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Vision of Jewish Education: Theory and Practice. Planning and
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Visions of Jewish Education: Theory and Practice

5-3-01

CONFIDENTIAL

Cherished team members:

The following memo is based on a file I retrieved today. It is labeled “11-00: *Visions of Learning*: To do post-acceptance.” I am so grateful to the Almighty—and to all of you—that I have the occasion to open that file!

Below is my effort to name the tasks I foresee in the months to come. Please contribute whatever I have missed, and I’ll amend this memo accordingly. Is, if I have misconstrued anything because of my experience in trade publishing rather than academic publishing, please let me know.

When we speak and meet, we must decide, on paper, which human being is responsible for each task and what his/her deadline is. Then I will reorganize the memo according to date of deadline, with designated human being noted, and redistribute to each of you.

We have a lot do.

A. Editorial / content

The necessary first step is to assess the merits of the readers’ reports and to decide what we will do about those points that seem compelling, particularly since the reports contradict each other at times.

Hand in hand with our response to the reports is our response to the publisher’s request that we cut approximately 100 pages of text. Keep in mind, as well, when thinking about length, that we will be adding some appendices to the text and perhaps some brief transitional material between sections to help the reader. I’m even willing to revisit the definition of vision—although I may be the only one.

Here’s a question that ought to resonate for any educator committed to the “vision approach.” By what criteria will we decide what’s in and what’s out? As in education itself, one must have a clear vision of the objectives of the book in order to assess what is most necessary and what is superfluous. (Thus, I have suggested the book-as-textbook criterion; see Editorial Memo #1.) Ergo, pedagogically, will you choose abbreviated selections from the same number of sources or fewer sources, using the annotated bibliography to list those we cut?

Of course, no one can predict how a book will be used. But, to paraphrase Rabbi Tarfon, neither can we decline the responsibility to try.

B. Editorial / content: parallel track

While we are working together as a team, I have proposed that I work separately with Seymour to polish and refine the translation chapter. Specifically, this would mean that I would annotate the margins of the chapter's pages and that Seymour and I would schedule frequent telecons so that I could integrate his oral responses into the text. This is how I have worked with most authors, including you, Seymour, on the Ramah essay, which we reviewed together many times before sign-off.

You are free to desist from this task, however, if—upon rereading the chapter—you feel it does what it should. (I have not reread it myself, but I remember feeling that it could be reviewed a few more times to do full justice to the ideas, since it is a linchpin chapter for the theory-practice approach.)

C. Technical requirements

Principle: Although the copyediting department at CUP is supposed to catch anything we miss, and although university presses are bastions of rectitude compared to the fallen standards of trade publishing, we live in an unredeemed world. My policy is that it is far better for us to submit the most polished manuscript we can than to rely on CUP as a safety net for our lapses. A corollary is that it is far better for us to make the decisions than to default and let the press make them on our behalf (for example, on issues such as transliteration). Thus:

1. Permissions

2 kinds: Formal permission must be obtained from each publisher, usually through the subrights department, for any copyright material drawn from a source that is still in print. (For example, even if Is tells us we can use his material in the Scheffler supplement, we nevertheless need the publisher's permission if the material is still in print.)

Once we decide which of the supplementary materials remain in the book, I can ask my assistant, Jennifer, to approach each publisher. But she is working here only until the beginning of August, and I do not know what kind of support I will have after that.

According to the contract, who picks up the tab for any fees imposed by the publishers? And is it the author's job to obtain permissions? (When this is the case, the publisher usually supplies the author with its preferred permission request form and preferred language of acknowledgement.)

Note: Materials in the public domain do not require permission. Some of the older translations Dan used may fall into that category. But I believe England and America have different standards of how many years must pass for material to fall into that category. U.S. laws have been amended in this regard, so we need to check with CUP.

Therefore, Dan: We will need xeroxes of the title page and copyright page of each volume or journal from which you quoted.

I also don't know whether when Dan translated material from Hebrew into English, the copyright holder needs to grant us formal permission to use his translation—and perhaps to approve it as well. I suspect the answer is yes. CUP will be able to help us on this, too, no doubt, but we need to find out.

