: "No vale el açor menos / por nasçer en vil nio, / ni los exemplos buenos / por los dezir iudio": "Proemio," in *Obras completas*, ed. Ángel Gómez Moreno and Maximilian P. A. M. Kerkhof (Barcelona, 1988), p. 451.

was governed by ancient and unchanging laws of Christian hermeneutics? Nothing could be further from my intent. The migration of thousands of Jews into Christianity destabilized many of the social and religious distinctions through which both groups distinguished themselves from the other. These "identity crises" catalyzed on both sides the reconstruction of distinctions and discriminations in terms that proclaimed their continuity with the old but were also decidedly different. Briefly put, the transformation of the convert from Christian back into "Jew" required a century of vast sociological and theological change.⁵¹

We are, however, sometimes too eager to forget that these changes were simultaneously achieved and apprehended through available categories or forms of thought. These forms were not shattered by the convulsions of 1391 and after. Rather, they were put to new kinds of work, filled with (and giving meaningful shape to) new kinds of content. If I have stressed excessively the power of certain forms (like that of "Jew" as a container for specific hermeneutic and ontological positions), it is because the work they did in building the "Jewishness" of late-medieval Spain has been generally ignored in favor of more genealogical, sociological, and political causalities. I do not mean to imply, however, that these "figures" of thought were independent or determinative of the social world in which they were deployed. Quite the contrary, the two are so intertwined as to be empirically inseparable. The emergence of thousands of real converts in 1391, for example, breathed fresh energy into "Judaism" as a form for linguistic critique (hence its importance for Baena's generation of poets, and not earlier ones). At the same time, the new uses of that form, in poetry and elsewhere, created new types of "Jews," refigured the potential meanings of both "Jew" and "Christian," and thereby transformed the uses to which the linguistic figure of "Jew" could be put.

I can demonstrate this by moving a few years forward and to a form of competition other than verse, for poets were not the only ones to put the language of Judaizing to serious work in the generations following the mass conversions. The royal courts of Castile and Aragon were settings of concentrated factionalism and struggles for power. It is well known that all parties in these struggles sought to blacken their rivals (and not only those descended from converts) as "Jewish" and therefore politically corrupt.⁵² In the 1430s and 1440s, as factionalism matured

⁵¹ I do not mean to minimize the anxieties produced by the mass conversions or the social and cultural transformations they occasioned, which I have written about elsewhere: see my "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002), 1065–93, and "Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain," *Past and Present* 174 (Feb. 2002), 3–41.

⁵² The "Jewishness" of bad governance is a topos in the *Cancionero de Baena* as in Castilian literature both earlier and later. For a partial substantiation of this argument, see my "Alfonso VIII and the Jewess of Toledo: A Political Affair," in *Studies in Honor of Denab Lida*, ed. Mary G. Berg and Lanin A. Gyurko, *Scripta Humanistica* 153 (Potomac, Md., 2005), pp. 27–43. For examples in Baena's collection, see the already cited no. 117 of Lope del Monte against Villasandino (ca. 1405) or Villasandino's own verses addressed to King Enrique (no. 57, pp. 78–81, lines 73–80, ca. 1391–93): "Vuestro padre, que heredado / con Dios sea en Paraíso, / en su vida siempre quiso / servidor noble, esmerado; / en lo tal fue su cuidado: / buscar ombre sin bolicio, / ca non vender el oficio / como judío renegado." Baena attributes the poem to Alfonso but doubts himself, "por quanto va errado en algunos consonantes, non embargante qu'el dezir es muy bueno e pica en lo bivo" (p. 78).

