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From Jewish Sensibility to Messianism: The Jewish Perspective of Ernst Bloch's Philosophy

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Abstract: Ernst Bloch, as an important German-Jewish philosopher of the 20th century, has long seen the Jewish dimension of his thought overlooked in academia. This paper examines Bloch's Jewish identity and his unique interpretation of the messianic concept, revealing how Jewish Sensibility permeates his utopian philosophy and eschatology. Growing up in Germany at the turn of the century, Bloch's intellectual formation was influenced by Zionism, gradually breaking free from the constraints of Enlightenment and Bildung rationality and turning toward a messianism imbued with eschatological overtones. In Bloch's philosophy, messianism manifests in three key traits: dialectical unity (restorative and utopian impulses), a catastrophic eschatology, and an anarchist tendency. These characteristics shape his ontology of "not-yet-being" (Noch-Nicht-Sein) and revolutionary utopianism, which emphasizes the redemption of a new world through the destruction of the old order. Bloch's conception of the Messiah not only critiques capitalism and the Enlightenment notion of progress but also highlights human agency and emancipatory potential within the Jewish tradition. This paper argues that the trajectory from Jewish Sensibility to Messianism is central to understanding Bloch's thought, demonstrating how Jewish tradition profoundly influences modern critical theory in the tension between hope and reality.

Key Words: Bloch, Jewish Sensibility, Messianism, Utopianism, Eschatology