At my request Dan created a memo, dated 10/12/00, that lists each translated passage in the manuscript, the majority by Dan. In the case of Greenberg supplementary material, for example, Dan translated several. Will G. need to see them?

Dan, please review this memo with Seymour to discuss how to handle Greenberg and Brinker re sign-off of the English you translated. Even if the copyright holder does not have the right to approve of a translation, we may need informal approval from these authors to maintain their good will. Seymour, please assess.

Also, all translated passages must acknowledge the translator clearly and in a consistent fashion.

2nd issue: We were extremely minimalist on our consultation with our authors. Seymour, you will need to take charge of both notifying the authors and gleaning whether they are content to publish as their papers as is or whether they will be very unhappy if they have not had a last look at the work that appears under their name.

Any author could theoretically say: "I want to look at my paper one last time before you publish." (You can be sure I would!) If that needs to happen, it must take place early in this process. Seymour, I leave this matter to you, but there can be no ambiguity about it. We need the good will of all authors.

Each author's paper raises different permission issues:

Twersky's we have discussed. Seymour and Danny need to review the precise status regarding Twersky's final sign-off of each element of his section.

Brinker: Didn't we translate his paper into an English version he has still never reviewed, Dan? Remind me of the status of his sign-off in this matter, as discussed above.

Greenberg: Up to Seymour. Also, Danny, didn't you move G's original footnotes into his supplement, as your e-mail to me of 10/24/00 indicates? Do we need G.'s permission for this?

Meyer: We used the version he published in the *CCAR Journal*, but he still must be notified, and notified of that fact.

Rosenak: I worked with him directly and line-edited his paper at least twice. If I have further suggestions, I'll work with him by e-mail.

***** to Seymour and Dan: In instances when permissions are not formally required but are strategically important, please take accurate and dated notes on any informal approvals you receive orally—and send the notes by e-mail, promptly, to me! It may be too awkward in the case of friendship to ask someone to sign a document, but we should have excellent notes just in case.

Supplementary material written by the authors (as opposed to drawn from other sources, a case I cover above):

Twersky: The publisher or the estate will need to give permission for supplementary materials by T., depending on their status, as above.

For the other 4 authors: We will need permission from their publishers or from them, if they hold copyright, to whatever supplementary materials they authored.

2. Legal reading

For Dan's paper. I know a lawyer in New York, graduate of Ramaz, who does legal readings for *People* magazine and for many publishers. I'm happy to approach her or anyone else. I do not know who picks up the tab for this either: Is it mentioned in the contract? And I do not know if Cambridge routinely undertakes a legal reading even if we do not raise the issue.

It is certainly the publisher's job to notice when such a reading may be required. But it is the author who is legally on the line! (Publishers are usually indemnified, but only up to a certain amount.) I have no reason to believe this is an issue at all, but given that the chapter is based on real people and their comments, it is essential that we decide how we will take care of it, and if we want to have Dan's paper read before we send the manuscript to CUP; if we want to ask CUP about it early on; or draw it to their attention only after submission of the final revised manuscript.

As you likely know, England has much more stringent libel laws than we do. (I don't know about Israel's.) The least predictable people can be affronted when they see themselves rendered in print, so please do not think I'm overreacting.

3. Terminology

- We use "vision" and "conception," as well as "approach" and "view" interchangeably. It is very important to make a decision about this one. We have "conception" alone but also "conception of Jewish education." And we distinguish between an author's "vision/conception" and his "essay." Are we both clear and consistent?
- Check "essay" vs. "paper" for consistency.
- Check use of the term "our project."
- Check for mention of the Mandel Institute to be sure we're historically accurate.

4. Tenses

When we speak of an author's ideas, we often speak of him in the present tense: "Twersky believes..." But when we speak of his activities that were part of the project and took place in real time, we MUST use the past tense, or the text is confusing to the reader. Danny and I agreed, when I edited his introductions, to this approach--present tense for beliefs, past for history or participation in the project—but we need to be sure we were consistent.