into civil war, this "Judaism" became increasingly linked to genealogy. Alfonso Martínez de Toledo provides a nice example of this logic in his *Arcipreste de Talavera o Corbacho*, written c. 1438. Alfonso suggested an experiment: if one were to take two babies, the one a son of a laborer, the other of a knight, and rear them together on a mountain in isolation from their parents, one would find that the son of the laborer delights in agricultural pursuits, while the son of the knight takes pleasure only in feats of arms and equestrianism: "This nature procures. Thus you will see every day in the places where you live, that the good man of good race (*raça*) always returns to his origins, whereas the miserable man, of bad race or lineage, no matter how powerful or how rich, will always return to the villainy from which he descends. . . . That is why when such men or women have power they do not use it as they should."⁵³

Literature here paralleled legislation. Within the increasingly polarized political context of the 1430s, prominent factions in the town councils of Seville, Lleida, Barcelona, Calatayud, and other places attempted to move against their competitors by arguing that those who were converts or descended from converts, that is, those who were not "Christians by nature," should be barred from holding any public office. This sharpening of the somatic limits to conversion was sharply opposed by the monarchy, and it was condemned both by the Council of Basel in 1434 and by Pope Eugenius IV in 1437. As the council put it, "Since regeneration of the spirit is much more important than birth in the flesh . . . , [the converts] enjoy the privileges, liberties, and immunities of those cities and towns where they were regenerated through sacred baptism to the same extent as the natives and other Christians do." But these genealogical arguments became broadly useful during the civil wars against King Juan II of Castile and his minister Alvaro de Luna, whose attempts to strengthen the monarchy aroused fierce opposition. It was during those wars, and most explicitly during the rebellion of 1449, that the rebel government of the city of Toledo issued the first "statute of purity of blood." Jewish hatred of Christianity and of Christians ran indelibly in the veins of descendants of converts, the rebels argued, and through their actions it was Judaizing society. Once these descendants were barred from ever holding office or exercising power over Christians, the corruption would end and Christian society would be purified.⁵⁴

These political arguments certainly transformed the potential meanings of "Jew," "convert," and "Christian," as we shall see. But neither the genealogical truth claims of these assertions nor the obvious sociopolitical consequences of the statutes they spawned bring us any closer to a world of "real Jews" and "real Jewishness." Scholars have devoted themselves to family trees and prosopographies, counting *conversos* in public office in order to uncover genealogical and sociopolitical realities underlying Old Christian claims about the dangers of Jewish

⁵³ Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, *Arcipreste de Talavera o Corbacho*, ed. Michael Gerli, *Letras Hispánicas* 92, 4th ed. (Madrid, 1992), pp. 108–9.

⁵⁴ On the shift described here, and on the debates that accompanied it, see my "Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities." The events of 1434 and 1437 are discussed on pp. 23–25.

government.⁵⁵ Such research is to my mind one-sided. There were, of course, *converso* politicians, just as there were *converso* poets, but their existence does not suffice to explain the rise of "Judaizing" as a language of political critique. The roots of this language lie not only in sociology but also in the same dialectical tension that I discussed so briefly earlier: the tension in Christian thought between the visible, carnal, and literal, on the one hand, and the invisible, spiritual, and nonliteral, on the other. Jews and Judaism could play as crucial a role in the politics generated by this dialectic as they did in the semiotics. This should not be surprising, given that Hellenistic political thought was fashioned out of the same distinctions of body and soul as Hellenistic hermeneutics.

Aristotle articulated a key distinction between the corporeal politics of bare life and the higher politics of the good: "Men form states to secure a bare subsistence; but the ultimate object of the state is the good life."⁵⁶ The "natural" relationship of soul to body as ruler to subject provided a powerful political analogy: "[A]lthough in bad or corrupted natures the body will often appear to rule over the soul, because they are in an evil and unnatural condition . . . , [i]t is clear that the rule of the soul over the body . . . is natural and expedient" (*Politics* 1254b). For Aristotle and the tradition that followed him, the chief function of the sovereign was to guide politics away from the demands of body and bare life toward those of the immortal soul. As Aristotle put it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "[W]e must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal" (1177b). He realized, of course, that many rulers did indeed reverse these priorities, placing worldly gain ahead of a common and immaterial good, and he represented this reversal not as sovereignty but as its most basic distortion, tyranny. Tyranny, in other words, consisted of a perverted preference for self-interest over the commonwealth, for the mortal over the immortal, for flesh over spirit.⁵⁷

