politics of phonocentrism could not destroy, [that] became the means for the reconstruction of an alternative identitarianism " (p. 105). Similarly, while criticizing the "politics of phonocentrism" (p. 105) in post-Ottoman Turkey for creating "the externalized interiority of the disavowed 'Ottoman,' along with the Republic's women, peasants, fundamentalists, criminals, communists, and ethnolinguistic others, the remainders of the Kemalist revolution" (p. 103), the author seems to consider Islam as the authentic cultural source for building an alternative identity, at the risk of replacing one totalizing ideology with another.

Ertürk's passionate discussion of the violent effects of the Turkish language reforms would have benefited from considering recent historical and anthropological research on the effects of early republican reforms. This scholarship has shown that the effects of the Kemalist reforms in the provinces were not always as radical or complete as previously assumed. Although Ertürk does not locate her work within this evolving scholarship in modern Turkish history, *Grammatology* nevertheless contributes to that scholarship by demonstrating how the works of several writers, journalists, and poets diverged from the idealized language promoted by the state, even when these writers supported aspects of the state's language policies. Overall this is a well researched and carefully written study that specialists as well as graduate students in Turkish literature, Turkish culture and history, comparative literature, literary criticism, and postcolonial studies will find useful in and outside of the classroom.

EYAL CHOWERS, *The Political Philosophy of Zionism: Trading Jewish Words for a Hebraic Land* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Pp. 274. $99.00 cloth.

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In this carefully written book, Eyal Chowers makes the case that while Zionism is born of modernity it differs from other 19th-century nationalisms. His book lingers on late 19th- and early 20th-century thought, placing Zionist conceptions of time, building (by which Chowers means the pouring of concrete and the building of houses, along with the idea of a community that "willfully shapes both space and matter" [p. 121)]), and language in the larger intellectual context of the period. It is an important achievement, as Chowers's patient examination of Zionism's intellectual origins allows us to better understand key aspects of contemporary Zionism. Yet his emphasis on what is particular to Zionism does not always help us understand the general challenges that any democratic and nationalist country such as Israel faces.

While many books on Jewish nationalism focus on European persecution of the Jews, Chowers argues that Zionism cannot be understood without taking into account its temporal imagination. Modernity changed the way people viewed time. Many people (taking their cues from Kant) came to argue that things would get progressively better as time passed. Each generation would advance morally, which also meant that each generation would have an obligation to try to make things better for the next. Although Jews for much of the 19th century were attracted to this idea of progress, after the Dreyfus affair it lost its resonance with many Jews. Chowers argues that what united many of the different kinds of subsequent Zionist thinkers—from Herzl to Ahad Ha'am to Jabotinsky—was a disenchantment with the ideology of progress. Modernity might bring technological progress, they concluded, but this need not entail moral and political progress as well.

Despite the skepticism of some Zionists about moral progress, those migrating to Palestine believed that they were building a new society and a new man, that "history was up for grabs, creating an interval in which innovative narratives could be consciously imagined, formed and

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chosen" (p. 75). Chowers argues that instead of a linear or teleological belief in progress, many Zionists held a semicyclical view of time: "The dangerous present demanded action; the far-away past demanded correction. The present offered only confusion and bafflement; the past, inspiration and direction" (p. 57). Looking upon the ancient past, recovering the ancient land, and reviving the ancient language were all crucial elements of a Zionism that would point to a better future.

For all the importance of the semicyclical imagination, it carried dangers with it as well: it was "equally prone to self-absorption and a shortsightedness toward the other" (p. 59). This imagination pointed inward; its focus on memory and on the past of the group readily pushed others to the margins. Zionism also became enamored with the ability of people to shape their geographic and demographic environments according to their will. The Zionist is the "urgent builder," looking "toward reshaping the human and material worlds according to national aims and plans" (p. 112). Adding to the urgency of Zionism was the sense of "homelessness," of a people alienated from their tradition and language during the 19th century, when Jewish tradition lost much of its role in their lives. Early Zionist thought wanted not only to reconstruct the material world but also to reconstruct human beings. These trends led the Zionists to develop a holistic concept of politics in which the state, civil society, and individuals were seen as profoundly integrated (p. 149).