5. Footnotes

Format: I hastily changed the format of almost every footnote to make each consistent with the other. But they are not—by a long shot. The footnotes need to be reviewed as an independent copyediting matter, and not by any of us. Terms such as *ibid* and "see below" must be used consistently and appropriately, according to whatever standards obtain for the field of Jewish studies/education/etc. (I have observed in my 7 years here that each academic discipline seems to have its own way of listing sources. And CUP will also have its own, which we should obtain from the press before undertaking this sub-project.) Also, "e.g.," should have a comma after it but doesn't always, etc.

Page references: When the manuscript is complete, we need to fill in the references in the footnotes that currently read: "See p. xxxx."

Placement: I think we left some as endnotes and most as footnotes. Did we have a policy about this or did we decide to leave the decision until now? I think the latter.

6. Hebrew

Font: When will we use Hebrew font? When we will transliterate? My records show that we have Hebrew text in: Meyer paper; Scheffler Jewish education paper; and Fox paper.

Transliteration: Very inconsistent. We need to choose an acceptable model—whether the EJ, *Prooftexts*, or any other—and then apply it. We will also likely have to provide it to CUP. I want to err on the side of contemporary Hebrew usage rather than the very formal 19th century "Science of Judaism" Near-Eastern-studies model. The footnotes are egregiously inconsistent. Also, which transliterated words or terms are italicized and which are not? See note on "translation of Hebrew/Jewish terms" below re our assumptions about the reader. Someone will have to go through the manuscript and implement our chosen model, as well as:

Style sheet: Whoever works on the transliteration issue will need to create a "style sheet" that lists the way we spell each Hebrew term in English, so that the Cambridge copyeditor can check our internal consistency against our own style sheet.

Translation of Hebrew/Jewish terms: Inconsistent. Sometimes we assume the reader is quite literate. Sometimes we assume he/she is a scholar/practitioner. But sometimes we assume the

reader doesn't know Hebrew. We did decide that the book was for "insiders," but we need to decide just how inside. If we imagine that there will be seminars for lay-professional teams in which the book will be used as a source, we will make this call differently than if we imagine seminars mostly for senior professionals.

7. Acknowledgements

I have a note on an e-mail from Dan of 10/30/01 that we should consider adding to the current preface an acknowledgement to the educators who participated in the deliberations. (We thank the scholars but not the educators.) Dan framed some text that I have in my file. We should also, in the appendix material still to come, list the educators who participated. This is not only appropriate but also politic!

8. Epigraph

Do we want one or more? I proposed some in 1999, which I offer below. But we could choose a Hebrew/Jewish source—or none. (And yes, I know the Twersky quote is in the body of the book, but we could still use it here.)

"Education is at once the most intimate and the most far-reaching of human endeavors. Through education we recall the words of our parents and touch the hearts and minds of children. Through education we interpret nature, build civilizations, and construct the worlds of art, science, and culture. Education deserves our closest attention and most sustained reflection. It merits the best efforts of thought we can supply."

"It is impossible to overestimate the importance of education in traditional Jewish thought. Learning is central to Judaism, a religious duty, a source of ultimate meaning, a form of worship."

Israel Scheffler

"Our goal should be to make it possible for every Jewish person, child or adult, to be exposed to the mystery and romance of Jewish history, to the enthralling insights and special sensitivities of Jewish thought, to the sanctity and symbolism of Jewish existence, and to the power and profundity of Jewish faith."

Isadore Twersky

9. Dedication

God? Mothers? Spouses? No one?

10. Format

We created the format of typefaces in the New York office. Although Mindy and I did our best to be consistent, it is a large manuscript with many kinds of titles, sub-heads, etc. And so there are still minor mistakes. The sub-heads are not consistently laid out; we sometimes omitted upper-case letters in the small caps typeface, etc. Justification is also inconsistent. (According to my notes, some endnotes are justified right and some are not.)

Again, CUP's designer will mark up the book according to his/her chosen design, but we should be consistent so that he/she can be.

