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Rosenzweig Jahrbuch
Rosenzweig Yearbook

Carvalho | Meir | Wiese [Hrsg.]

Transzendenz und Offenbarung

Transcendence and Revelation

VERLAG KARL ALBER



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Preface / Vorwort

The Rosenzweig Congress in Coimbra, Portugal in December 16-17, 2021 celebrated the centenary of Rosenzweig's *Star*. Notwithstanding the difficulties caused by Covid-19, more than twenty scholars participated in the conference, most of them in person, a few virtually. The present volume contains the papers presented at the Congress. Moreover, we are happy to publish here the English translation of Rosenzweig's article "Globus", realized by Malcolm Goldman and initiated by Martin Zwick. At the end of this volume, the reader may enjoy Frank Hahn's impressions of the Rosenzweig Congress in Frankfurt which took place in July 2022.

The Proceedings of the Convention in Coimbra

Many articles compare between Rosenzweig and other thinkers. Four articles deal with the relationship between Rosenzweig and Emmanuel Levinas. One article discusses Rosenzweig and Isaac Breuer, another one is on Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem.

In a most precious article on this subject, dedicated to the memory of Heinz-Jürgen Görtz, Myriam Bienenstock comments upon what is frequently mentioned as Levinas's debt towards Rosenzweig and brings to these common insights refined and necessary nuances. She specifies that Levinas's denunciation of totalitarianism is indebted to Hannah Arendt and to Karl Löwith's *Meaning of History*. To Hans Ehrenberg Rosenzweig owed the introduction of an eschatological dimension in the philosophy of history. In a further reflection, Bienenstock argues that whereas Rosenzweig highlighted love in the Jewish tradition, Levinas worked with the idea of separation. Prudently criticizing Buber's symmetry in the dialogue, Levinas equated "separation" with *qedusha*, in opposition to Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige* and to Hegel's negative view on the Jewish "separation". Finally, Bienenstock brings Levinas's "love" and "transcendence" in relation with "proximity": the Other is approached as separated. In

ethical nearness to the Other, she concludes, Levinas comes closer to Cohen than to Rosenzweig.

Edmundo Balsemão Pires also deals with Rosenzweig and Levinas. He approaches both philosophers as a specialist in the theory of society. He argues that the notion of a “Jewish-Christian” society hides a problematic Christian view of Jews as potential Christians. He reflects on Rosenzweig’s decision to “remain a Jew.” Rosenzweig affirmed the Jewish singularity in society and deemed that the Jewish existence was anti-pagan, whereas Christians were running the risk of paganism. Balsemão Pires argues that Levinas continues Rosenzweig’s (and Buber’s) socialisation of religion. At the same time, he points to the limitations of Rosenzweig’s and Levinas’s view on the social nature of religion, given their quasi-reduction of the social to the personal and their lack of properly situating the source of the religious code in the evolution of modern society, of the liberal state and of today’s tolerance.

Karl S. Sen Gupta deems that, in contrast with the immovable and almighty God of the Biblical-classical synthesis, Rosenzweig and Levinas develop a non-ontotheological approach of God, who limits himself/herself for the sake of humankind. Their understanding of the divine *kenosis* makes theodicy problematic as the attempt to reconcile evil with a perfect God.

Jacob Levi studies the relation between immanence and transcendence in the *Star* and in *Totality and Infinity*. He explains how Levinas continues and radicalizes Rosenzweig’s critique of totality and his notion of transcendence. Following Derrida’s remark on Levinas’s renewal of empiricism and its inversion “by revealing it to itself as metaphysics,” he deems (with Stéphane Mosès) that Levinas’s “ex-cendence” of being as disclosed in the face of the other is an adaptation of Rosenzweig’s “radical empiricism” with its openness to the transcendent. Levi also compares between Rosenzweig’s Gyges and Levinas’s Gyges.