These distinctions could be translated into Christian terms, and the relationship in early Christianity between the politics of flesh and the politics of spirit proved every bit as dialectically tense as that between carnal and spiritual hermeneutics. The energy released by this tension, like its hermeneutic analogue, had a tendency to seek ground in the Jew. We can see how great the potential force of this tension was by focusing on the important early Christian debate about the relationship of secular to divine power. There were many apostolic positions available in this debate. Paul, in Rom. 13.1–6, had refused to distinguish between the two, treating secular magistrates as God's appointees and agents: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. . . ."⁵⁸ The author of Matt. 22.21 drew a clearer distinction: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but unto God the things which are God's." The Gospel of John went further and imagined sharp

⁵⁵ See, for example, the many works on this topic by Francisco Márquez Villanueva, beginning with his "Conversos y cargos concejiles en el siglo XV," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas, y museos* 63 (1957), 503–40.

⁵⁶ *Politics* 1252b, 30. See also *Politics* 1278b, 23–31; and 1252a, 26–35.

⁵⁷ E.g., *Politics* 1279b.

⁵⁸ Elsewhere Paul seems less monistic: cf. 1 Thess. 5.1–11; 1 Cor. 3.5–4.5, 15.24; and 2 Thess. 1:1–12.

conflict between the power of the Word and the "prince of this world," which would be resolved only with the defeat and disappearance of the latter (12.31, 14.30, 15.18). Early Christian exegetes developed all of these positions and many others.⁵⁹ At one extreme were those who emphasized a futuristic eschatology like that articulated in the Revelation of John. They understood the relationship between Christian Church and pagan Roman Empire as analogous to the struggle between Christ and Satan and tended toward antithesis rather than dialectic: Caesar became Antichrist, empire became Babylon (Rev. 18.1–20, 1 Pet. 5.13). At the other extreme were those who emphasized the "realized" triumph of Christ and understood the relationship in terms of incarnational dialectics, with the empire as fleshy body and the Church as inner spirit.⁶⁰ All, however, had a tendency to think of the princes and principalities of this world in carnal terms. And all mapped their distinctions onto the same dualities of flesh and spirit, Old Dispensation and New, which had pointed hermeneutics so fatefully toward the Jew.

Origen, for example, adapted the same distinctions that informed his exegesis to the question of politics, dividing mankind into three classes: the *hylics* (from *hylē*, matter), or materialists, who were pagans and Jews; the *psychics* (from *psychē*, soul), who corresponded to the average Christian; and the *pneumatics* (from *pneuma*, spirit), who included only the most spiritual and ascetic of Christians. Since Caesar's claims were only on the body, only those who were of the body had to render unto him: Jews, pagans, and average Christians, but not pneumatics, not those who dwelt truly in the Spirit. Hence Peter and John had nothing to render unto Caesar ("Gold and silver have I none," Acts 3.6), for they had no business in the world.⁶¹

It has been justly said of Origen that "in his politics the 'state' is related to the Church, very much as in his exegesis the letter is related to the spirit." The same general point could be made of many a theologian, whether Latin or Greek, that came after him. One seldom noted consequence of this relation is the possibility of characterizing political error (that is, an improper balance between secular and spiritual) in the same terms used to assess hermeneutical error: that is, in terms of

⁵⁹ I have relied on Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis* (esp. chap. 4), and Lester K. Field, Jr., *Liberty, Dominion, and the Two Swords: On the Origins of Western Political Theology (180–398)*, Publications in Medieval Studies 28 (Notre Dame, Ind., 1998), to clarify the issues treated in the paragraphs that follow.