11. Necessary appendices to the manuscript, which I am not willing to forfeit

- List of all participants in the project, including Jewish educators (as above) and those in general education who contributed to the project: Dan. (Added pressure: Anyone we omit will not forgive us.)
- Chronology of the project: Key dates from the project's inception until the preparation of the book: Dan.
- Selected annotated bibliography for each author: Dan.
- Index: According to the contract, whose responsibility is this? Who does it and who pays for it? The index can be undertaken as soon as we have a clean manuscript: If we can pay for it and to hire an "insider" who knows the field, we will get a much better index, in my opinion. (For example, we may want to index conceptual terms such as "translation" and "theory to practice," an idea that may not occur to the uninitiated.) Also, all names, since most readers turn to the index first to see if they themselves are listed! Is, please decide how we should handle this matter!)

12. Marketing

LONG before the pub date, we need to think about how we will introduce this book to the Jewish education world--and to other worlds. We need to think well in advance about key opportunities such as the Association of Jewish Studies meeting in Boston each December; the annual Koret Prize for best work of Jewish scholarship (\$10,000! won by David Ruderman this year); etc.

If we don't plan all of this thoughtfully and early, we will lose the opportunities. *It would be unworthy of our dreams for Jewish education if we let modesty or unconscious ambivalence sabotage this necessity.*

Well, visionaries, I am exhausted from compiling this not-exhaustive list. What have I forgotten?

Last note: It is probably imprudent for any one of us to act on these points, especially re the authors, before we discuss policy as a group.

Nessa

Nessa Rapoport

To: Seymour Fox; Daniel Marom; Israel Scheffler
Subject: The ultimate memo



Compr memo
5-3-01.doc

Here is today's work: as comprehensive a memo as I could create.

What I need to know: Telecons for next week: One, more, when?

What you need to know (which some of you already know):

Reaching me from now until we break out the champagne:

If I am in the office: E-mail is fine, as is phone. I usually arrive after 9:30 and stay until 6.

If I am not in the office: When my assistant is in, she reads me incoming e-mail several times a day. If she's away, such as next week for the JCCA seminar, the indispensable Mindy will often help me out. But if you really need to reach me, leave me voicemail AT WORK, because wherever I am, all over the world, I check my voicemail several times a day. And don't forget to tell me when and where to reach you, taking the time differences into account.

Fridays: I try not to come in, although when working on the book I was here both often and longest. Again, Jennifer will read me e-mail. And I check my voicemail often. (If you Israelis send me e-mail on Thursday, I sometimes do not receive it until Friday.)

Critical to know: I deliberately do NOT have e-mail anywhere but at work. Thus, if it's an American holiday and you're writing to me from Israel, I will not be reading your message until I return to the office. (Most people do not adopt this policy and are available on e-mail 24/6--or 24/7, if they do not observe Shabbat! I am always happy they are--because I can write to them and they'll read it at 3 in the morning (example: Dina Roemer), but I'm equally happy I'm not. I am so compulsive that when I used to receive e-mail outside the office I dropped everything to answer it.)

Also, I do not hear my home voicemail until the evening.

Davar acher: Any school day morning I can be called from 6:30 am on. (If, however, you mistakenly wake me up at 6:30 on a public holiday, I cannot be responsible for the consequences. Although chances are that Doria R. Kahn has beat you to the punch.)

Why am I telling you all this? Because we may need rapid communication on this issue or that: Save this memo!

Happy reading.

Nessa

Visions of Jewish Education: Theory and Practice

Additions to NR Memo: 5-10-01

1. Assignments:

June 7: The team will exchange annotated Table of Contents by e-mail attachment with provisional recommended cuts, changes and additions.

Immediately: SF and DM will notify remaining author/s of acceptance.

2. Editorial issues raised by readers' reports:

Principle: Where reports contradict, Reader B's report to be given greatest weight.