Ido Ben Harush juxtaposes Rosenzweig and Breuer and compares between their concepts of miracle. Considering Breuer’s critique of theories that naturalize and neutralize the miracle, he argues that Rosenzweig fails to make the miracle an actual lived experience (*Erlebnis*) and that Breuer’s understanding of miracle as beyond cognition and revealing God’s sovereignty could correct this flaw. However, such a rectification would come at the expense of Rosenzweig’s concept of miracle (*Zeichen*, “sign”) as pivotal in the structure of the *Star*, separating and linking philosophy as prophecy and theology as fulfillment.

In a fine piece of research, Pierfrancesco Fiorato deals with Scholem's discussion of Rosenzweig's theory of redemption. He analyses Scholem's critique of Rosenzweig's anticipation of redemption in Jewish life. For Scholem, the category of anticipation rather characterizes Christian doctrines, whereas Justice as a central concept of Judaism is absent in the *Star*. The conceptual framework of Fiorato's article is formed by Scholem's opposition between anticipation and postponement. For Scholem, the neutralization of the divine judgement takes place in delay. In the *Star*, the Jewish festivals of redemption imply a spiritualization of the divine judgement through anticipation. Anticipation and postponement are, therefore, forms of neutralization which relate differently to the future.

Seven articles focus on the *Star* itself. In memory of Norbert Samuelson, who was Honorary President of our Society, Stanislaw Krajewski writes an article in which he reconsiders the issue of the role of mathematics in the *Star*, mainly in discussion with the positions of Norbert Samuelson and Matthew Handelman on this topic. As is well known, Rosenzweig attributes a limited function to the mathematical tool and uses further a grammatical and liturgical organon. In his contribution, Krajewski proposes to solve the problem arising from contradictory opinions regarding Rosenzweig's (and Cohen's) use of mathematics by claiming that mathematics is essential in the *Star* in the context of discovery, but not in the context of justification. In his view, Rosenzweig left mathematical truth behind and rendered it inessential in his messianic theory of knowledge which asks for the verification of truth in daily life.

Cláudio Alexandre S. Carvalho's article creatively combines Rosenzweig's New Thinking and therapy. He reads the *Star* from a therapeutic perspective, basing himself upon *Büchlein* that presents the *Star* as a health recovery. In his interdisciplinary and original study, Carvalho shows how Rosenzweig's therapeutic path inspires Buber and Levinas, who emphasized the transformational potential of conversation and the call of the other who urges one to respond. He expounds on Rosenzweig's thought as relevant for rabbis, pastors, educators and therapists.

Leonardo Sandonà offers a Christian dialogical view on the *Star*. He reflects on Rosenzweig's philosophy of history as a philosophy *for* history, on his view of redemption as commitment to history and on his negative theopolitics. In reference to Jürgen Moltmann's theology of hope, he criticizes "immanent eschatologies" and perceives a promise in history that asks for a mission of love. The world is created with meaning and the human being's task is to lead it to fulfillment against a totalitarian

politics and the soft-totalitarianism of well-being. Sandonà also refers to *Globus*, where Rosenzweig deems that the greatest battles for the definition of an authentic idea of the world still lie ahead.

Eugenio Muineloz Paz shows how language and love in Rosenzweig's phenomenology of revelation are the domains where immanence and transcendence interact. Against Idealism and following biblical anthropology, Rosenzweig does not dissociate eros and agape in his discussion of revelation. Love in Rosenzweig's perspective is above eros and agape. Revelation of love is the divine address to an always specific, free human being who is commanded to love and to become an answerable human being. Such a revelation does not annul the human condition and makes God himself vulnerable. The "bi-polar" revelation supposes the interdependence of God and the human being and a parallelism between interhuman love and God's love for the human.