⁶⁰ For Tertullian, for example, church and empire are opposed as castle of light to castle of darkness, banner of Christ and banner of demons: *De idolatria* 19.1. Similarly for Hippolytus of Rome "the kingdom of this world" "rules through the power of Satan," and Rome is equated with *anomia*, lawlessness (*On Daniel* 2.27, 3.23, and 4.5–6). A more neutral position was that of kingdoms as "exterae potestates," natural powers appointed for those who were not of God. The phrase is from the Council of Antioch (341), canon 5, but the argument that earthly kingdoms are godly institutions for the utility of the pagan ungodly emerges first (I believe) in the second-century author Irenaeus, *Adversus haereseos* 5.24.2. Caspary uses the term "fleshy envelope" to refer to Origen's view of the relationship of state to church (p. 181). Eusebius will more famously articulate this penumbral theology as a way of integrating Christianity and empire.

⁶¹ See Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis*, pp. 142–43, and the bibliography cited there. This position is less antinomian than it sounds. Elsewhere in his commentary on Romans Origen stressed (tropologically) that since all men must care for their bodies, and since all bodily things "bear the bodily image of the Prince of Bodies," all men must pay "tribute to Caesar" (*ibid.*, p. 155).

Judaism and Judaizing. Origen himself occasionally did so.⁶² But the most famous example of such slippage in late antiquity, and the most revealing, comes from more than a century later, when the emperors' conversion to Christianity had sharpened the stakes involved in questions about the relationship between princely and episcopal power. I refer, of course, to the famous altercation between St. Ambrose of Milan and the emperor Theodosius after some monks, at the instigation of a bishop, burned down a synagogue. The emperor's officials saw this as a violation of imperial law, and the emperor endorsed their order compelling the bishop to pay for the synagogue's reconstruction. In letter and sermon Ambrose responded by insisting upon the superiority of divine over public law and claiming that in this case neither the bishop (as God's priest) nor his victims (as God's enemies) fell under the laws of the state. Most pointedly, he presents the emperor's insistence on upholding the letter of the law as itself Judaizing, and he reminds the emperor of his predecessor's unhappy fate: "Maximus . . . , hearing that a synagogue had been burnt in Rome, had sent an edict to Rome, as if he were the upholder of public order. Wherefore the Christian people said, No good is in store for him. That king has become a Jew. . . ."⁶³

Ambrose's fusion of politics and hermeneutics here implies a "resistance theory": the monarch who reads literally, upholding the letter of the law over the demands of spirit, deserves deposition as a Jew. The rebellious potential inherent in this "Jewish" figure of political thought surfaced only rarely in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, but it became a coherent discourse in Latin Christianity after the year 1000, when newly robust monarchies began to extend their power throughout western Europe, in part by establishing their prerogatives over Jews.⁶⁴ The history of medieval rebellions is peopled with "Jew-loving" rulers. In Castile alone the list is revealing. The rebels against Alfonso X "the Wise" charged, among other things, that he was a puppet of the Jews.⁶⁵ The aristocratic factions that deposed and murdered King Peter "the Cruel" in the mid-fourteenth century justified their actions by portraying him as a favorer of Jews, and even stating that he was a "cuckoo," the son of a Jewess adopted by the queen mother to conceal her inability to provide an heir. Prince Henry (IV) rebelled against his father Juan II claiming that his father favored the Jews. He himself would later be ritually

⁶² The quotation is from Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis*, p. 9. For examples of Origen's "Judaizing" political error see his *Commentary on Matthew* 17.27 (quoted and discussed *ibid.*, pp. 155–56), where he calls those Christians who err by refusing to acknowledge the debts of the flesh "Pharisei," or his characterization, in his *Commentary on Romans*, of pneumatics who resist the earthly powers with material force as Judaizing Zealots (*ibid.*, p. 149).

⁶³ *Sancti Ambrosii Opera*, ed. Michaela Zelzer, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 82/3 (Vienna, 1982), letters 40 and 41, pp. 145–77; letter 40.23: "Nil boni huic imminet, rex iste Iudaeus factus est" (p. 173).