Consider: Proportion: Greater balance between materials on theory and on practice (B)

Chapter 2: Thinking of Chapter 2 as a "how to" for communities (C)

Order of papers: Scheffler/Rosenak (C)

Twersky: Do we need all these materials? Are they in the right sequence? (C)

Supplements: "Of particular importance here are the notes bearing on the discussions of the papers with other participants, educationists and others." (C)

Add: Bios of writers (A)

Translation of Hebrew terms (C)

Diagram that compares and contrasts authors' visions to help readers (A)

3. Issues raised in telecon today that are not listed on previous memos

Editorial: Title (Seymour)

Translation: Team members to assess the flow of the translations unit by unit. Do we need to commission any new translations of these materials? (Nessa)

Possible expansion: Reference to Mandel/ Mandel Foundation role in preface. Seymour's chapter. Discussion of feminism and post-modernism by IS. (Is)

Supplements: Have we offered a sufficient rationale for each unit of the supplement we choose to include, so that the reader understands precisely why it's in the book? (Nessa)

Option of supplementary material on MF web site (Nessa)

Some principles for deciding how to cut supplements: If it's not there, will anyone miss it? (Is). Is it expanding the paper into a conception? (Retain) Or is it offsetting the reader's inability to retrieve easily the supplementary material we find valuable? (Cut in favor of footnote + web option). (Nessa)

Administrative: Scheduling of Cambridge trips

Scheduling of NY meetings between SF and NR



Nessa Rapoport

To: Seymour Fox; Israel Scheffler; Daniel Marom
Subject: Dear Visionaries



Memo addition
5-10-01.doc

Today is my last formal and complete day in the office until Tuesday May 22. I will be in and out next week as I work on the bar mitzvah. (I do know I'll be in on Tuesday from 3 to 5, for example.)

Therefore, as soon as we completed our call I wrote up my notes to share with you. They consist of:

1. Assignments: There are 2 resulting from our call.
2. Editorial issues raised by the readers' reports: These are my idiosyncratic notes on what resonated in the reports for me. They are not normative!
3. Issues raised in the telecon. Self-explanatory.

I add my customary footnote: If anyone thinks I missed anything, please write to me, as I am the dictator's handmaiden in recording our observations and decisions.

Note that whenever in the past I have made this offer to you, no one has actually responded. However, the acceptance of this book allows us each to reform his/her evil ways. (Thus, I have mentally replaced the leadership model of Nessa-the-dominatrix in favor of Isy-the-dictator, which I think will be salutary for us all.)

So do not hesitate to annotate these notes. Remember, what is not written down by the official record-keeper is less likely to be considered in our meetings.

By the way, I will be reading e-mail next week, through Jennifer.

For your files: This attachment is the third of the memos you should place in your Cambridge file.

1. E-mail from me called "Editorial memo # 1" of 4-26-01.
2. Confidential memo of 5-3-01.
3. This attachment.

N.

**Reader's Report: Visions of Learning:
Jewish Education in Theory and Practice**

Appropriately, the primary questions regarding *Visions of Learning: Jewish Education in Theory and Practice* surround the text's vision: does the text seek to be a primer on Jewish education in general? or does it merely wish to portray disparate and divergent points of view on the question of what it means to be an 'educated Jew'? what body of people comprises its intended readership? does it intend to provide an extensive introduction to and background for contemporary debates within Jewish education or assume that its readers already have a basic understanding of the topic? Any editing of *Visions of Learning* needs to start by thoroughly re-evaluating these fundamental questions and providing readers of the text with a clear and cogent sense of the text's underlying vision. While *Visions* may function as a textbook and primary resource for Jewish educators, making it implausible to construct the text along the lines of a single, central vision, it nonetheless must be able to answer the very questions it poses: why and how it is important to translate the experiences of a diverse group of educators into a vision of the 'educated Jew' in 2001.

I think the question of how to translate these viewpoints, how to communicate in a language, or discourse, that appeals to *haredi* and secular Jews alike; to Hebrew and English (not to mention Ladino and Yiddish) speakers; and to traditional and nontraditional educators exists at the heart of *Visions*, and proves an amazingly fruitful locus for further inquiry and evaluation. In the various essays in this volume, as well as the introductory, concluding, and

supplementary material in this text, the reader feels this point alluded to, but often veiled beneath a cloak of rhetoric. I think that the notion of translation could be dealt with directly and used as a frame for synthesis of the diverse materials and viewpoints in this volume. For instance, Seymour Fox's footnoted joke about the vernacular of Judaism becoming completely foreign and unintelligible due to a tiny shift in material conditions -- in this case the changing of ownership of a restaurant -- would be an ideal way to begin the textbook: adding a much-needed dose of levity and particularity to what could easily fall into becoming a catalogue of generalities about what it means to be an 'educated Jew.'