Gesine Palmer examines the passage in the *Star* where Rosenzweig posits that Judaism maintains itself by subtraction and by the formation of ever new remnants, permanently stripping itself from non-Jewish elements. In this "subtraction-passage," she argues, Rosenzweig performs a self-othering in front of the Christian other without conquering the other or becoming assimilated. His other differs from Cohen's other as someone with limited rights and from Levinas's other with illimited claims. Rosenzweig others himself and his people by separating Jews as the holy remnant, waiting on the shore, whereas the Christian other goes along with the stream. In this way, the otherness or strangeness of the Jew in the *Star* allows all others to be other.

In a creative new reading of Rosenzweig, Francesco Paolo Ciglia argues that Rosenzweig formulated an innovative approach to secularization. He deems that, in Rosenzweig's philosophy, Greek pagan mythology and the biblical revelation are "meta-" or "trans-religious," which suits our secular age. Greek paganism provided him with an ontology of difference, whereas the biblical revelation needed this ontology to relate what is separated, in creation, revelation and redemption. Already in a diary fragment of 1906 Rosenzweig clearly distinguished the awareness of God (*Gottesgefühl*) from religion itself. In the *Star* again, Rosenzweig does not write on religions. Greek paganism intuitively understood the different separated elements of reality: the mythical God, the plastic cosmos and heroic man. The second part of the *Star* shows how these irreducible elements are related in the experience of daily life. In the third part, the eternal life of the one people and the eternal way of Christians, who reach out to pagans complement each other, but the eternal truth is

beyond them. In the *New Thinking*, Rosenzweig explains that Judaism and Christianity are not presented in the *Star* as “founded” (*gestiftet*): they are not closed “religions,” but a fact (*Tatsache*) and an event (*Ereignis*), open to the large field of the daily human condition. In Rosenzweig’s meta-religious perspective, Ciglia aptly concludes, God did not create religions, but the world.

Emiline Durand offers us a refined reflection on Rosenzweig’s *erfahrende Philosophie* and his *Sprachdenken* in pointing to the novelty of this philosophy, moored in and oriented to experience. First, she explains how Rosenzweig develops a new concept of experience in the *Star*: in the lived experience of revelation, relations that constitute temporality become clear. In a second stage, she proposes to understand Rosenzweig’s philosophy of experience concretely from his teaching in the *Lehrhaus* and from *Büchlein*, where he retranslates philosophical problems in the language of experience. Finally, referring to Rosenzweig’s *Halevibuch* and to his use of “Jewish words” in the formulation of his New Thinking, she explores the relation between language as the place of experience and the renewal of philosophy.

Two articles deal with Rosenzweig and education. Monika D. Kaminska explores Rosenzweig’s thinking on the living moment in the dialogical and educational context. She refers to a few Jewish thinkers who -like Rosenzweig- contest the primacy of epistemology and of conceptual knowledge. Eliezer Berkovits in his “Was ist der Talmud” (1938) explains that what is important is not the mere understanding of the Talmudic text, but rather the open dialogue on what the text means in the living context. Levinas too with his philosophy of the Other gives priority to proximity to the Other above mere cognition: in the ethical relationship, a teaching stems from the face of the Other. Kaminska also refers to my interreligious theology and my concept of “trans-difference” in which undeniable differences are thought together with bridging and communicating. She concludes that learning and education take place in an open dialogue in the present moment.

Naomi Tanaka explores the relationship between Jewish education and Messianism in Rosenzweig’s thought. She describes his conception of the Jewish people as elected to testify to God, who started a dialogue with them and planted eternal life in their midst. God’s existence had not to be proved but to be verified (*bewährt*), just as marriage is verified by marriage *life*. Rosenzweig referred to the saying of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Midrash Psiqta de-Rav Kahana: “If you testify to Me, then I shall be God, and if you are not testifying to Me, I will so-to-say

not be God.” In *The Builders*, he explained to the participants in the *Lehrhaus* that one testifies to the divine existence through following the divine commandments. Tanaka concludes that for Rosenzweig Jews must continue making God true and real by realizing the unity of mankind: in his Messianism Jews maintain hope in a much-divided world through dialogue with others.