Chowers focuses on what he sees as unique within Zionism, rarely discussing Zionism as part of a more general nationalist modernity. The Zionists were not the only ones intent on reshaping the material world. The idea of transforming human nature was commonplace among 19th-century socialists, many of whom certainly had an integrated vision of the state, civil society, and individuals. Other nationalist movements were intent on building—think of the Americans and their attitude toward the land. Chowers argues the one problem with Zionism and its unique semicyclical view of time is that it leads one to ignore others, as they lie outside the narrative of one's people. But one wonders if Zionism's inwardness is unique, or a problem that plagues all nationalisms. And in A. D. Gordon, Zionist thinker, we have a thinker who does seem antimodern, who wants the Zionist to "release himself from rationality" and "get back to nature, to space, to the limitless" (p. 137). Here, too, one can wonder if there are similarities with other nationalisms, which often celebrated the simple peasant working the land over the sophisticated urbanite. While Gordon's conception inspired many early Zionists, eventually the modern idea of building took over, as it did in many nationalist movements.

The Zionists were also intent on rebuilding the Hebrew language. Chowers shows us how early Zionists wrestled with this challenge. Other nationalisms transformed language, but "in no other national movement in modernity did the revival of a national language also involve such a complete and swift transfiguration of its theological and ontological status" (p. 156). Tracing how early Zionists, particularly Ha'am and the poet Chaim Bialik, wanted to transform Hebrew is an interesting and important chapter in the Zionist story, but Chowers draws a dubiously tight connection between language and political action, an argument that pervades the last part of his book. The radical change that Hebrew underwent is thus said to have "left the Hebrew language flat and weak, and fostered the Zionist inclination to embrace tangibly oriented politics" (p. 156). Chowers argues that a "democratic language" makes the individual an originator of valid truth claims, something that the revived Hebrew language resists. The important debate in Israel about the occupied territories, for example, has "been stalled for so many years partly because there are no agreed upon foundations on which to conduct this debate" (p. 238).

The strength of this book is the way it presents the ideas that helped transform Zionism into an important and viable political movement. Chowers invites readers to consider how Zionism is both part of and a reaction to modernity. Yet the book may have benefited from

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not focusing so relentlessly on Zionism's unique aspects. The lament of the last part of the book—that the Hebrew language is the cause of current stalled debates in Israel—seems odd from an American perspective. The United States has a closely divided polity, with many stalled debates, yet the English language did not have to unmoor itself from its theological status. We have intractable and persistent debates—about abortion, the role of government, and so on—because people deeply disagree. Language surely matters, but the idea that a certain kind of language is befitting of democracy, and that if only Israel had it the debates within that country would be more productive, is hard to fathom.

This argument overreaches, but does not detract from the richness of the rest of the book. For those who want to wade into late 19th- and early 20th-century discussions about time and progress; for those who want a clear understanding of the role of building in Zionism that continues in Israel to this day; and for those who want to understand how early Zionists wrestled with making Hebrew a modern language, this book has much to offer.

NINA BERMAN, *German Literature on the Middle East: Discourses and Practices, 1000–1989* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2011). Pp. 336. $70.00 cloth.

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Although coming from literary studies, Nina Berman sets out to survey a millennium not only of German discourse on the Middle East but also of German social, political, and economic practice in the region and/or pertaining to it. Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the text is divided into five chapters of about equal length. The first, "Pilgrims, Crusaders, Knights, and Settlers," covers the period from 1000 to 1350 and a main point of it is to show that large numbers of pilgrims went to the Holy Land even before the Crusades. The second chapter, titled the "Conflict with the Ottoman Empire," from 1350 to 1683, the second Ottoman siege of Vienna, focuses on a shift from the religious discourse to one emphasizing cultural difference. The third chapter covers the years from 1683 to 1792, a period characterized as "A Moment of Equilibrium" and distinguished by *Turcomania* and the popularity of other Middle Eastern themes. The fourth chapter, "Empire and Modernization (1792–1945)," shows that a tradition of positive identification with the Middle East existed alongside the typical colonial perspective. The fifth chapter, "The Middle East Within (1945–1989)," points out that beliefs established in earlier periods persist despite intensive economic and political relations between German-speaking and Middle Eastern states and the presence of large numbers of immigrants from the Middle East, especially in the Federal Republic.

Covering such a long period makes it impossible for the study to be based predominantly on primary sources. Instead, Berman provides an extensive survey of existing research findings. Though the survey of the literature is not comprehensive, and not even all publications mentioned in the introduction are used for the discussion in the relevant chapters, the book covers a very impressive range, enabling the reader to get a useful, well-written overview of the research undertaken so far.

The framing is more problematic. Berman explains in the introduction that she intends to demonstrate that in his *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), Edward Said, like other poststructuralists, was wrong to assume the "concurrence of textual discourses and social, political, and economic practices" (p. 6). In contrast, she aims at utilizing *practice theory*, first introduced by Max Weber in his *Economy and Society: The Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff et al. [Berkeley,

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