Structurally, the text suffers from its excess of supplementary material. While I certainly think that some amount of background information is necessary to fully understand the essays, the sheer information overload of some of the supplements distracts from the pieces which they frame. As a reader, I found myself overwhelmed by the fact that the supplements were often two or three times as long as the essays on which they were meant to comment. In particular, the extremely long quotations included in many of the supplements disrupted the flow of the text, making it choppy and disjointed. If there is a need to include such long passages from the works of other authors, it might be best to introduce an appendix into the back of the text which would allow interested readers access to primary sources without disrupting the flow of the prose itself.

Have we thought about making any essay the 'anchor' piece for the rest of the works, or, at least, grouping them so that they are more united thematically? For example, we could juxtapose the work of Twersky with that of a much less

traditional thinker in order to frame the debate at the heart of *Visions*. Or, we could use Scheffler's piece, which is one of the most well-written and –organized essays in the volume, as the first in the text. His essay uniquely synthesizes the idea of what it means to be an 'educated Jew' with its practical, educational corellary.

Comments on Individual Chapters:

Introduction –

The introduction is generally good. However, it needs extensive line edits. Often, it gets bogged down in awkward sentence constructions. Particularly in the beginning of the work, there are a number of strange, hanging clauses and prepositional phrases that made the text less enjoyable to read.

Also, in line with Seymour Fox's Ramah pamphlet, it might be appropriate to begin the book on a slightly more dramatic note – e.g. "the essence of Jewish life is experiment..." or something of the like. As a reader, I wanted to begin the text with some impression of the visionary urgency of all the authors who contributed to the work.

PART 1

Too many long quotations break up the flow of this chapter. In addition, there are far too many organizational details about the planning and implementation of the 'educated Jew' project and not enough concrete probing of ideas. Mid-way through page 20, the writer finally begins to incorporate more descriptive depth, increasing the piece's clarity and focus. Still, however, there exists too much allusive reference to 'general issues' in Jewish education and not enough cogent

introduction of the thematic content of the text. There is repeated, and seemingly random, use of the definite article throughout this writing, which further adds to the sense of general abstruseness in the text's opening chapters. In general, this section needs to be pared down and its focus clarified.

Twersky, Chapter 4: This piece often appears too oriented to ordination, setting out ideas along numeric lines -- the three aspects of Torah, the three parts of *hergel* -- which can become redundant to the reader. In general, however, this piece serves the purpose of presenting the traditional view of Jewish education against which the other essayists contrast themselves. More extensive edits included in manuscript text...

Brinker, Chapter 5: I think it's good to place Brinker next to Twersky, both because he presents a more secular portrayal of Judaism as part and parcel of a notion of national identity, and because he situates part of the debate over Jewish education in an Israeli context. The supplement to Brinker's writing is far too extensive; there is no need to include such long quotes when Marom already provides a synopsis of Brinker's thinking.

Greenberg, Chapter 6: Greenberg presents an existential approach to the question of why Jewish education retains such importance in the contemporary landscape. I think this addition to the volume is very important and supplies a partial answer to questions of where universalism and particularity meet in Judaism. The translation of this piece seems problematic, however. There are some awkward sentences and hanging clauses throughout the essay. I also think that Greenberg's notion of the symbolic could be more extensively explored

in the text of the essay; Marom's supplement to the piece has to go too far in trying to explain the author's point about symbols, which further clutters the already dense supplementary material.