All the chapters in this Volume were blind reviewed. They benefited from the scientific and linguistic revision by members of the Board and of the Scientific Committee of the IRS. Thanks to all those who were involved in the revisions and especially to Cláudio Alexandre S. Carvalho, who coordinated the entire process.

Rosenzweig’s “Globus”

This Yearbook contains the English translation of Rosenzweig’s “Globus. Studien zur weltgeschichtlichen Raumlehre.” Martin Zwick instigated the idea of this translation. His material and spiritual support for this project made it possible that many English speaking Rosenzweig researchers will benefit from this excellent translation by Malcolm Goldman. In the essay, written during WWI, Rosenzweig writes on a slow, but steadily growing global unity and on the end goal of the earth which lies in its boundlessness, a boundlessness which is “already property of the primordial sea” (p. 309). He shows how universalist thoughts pervade history and that we are experiencing a beginning of world history. (p. 346) An ever-expanding unification comes into perspective through dominance, colonialization, wars and conquests. Until today, the world is not yet a globe and “[...] humanity is not yet under a single roof.” (p. 367).

Rosenzweig’s “Globus” contains a meta-historical viewpoint. He does not believe that cultural spheres are separated for ever, “[f]or God, of whom it is written in scripture is a warrior, created only a single heaven and a single earth.” (p. 346) He points to the Church as the only ecumenical power (p. 355), a task which will be performed in the *Star* by Christians and Jews.

The first part of “Globus” is entitled “Ecumene. World-state and world of states.” The second part is called “Thalatta. Naval dominance, and maritime freedom.” In the latter part, Rosenzweig reflects on the sea in different worldviews and on the oceans which slowly become one single sea. He hails the “freedom of public, borderless oceans.” (p. 363) In a Europocentric move he concludes: “Europe is not yet the soul of the

world” (367). As if Africans, for instance, were not always already in Africa with their specific culture, before they were discovered by the English, the French or the Dutch. John Donne has said that no man is an island. In Rosenzweig’s vision, no country is an island: cultural differences do not have to lead to permanent struggle. In his global worldview, countries are destined to be united in a global world, just as the primordial sea was boundless, since God created the world as one world.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to my co-editors, Cláudio Alexandre S. Carvalho and Christian Wiese as well as to Maria Saam, who is now in charge of the Yearbook at Karl Alber Verlag.

Ephraim Meir, President of the Rosenzweig Society

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Transcendence as Sociability – Rosenzweig and Lévinas.

Abstract

In a notable essay on the 1913–16 exchanges between Franz Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock, André Neher reminded F. Rosenzweig's decision »to remain jew« and refusal of conversion as a meaningful episode in the difficult historical dialogue between Judaism and Christianity and, especially, reiterated its importance for a philosophical explanation of what Religion is¹.

The hybrid figure of the »Jewish-Christian« seemed to André Neher and Franz Rosenzweig as an equivocal notion, partially inspired in the Christian ambition to convert the Jews, not only to their religious rituals but to the Christianized Civilization, including the State. For the Christian faithful to the proselytism of the Christian message, the decision to remain a Jew would be regarded as an »unexplained obstinacy« and an attitude contrary to the History of Civilized Nations, a reaction that combines Religion with Politics in the fate of Europe.

German Idealism, and particularly some readings of Hegel's views on the History of Religions, could be assumed as theoretical sanctions of an unescapable incorporation of the Old Testament in the Christian History of Redemption, where the Jew is portrayed as a virtual Christian.

From a Jewish point of view, the permanence of Judaism in a Christianized world is a theological and a sociological fact. Remaining faithful to the meaning of the biblical Choice, the Jew refuses what Neher called the triple Christian idolatry – the reality of a universal Church, the universal value of a »Christian civilization«, and the Father's incarnation.