⁶⁴ For an example of this process see William Chester Jordan, "Jews, Regalian Rights, and the Constitution in Medieval France," *AJS Review* 23 (1998), 1–16.

⁶⁵ On the accusations made by Castilian bishops against Alfonso X before Pope Nicholas III, see Peter Linehan, "The Spanish Church Revisited: The Episcopal *Gravamina* of 1279," in *Authority and Power: Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Brian Tierney and Peter Linehan (Cambridge, Eng., 1980), pp. 127–47; and *idem*, *The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century*, *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought*, 3rd ser., 4 (Cambridge, Eng., 1971), pp. 176 and 219.

deposed, accused of favoring Jews, of living like a Muslim, and of homosexuality. Even the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel, conquerors of Granada, founders of the Inquisition, expellers of the Jews, were said by some of their subjects to be descended from Jews and to favor them in their policies.⁶⁶

Of course, this breathless page or two is not intended as a history of political thought. It is meant only to sketch some associations that might make plausible a potential politics related to the poetics upon which the bulk of this essay has focused. We need not insist on the historical accuracy of these associations in order to concede that a logic very much like this one animated the political imagination of mid-fifteenth-century Castile. It was in 1449, during Henry's revolt against King Juan, that we first encountered the anti-*converso* polemic of the Toledan rebels, with their precociously articulated statutes of purity of blood. Their politics was concisely explained in an influential treatise written by the revolt's ideologue, the "Bachiller" Marcos, shortly before the fall of the city and his execution. The difficulty of his position made his opening choice of address a tortured and therefore highly revealing one:

[I address this letter] to the Holy Father . . . , and to the high and powerful king or prince or administrator to whom, according to God, law, reason, and right there belongs the administration and governance of the realms . . . of Castile and Leon, and to all other . . . administrators in the spiritual and temporal [affairs] of the universal orb, in the Church militant, which is the congregation and university of faithful Christians, [that is, those] truly believing in the birth, Passion, and Resurrection [etc.] . . . , [but I do not address it to those administrators who are] the unbelieving and the doubtful in the faith, who are outside of us and in confederation (*ayuntamiento*) with the synagogue, which is to say a congregation of beasts, for since such bind themselves like livestock to the letter, they have always given and still give false meaning to divine and human scripture. [In short, I address this letter to those] attesting to the truth and saying: "The letter kills, the spirit vivifies [2 Cor. 3.6]."⁶⁷

In the Bachelor's discriminating salutation we recognize a variant of the Aristotelian distinction between a community that exists for the mere fact of living and the "congregation and university of faithful Christians" that lives with regard to the higher good. We recognize as well Augustine's position from *De doctrina Christiana*, in which those who read literally become beasts of flesh. The Bachelor's marriage of Aristotle and Augustine produces a literacy test for citizenship. "Administrators" who read like Jews, literally after the flesh, have lost the human right to participate in the *res publica*. They have become creatures of self-interest, and their power is by definition tyrannical not sovereign. We know exactly who

⁶⁶ On Henry's IV's difficulties, see inter alia Ana Echevarria Arsuaga, "La conversion des chevaliers musulmans dans la Castille du XVe siècle," in *Conversions islamiques: Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal (Paris, 2001), pp. 119–40; and Barbara Weissberger, "'¡A tierra, puto!': Alfonso de Palencia's Discourse of Effeminacy," in *Queer Iberia* (above, n. 17), pp. 291–324. On Isabel as "protector of the Jews and daughter of a Jewess" see the account of the Polish traveler Nicolas Popplau, in Javier Liske, *Viajes de extranjeros por España y Portugal en los siglos XV, XVI, y XVII: Colección* (Madrid, [1879]). On Ferdinand, see Maurice Kriegel, "Histoire sociale et ragots: Sur l'ascendance juive de Ferdinand le Catholique," in *Movimientos migratorios y expulsiones en la diáspora occidental*, ed. Fermín Miranda García (Pamplona, 2000), pp. 95–100.