Meyer, Chapter 7: Meyer's piece is an important one in the text, as it offers a voice in support of the inclusion of secular liberalism in the notion of what it means to be an 'educated Jew.' The material on the history of Reform Judaism in this chapter, while perhaps too extensive, is very helpful to the text. It sets up a contrast between Meyer's work and that of the other denominationalists in *Visions*. In addition, it is one of the few essays in the volume that is situated historically, in this case, as arising out of the tradition of Reform Judaism in America. As a reader, I found this very interesting and a much-needed addition to the text in order to make it practically applicable, as well as theoretical.

Scheffler, Chapter 8: Scheffler's piece provides a great introduction to secular educational practices. Locating the places where these practices and traditionally Jewish educational methods can meld and diverge, Scheffler's pieces provide an anchor in *Visions*. His essay begins to answer the question of 'where do we go from here,' i.e. how we can utilize other educational models while still maintaining the unique Jewishness of our discourse in building a future for Jewish education. He also manages to elucidate how deeply embedded learning and teaching are within the Jewish tradition. By showing the way in which Jewish educational practices are a necessary supplement to secular education, Scheffler paints a more hopeful picture for the Jewish educational future than do some of the other authors. As he writes, "The purposes of Jewish

education differ wholly from those of public education. These purposes are neither civic, nor individualistic, nor utilitarian. Viewed in relation to the pupil, they are: to initiate the Jewish child into the culture, history, and spiritual heritage of the Jewish people, to help the child to learn and face the truth about Jewish history, identity, and existence, to enhance his or her dignity as a Jewish person, and to enable the child to accept, and to be creative in, the Jewish dimension of life" (372).

Rosenak, Chapter 9: Rosenak's essay proves a good choice for the final piece in Part 2. His essay focuses on the commonalities of vision amongst Jewish educators. It's an important piece in the text because it seeks a simple approach to uniting disparate visions of Jewish education. It seems that Marom tries to build on this supradenominational approach in his concluding essay.

Most of the problems in Part 2 of the text arise in the essays' supplementary sections. I've included extensive potential excisions and line edits in my copy of the manuscript. The numerous long, sometimes multi-page, quotes in these sections need to be heavily edited in order to keep the supplements from becoming unduly repetitive. Is it possible to include some of the material in the supplements in the briefer introductions to each chapter?

Part 3

Fox, Chapter 10: Although there is the occasional, jarring awkwardness in Fox's prose, his chapter is one of the best-written and -presented in the volume. I think he, unlike many of the other writers, clearly evokes the text's fundamental issue

of educational translation in his piece. Translations of various kinds lie at the heart of *Visions*, but most of the authors only allude to the fact that envisioning Jewish education of any kind necessitates myriad translations: from Hebrew to English and back; from America to Israel and back; from religious to secular education and back; etc. He directly addresses the question of how the 'language' of Jewish education interacts with the 'languages' of the greater culture in which it exists. His example of the different linguistic meanings of the words 'mouse' and 'windows' for people born before and after the computer age proves a particularly apt metaphor for the process of dialectical conversion and communication that informs the teacher-student relationship, as well as the process of putting educational theory into practice.

Marom, Chapter 11: This chapter is seminal to the 'vision' of this text. Without Marom's explication of how the ideals of Jewish education can be expressed in a 'real' context, the book doesn't attain its goal of showing how the disparate visions of various Jewish educators can be synthesized into some kind of praxis. I think Marom's chapter is well-written; it has a more creative narrative structure than the other, more traditional pieces in the volume. However, he tends to belabor his point and become redundant in certain parts of the chapter. For instance, his repeated emphases on Magnes' "readiness for change" early in the piece seem purposeless and disconnected from his larger point about putting educational visions into practice. This chapter needs to more explicitly comment on the other essays in the collection. It is completely different in style and

content from the previous essays; there must be a clear reason for this uniqueness. This piece should tie together the threads of the other essays by clearly underlining ways in which specific educational ideas of Twersky and Scheffler and Greenberg and Meyer play out in an educational community. While Marom's details about the structure of the Magnes School are interesting, they are often superfluous and seem more like literary flourishes than facts designed to hammer home the text's intended point about the role of vision in Jewish education. Marom provides far too much information about Magnes' internal politics and the internecine process of creating a written constitution for the educational institution. While he is no doubt trying to make a point about the importance of behind-the-scenes process in Jewish education, he never takes us into the classroom, where we can see the results of all these marathon planning sessions and denominational battles. I wondered while reading this piece if it would be better transformed into a shorter epilogue, directly commenting on the former pieces. At the same time, I truly enjoyed this section and wouldn't want to make too many unnecessary cuts in its length.