The resistance to the triple idolatry also entails the triple meaning of the »obstinacy« and stimulates a philosophical discussion on the social

¹ A. Neher, »Une approche théologique et sociologique de la relation judéo-chrétienne: le dialogue Franz Rosenzweig-Eugen Rosenstock« in: Idem, *L'Existence juive. Solitude et affrontements*, Seuil, Paris 1962, 212–239.

and theological aspects of being a Jew within a systematic comparative explanation of the biblical Revelation and Redemption, in Judaism and Christianity.

F. Rosenzweig assumed such task as the nuclear theme of the third part of the *Star of Redemption*, in the final pages, but also embracing Paganism. Emphasizing the radical anti-pagan spirit of Judaism and the accommodation of the Christians to ancient pagan idolatry, he inferred essential features of the differences between Biblical religions and between monotheism and paganism.

If one seeks the grounds of the theological justification of the permanence of Judaism the keys are fundamentally given in the Election of Israel, consequently in the fidelity to one's people and in the connected rituals. The theological and sociological explanations to remain Jew are entangled, thanks to the Election of Israel, in a time that runs parallel to the History of the Globe.

By insisting in the unavoidable singularity of Judaism, The *Star of Redemption* follows the distinctive meanings Judaism and Christianity gave to biblical time structured in Creation, Revelation, and Redemption as different, but valid solutions to the main riddle of religion which consists in the enactment of the communication of transcendence in immanence. The *Star's* initial denunciation of the all-inclusive Totality of Philosophy helps also to denounce the inanity of an exclusively rational demonstration of God, which in a sense was the temptation of Jewish and Christian Philosophies (Maimonides or Thomas Aquinas) seduced by the Greek rationality.

I'll argue that a decision to »remain a Jew«, the vindication of a right to »remain a Jew«, and religious real diversity are not abstract moral entitlements but sociological, historical as well as theological dimensions of the evolution of the codification of religion.

I will address the key questions in the *Star's* approach to paganism and the differences between Judaism and Christianity, within the monotheist religious code, along the divisions I and II of this paper.

Emmanuel Levinas continued through Rosenzweig's and Buber's paths emancipating the meaning of religion from the logical-metaphysical proofs of the existence of God paving the way to what I conditionally call a *socialization of religion*.

In support of my view, I'll take into scrutiny *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974) and the Talmudic lectures and readings included in *L' Au-delà du verset* (1982).

I will show that Lévinas's concept of Sociability entails a version of the interpersonal relation that goes beyond F. Rosenzweig's and M. Buber's I-Thou, giving an alternative to the Star's assessment of transcendence in immanence and a new key for the understanding of the religious code.

The division **III** of the essay will address Lévinas's contributions to emphasize the social nature of religion. I will conclude, in division **IV**, with a summary of the theoretical limitations of Rosenzweig's and Lévinas's attempts to fully situate religion in a social setting, notwithstanding their remarkable advances.

I – From pagan separation to Revelation – the religious schema and its binary code

Religious communication is a highly codified form of communication. It entails semiotics of gesture, the use of oral and written linguistic signs in prayer, reading, and interpretation, ritualized actions, and feelings of belonging to communities. The theoretical approaches to religious communication are dimensions of such a large religious code. In its reduced structure, the religious code is assembled over the binary opposing transcendence and immanence. Ludwig Feuerbach's anthropological critique of God's transcendence was mainly motivated by a rejection of the logical and metaphysical construction of God he could identify in the traditional proofs of the existence of God, and Hegel's Logic, that has ignored the role of the wholeness of the human being's faculties in the formation of the religious communication². Also, in Søren Kierkegaard's writings, the strategy of an anthropological reallocation of religion is assumed beyond the scope of the logical-metaphysical proofs³. In both

² In his 1848–49 Heidelberg lectures, Ludwig Feuerbach reviewed and restated his former views on Philosophy of Religion to stress, in a wider perspective, the anthropological foundations of the philosophical and common ideas on religious transcendence, giving a new orientation to the two poles, Human Being and God, immanence and transcendence, of the religious code. L. Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke. Achter Band. Vorlesungen über das Wesen der Religion*, Verlag von Otto Wigand, Leipzig 1851, 15, 148 and ff.