⁶⁷ Text in Benito Ruano, "El memorial" (above, n. 5), pp. 320–21.

he had in mind: the *Privado* (royal favorite) Alvaro de Luna; the king, Juan II, who supported him; and even the pope, if he ended up rejecting the Bachelor's appeal and ruling in favor of the king. If no prince can be found who reads like a Christian, the treatise concludes, then the city should place itself directly under the governance of the Holy Spirit.

Onto the political oppositions of bare life and good life, private body and body politic, tyrant and legitimate magistrate, the Bachelor grafted a hermeneutic one, killing letter and vivifying spirit, and animated both with the distinction between "Jew" and Christian. The resulting political language proved potent, for the charge of "Judaizing" in late-medieval Castile drew power from an unusually powerful confusion of bloodlines and hermeneutics produced by mass conversions and intermarriage. Though the rebels of Toledo were defeated and the Bachelor Marcos was executed shortly after writing his treatise, his logic lost none of its political utility in the ongoing struggle over the balance of political power in Castile. That utility propelled his claims about the genealogical nature of convert Judaism to victory. The period after 1449 saw an explosion of treatises that drew upon sciences as diverse as medicine, metallurgy, animal breeding, etc., in order to provide Israel with a natural history capable of explaining why the attributes of its children were unchangeable by God (via baptism) or king (through ennoblement).⁶⁸ Within a generation or two, the Iberian body politic had produced a thick hedge of inquisition and genealogy in order to protect itself from penetration by the "Jewish race" and its cultural attributes.

This is not the place to show how that victory was won or to think through its many implications. Suffice it here to say that the genealogical turn was taken, and that it transformed the meaning of conversion from "Jewishness." For descendants of converts, the consequences were vast. Just as some theologians had warned in the 1430s and 1440s, the logic of lineage created despair about the possibility of conversion. After the anti-*converso* riots of 1449 some descendants of converts gave up hope of becoming Christian and circumcised themselves.⁶⁹ The same despair took hold of those who had believed in "poetic conversion." Poetry ceased to be, for *converso* and Old Christian alike, a place in which hermeneutic good faith could be proven. Converts who wrote poetry in the 1460s and 1470s were acutely aware that it could serve them only as a vessel for satire and self-mockery, not as a literary statement of their state of grace or as a forum for assimilation into the Christian body poetic. The pen of the *converso* poet Antón de Montoro, for example, is mordantly engaged with those who consider him a Jew. In one poem even his horse abuses him as a "killer of Christ." In his youth Antón de Montoro had moved in poetic circles like those of Juan Alfonso de Baena, full of hope in the emancipatory power of poetry. By the age of seventy he claimed to have lost any such hope. As he wrote in verses addressed to Queen Isabel, despite all his devotion, all his efforts to write and worship like a Christian, he was never

⁶⁸ On the work accomplished by these treatises and the vocabulary of natural science that they utilize, see my "'Race' and 'Racism' in Late Medieval Spain."

⁶⁹ See, for example, Haim Beinart's discussion of Ciudad Real in *Conversos on Trial* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 55–58.

"able to kill this trace of the convert," never "able to lose the name of old faggot Jew."⁷⁰

Conversely, non-*converso* poets found that the increasingly combustible nature of *converso* flesh deprived "Judaism" of its playful utility as a critical language. Poets in the generation after Baena continued to criticize poetry as "Jewish," but such attacks were now aimed exclusively at convert poets and stressed more pointedly the inescapably corrupting effects of Jewish lineage on textual practice. The Old Christian nobleman Frederico Manrique's description of the convert Juan Poeta's pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Valencia is typical, albeit unusually brilliant: "Johan Poeta, when you came / into this sacred space / you converted many consecrated things / from one thing into another / . . . the bull of the holy father / . . . turned with a loud noise / into scripture from the Talmud. / And the devoted Church itself / through the mere fact of your presence / was then contaminated / and at that moment became / a holy house of the Old Testament."⁷¹