It seems that Marom's point in this section is the need for educational institutions to engage in a perpetual process of self-inquiry and – evaluation. At one point he writes, "The immediate purpose of all this activity was to generate a resonance between ideas and practice in as many contexts and with as many players at Magnes as possible. What emerged could not yet be translated into a plan of action. Rather, I wanted to establish the groundwork for more serious and systematic inquiry into the aims of Magnes" (550). I think it might help

Marom to begin his piece by highlighting the uniquely Jewish spirit of such inquiry. He might suggest that this process of systematic evaluation and constant questioning of goals and aims is the true place where the visions of a more Orthodox scholar such as Twersky and a Reform rabbi like Meyer unite. In this singularly Jewish pursuit of incessant self-interrogation, the reader can simultaneously find the seeds of Twersky's more classical Jewish tradition, replete with its almost-Socratic system of call and response, and Meyer's more 'modern' vision of Reform Judaism.

As a reader, I sought such synthesis from Marom's piece. Although this book functions in part as a textbook of sorts and therefore needn't falsely unify its essays under the rubric of a central thesis, it needs to answer the question of why Jewish education is an important arena for debate in 2001. Is the purpose of this text merely to showcase the works of great contemporary thinkers in Jewish education? Or, is it designed to explicate why the questions that their thinking poses are necessary to explore? Daniel Marom's piece must begin to answer these questions.

The question of trans-denominationalism that Marom poses towards the end of *Visions* (p. 554) proves an important one. By suggesting that the Magnes School can transcend denominational conflict around the *tefillah* curriculum, Marom emphasizes the unifying ideal behind *Vision*: that inter-denominational conflict can be resolved through a collective agreement on goals. He writes that "Slowly there emerged the sense that Magnes was an 'educational denomination' in its own right..." (555). This sense that the self-sustaining context of an

educational institution can act as an ideal experimental testing ground to distill what is central to being an 'educated Jew' proves an important component of *Visions*, and one that Marom should not bog down in too many organizational details.

Talking about how to transcend denominationalism, Marom further writes "At first, people seemed to be thinking about the *tefilla* curriculum in terms of satisfying those in the Magnes community with various denominational commitments to issues of text, gender and authority" (554). Marom's discussion of these 'denominational commitments to issues of text, gender and authority' points out one of *Visions*' flaws. *Vision* doesn't portray the dynamic landscape of contemporary Judaism. Where are the voices of women and less centralized Jewish figures in this text, individuals who could inject added life into this volume much as they have in the secular academic world?

As one reader pointed out, there is a sense that this text could have been written in 1970 or 1980 just as easily as today. I think it is important to emphasize the larger cultural importance of the essays in this volume, the fact that they answer to a particular cultural malaise and pursuit of authenticity that is certainly not unique to Jews in the year 2001. I don't think emphasis on this point would undermine the clear sense that the visions the authors in this volume pose are definitively Jewish ones, but instead would merely locate the book more firmly in its time and place.

With this thought in mind, it might be beneficial to include more extensive biographical material about the essayists, vignettes that would explain what led

these authors to their views. There is no reason why this text cannot address the fact that these thinkers came out of a particular place and time in Jewish thought. In fact, one might pose this particularity –the fact that all these authors are males educated in a singular era of Jewish education – as exactly what allows these writers to offer a potential antidote to some of the problems inherent to so-called ‘post-modern’ thinking. For, despite *Visions*’ editorial needs, it is a book with a great deal of life and potential. In every way, it fills an unique niche in Jewish scholarship, bringing together powerful and disparate educational voices. I think it is the right time for a book like this one to be published. It speaks with the authority of Jewish tradition, while at the same time suggesting a way to translate Jewish education into the future.