³ Søren Kierkegaard's account of Abraham's sacrifice in *Fear and Trembling* is a testimony of the originality of his philosophical attitude regarding transcendence, by emphasizing the subjective meaning of faith in temptation and risky existential decision, far beyond the traditional »fides quaerens intellectum«. His account of the existential context of Abraham's faith epitomizes the crisis of the rationalist construction of transcendence in imma-

authors, the notions of existence, existence *by itself*, and the logical arguments used to postulate an independent Being responsible for the Creation of the World and Man were considered ancillary.

In the traditional proofs of the existence of God, a connection between existence *by itself* and God's transcendence was presumed. Religion was simply added as a corollary to the rational evidence of the existence of such a Being, as if religion could be understood as the practical consequence of metaphysical ratiocinations, for instance in Dogmatics. The main risk of evading the traditional theological-moral circle of the rational construction of God's transcendence was the abandonment of God as the key signifier of a Being *by itself* and the reduction of God to fiction. Kierkegaard's and Rosenzweig's strategies overcome such risk by subtracting the idea of religion from its support in the link between existence *by itself* and the logical proofs of God's existence. Particularly, F. Rosenzweig's transformation of the idea of religion entails a new formula for the transcendence/immanence binary.

The method *The Star* employed to discard the logical proofs of a Being *by itself* and to rebuild the religious transcendence/immanence binary is ambivalent regarding Hegel's method in the fragments on the History of Religion dated from the periods of Tübingen, Bern and Frankfurt.

Assuming the Kantian crisis of Rational Theology, but diverging from Kant regarding the correct moral foundation of religion, Hegel's method in these texts on *Popular Religion* asserted the possibility of the understanding of religion and the history of religions not from logical-metaphysical arguments, or proofs, but directly from the forms of the ethical life of a people, according to a pre-sociological view, by observing the objective and the subjective, the ceremonials and the moral convictions and feelings, the History of Church, law, and morality⁴. Theology as a knowledge of God's predicates and source of logical proofs should be put in the context of this institutional evolution,

nence and incentives the rethinking of the traditional, philosophical explanation of the religious code relying, mainly, on the rational proofs of the existence of God. S. Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Writings. Fear and Trembling. Repetition*, edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1983, »Eulogy on Abraham«, 15 and ff.

⁴ Georg W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke* (Band 1), *Frühe Schriften I*, edited by Friedhelm Nicolin and Gisela Schüler, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 1989, »Das Leben Jesu«, 205 -278; Idem, *Gesammelte Werke* (Band 2), *Frühe Schriften II*, edited by Walter Jaeschke, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 2014, »Frankfurter Manuskripte«, 79-99; 111-368.

and not independently considered as a product of an abstract faculty called reason.

The transcendence/immanence binary is itself an observational conundrum. One comes to different modern formulations of the same binary if one regards Hegel's historical views, Kierkegaard's existential decision or Rosenzweig's dialogical interaction as hermeneutic keys to the riddle of the observational and communicative meaning of the code of religion.

However, it is the merit of Rosenzweig to have stressed, across the structure of *The Star*, the origin of the religious observational scheme in the historical situation of the crisis of paganism and the establishment of biblical monotheism. His notion of religion was not so large that it could include social phenomena distinct from the expressions of monotheism, due to his understanding of the binary.

On the other hand, from the theoretical horizon of Sociology, Émile Durkheim, in the first book of his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), continued the late nineteenth-century anthropological discussions about magical thinking and religion, naturalism, animism and totemism. Critically relying on the influent Friedrich Max Müller's work, he situated the social foundation of the religious code in the distinction between the profane and the sacred,⁵ prior and independent of the binary opposing immanence and transcendence.