We could not ask for a more vivid expression of the explosive power granted "Jewishness" by the genealogical turn. Both poets, Old Christian and New, were well aware of the dangers of a new world in which right reading and right breeding were in so intimate an embrace. Far from containing "Jewishness" in the blood of converts and their descendants as its early advocates had promised, the union of flesh and thought, lineage and language threatened to infect all of Spanish culture with "Jewishness." We have reached Rodrigo Manrique's "land of barbarism," in which no one could "possess a smattering of letters without being suspect of heresy, error, and Judaism."

Despite the claims of the logic of lineage, this "Jewishness" of Spain was not the product of "Jewish" ideas spread by "hybrid" lineages of Marranos. It was rather the product of a Christian theology that rooted extremes of spirituality and carnality, of love and enmity, of metaphor and letter, of freedom and tyranny in the one lineage believed to have produced the flesh of God and of his enemies, the lineage of the Jews. Spain was unusual in that the magnitude of its conversions constituted the largest assimilation of European Jews before modernity. These conversions precipitated a precociously self-conscious exploration of the limitations of Christian dialectic to overcome the stubborn particularities of flesh. That exploration focused its anxiety on Judaism and found in Jewish lineages the most powerful expression of the confused heterogeneity of the fallen world. In so doing, it produced the phenomenon it sought to describe.

⁷⁰ Montoro to his horse: Dutton, ID6767, 11CG-995 and 14CG-1074; to Queen Isabel: ID1933, MP2-81. In ID0181, PN10-33, Montoro deploys the "killers of Christ motif" in order to threaten the Corregidor of Córdoba: "Ca el linaje que es ya visto / de grandeza y de valor / que pudo con ihesu xpisto / Podra con corregidor." On *converso* self-mockery see inter alia Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "Jewish 'Fools' of the Spanish Fifteenth Century," *Hispanic Review* 50 (1982), 385-409. On Montoro's poem to Isabel see most recently Barbara F. Weissberger's " 'Deceitful Sects': The Debate about Women in the Age of Isabel the Catholic," in *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees (New York, 2002), pp. 207-35, here pp. 214-19. See also the valuable review essay of E. Michael Gerli, "Antón de Montoro and the Wages of Eloquence: Poverty, Patronage, and Poetry in 15th-C. Castile," *Romance Philology* 48 (1994-95), 265-76.

⁷¹ Dutton, ID0219, PM1-15, ca. 1472.

The scholarship on the history and literature of late-medieval Spain has reproduced this confusion. The lineages of Spain's converts have even come to serve as the foundation for any number of genealogies of European modernity. In 1971, for example, Richard Popkin suggested that the Marranos constituted the "beginning of modernization in Europe."⁷² By the 1990s the claims had become less modest, with Spain's converts causing the "collapse of ecclesiastical society of the Middle Ages and the rise of secularism and modernity." These arguments nourish and are nourished by the stress on the Spanish roots of Spinoza ("the first secular Jew, and as such the first secular man"),⁷³ Montaigne, and others. Today it is common, in fields ranging from intellectual history to psychoanalysis, to discover the roots of skepticism, irony, hybridity, and other concepts believed to be constitutive of modernity, in the flesh of the descendants of the converted Jews of late-medieval Spain.⁷⁴

Discover? As I have shown, the history of the "Jewishness" of each of these terms stretches far out of the sight of those who stumble upon it so innocently with each generation. Indeed these histories were already old when the Marranos were born in the forced conversions of late-fourteenth-century Spain.⁷⁵ There are, of course, important differences between contemporary searchers after "Jewishness" and those of previous centuries. It is now much more common, for example, to give a positive rather than negative value to supposedly Jewish traits like skepticism or hybridity and to the ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological

⁷² "Epicureanism and Scepticism in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Philomathes: Studies and Essays in the Humanities in Memory of Philip Merlan*, ed. Robert B. Palmer and Robert Hamerton-Kelly (The Hague, 1971), pp. 346–57.

⁷³ José Faur, *In the Shadow of History: Jews and Conversos at the Dawn of Modernity* (Albany, N.Y., 1992), here p. 142. Cf. Yirmiyahu Yovel on the "special hybrid phenomenon—perhaps even sui generis," of the Marranos: *Spinoza and Other Heretics, 1: The Marrano of Reason* (Princeton, N.J., 1989), p. 23. Much more discreet are Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's arguments about the nonnormative nature of Marrano Judaism in *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto: Isaac Cardoso. A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics*, Columbia University Studies in Jewish History, Culture, and Institutions 1 (New York, 1971), e.g., p. 44. On the "Jewishness" of Spinoza see, more generally, Manfred Walther, "Spinoza und das Problem einer jüdischen Philosophie," in *Die philosophische Aktualität der jüdischen Tradition*, ed. Werner Stegmaier, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 1499 (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 281–330; and most recently Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison, Wis., 2004).

⁷⁴ See, for example, the special issue of *Pardes* 29 (1999): "Le juif caché." For other arguments that find the origin and transmission of modern subjectivities in Marrano lineages see, for example, Jean-Pierre Winter, *Les errants de le chair: Études sur l'hystérie masculine* (Paris, 1998); and Elaine Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor: The Jewish Presence in French Writing* (New York, 1996). A different juxtaposition of converts and modernity, although equally problematic, is Geoffrey Galt Harpham's "So . . . What Is Enlightenment? An Inquisition into Modernity," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1994), 524–56.

⁷⁵ See, for example, *Coloquio entre un cristiano y un judío*, ed. Aitor García Moreno, Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar 40 (London, 2003), pp. 148–49, on the Jews as rationalist skeptics; 154–55, on the Jews as a hybrid people; and 85, on the Talmud as an ironic joke by the rabbis that the Jews later confused with truth. All of these polemical topoi occur in other Christian sources, but this one (first produced ca. 1370 and copied in the mid-fifteenth century) spans the period that concerns me here.

positions those traits are thought to produce.⁷⁶ This difference, however, should not be overdrawn. It stems from radically differing valuations of skepticism, materialism, and secularism, not from radically different understandings of the transmission of "Jewishness" across time and space. When we turn to these lineages in order to explain the history of our own modernity, we merely achieve the reproduction, in a secularized and unreflective form, of a theology that (to paraphrase Marx) "ceaselessly produces the Jew out of its own entrails" as "the alienated essence of man's labor and life."⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Arguments for the philosophical importance of *converso* hybridity in the development of modernity also have a distinguished scholarly pedigree. Carl Gebhardt provides an early example: "Wenn wir der Geschichte der Marranen einen Sinn geben wollen, so kann er nicht darin gefunden werden, daß sie in einer im ganzen wenig eigenartigen Weise fremde Religion reproducierten. Ihr Erlebnis war, ihre Einmaligkeit in der Geschichte, daß sie zwischen den Welten, zwischen den Glauben standen, in der Spaltung ihres Bewußtseins die ersten Menschen ohne eingeborene Kategorien": *Die Schriften des Uriel da Costa*, Bibliotheca Spinozana 2 (Amsterdam, 1922), p. xxxix (my thanks to Benjamin Lazier for the reference). For a contemporary example, see Klaus W. Hempfer's discussion of "Ambiguität," "Hybridität," and "Komplexitätspotenzierung" in *Möglichkeiten des Dialogs: Struktur und Funktion einer literarischen Gattung zwischen Mittelalter und Renaissance in Italien*, Text und Kontext 15 (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 1–38.

⁷⁷ Karl Marx, "Zur Judenfrage," in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Werke*, 1 (Berlin, 1957; repr. 1981), pp. 347–77, here p. 374.