His distinction between the sacred and the profane excludes the magical practices from the religious phenomena. However, he didn't realize the importance of differentiation of monotheism from the expressions of the sacred of totemic origin, as a source of an entirely different meaning of the religious phenomena⁶. According to Durkheim and his school, the *sacred*, in its opposition to the *profane*, has the advantage of being an all-embracing category that includes beliefs of totemic, naturalist, animistic origin, and the monotheist transcendence of the unique God. This conviction was preserved in Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss's *Essay on Sacrifice* (1899), and in Roger Caillois's studies on the

⁵ Émile Durkheim, *Les Formes Élémentaires de la Vie Religieuse. Le Système Totémique en Australie*, P.U.F., Paris 1912, I, chapter 1. See, also, regarding the context of Durkheim's conceptual use of the sacred: William S. F. Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion*, James Clark & Co., Cambridge 2009, 115 ff.

⁶ In this regard, Rosenzweig's comments on the difference between the figures of the magician and the prophet, and »Zauber« and »Zeichen«, along the division »Über die Möglichkeit das Wunder zu Erleben« are enlightening. F. Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung (Star)*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1988, 104–105.

sacred and the concept of sanctity, induced by H. Hubert, M. Mauss and Rudolf Otto's (*Das Heilige*, 1917) approach to the *mysterium tremendum ac fascinans*⁷.

In what follows, I differ from this approach, and I will survey the restricted concept of religion that refers to the monotheist revelation as the central source of the distinction between immanence and transcendence, even acknowledging the value of a sociological account of the religious monotheist code. Therefore, I will describe religion in the monotheist sense and the sacred as two different social types, also distinguishing the religious scheme from its external milieu – paganism.

My methodology agrees with Hermann Cohen's understanding of religion in his project of a »Jewish Philosophy of Religion«⁸, essentially preserved by Rosenzweig in what concerns the differentiation of the essence of paganism and religion, after the monotheist revelation. Following Rosenzweig's construction of the first part of the *Star*, the opposition between paganism and Judaism illustrates the absence and the presence of the specific religious observational binary code and confers to the code the value of a foundational reference of a new form of observation, ritual actions, and a social, personal, communication with the transcendent that could be defined, accurately, as *religious*, in contrast with the pagan experience of the sacred but also distinguishing it from the philosophical talk about God in the "rational proofs"⁹. It is a new *form of observation* that emerges with Judaism and not an isolated set of beliefs and rituals.

This conviction justifies the notion of an observational schema, or religious schematism, since the uses of the new observational form promote (i) *anticipation of perceptions*, (ii) *expectations in actions* and (iii) a *symbolic code for communication* regarding a wide variety of subjects provided they are subsumed under the binary transcendence/immanence. F. Rosenzweig's account of paganism is essential to situate the experience »before« the emergence of this religious binary code. It is

⁷ Roger Caillois, *L'Homme et le Sacré*, Gallimard, Paris 1950, 48–54, on sanctity: 52–54.

⁸ Hermann Cohen, *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums. Eine jüdische Religionsphilosophie*, Marix Verlag, Wiesbaden 2008. Concerning the manifold influence of Cohen on Rosenzweig, see: Myriam Bienenstock, *Cohen und Rosenzweig. Ihre Auseinandersetzung mit dem deutschen Idealismus*, Verlag Karl Alber, Freiburg/München 2018, passim.

⁹ Martin Buber, along the chapter 2, »Religion and Philosophy«, of his *Eclipse of God*, initially referring to the Epicurean deities, recognized the social context of communication with the transcendent by distinguishing a talk *to* God from a talk *about* God. M. Buber, *Eclipse of God. Studies in the Relation between Religion and Philosophy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Oxford 2016, 20 and ff.

used as a mark of the enclosure of the religious (monotheist) code and the reference to what is not »yet« religion, regarded as the sacred of the pagan worldview.

Across the complete description of the process of conversion of the three wholes of paganism, *The Star* explained the genesis of a religious »view of the world« assuming a national character (in the Jewish people) and including the personal transformation of the separated ethical subject across the movement of the three wholes in Creation, Revelation, and Redemption.

This means that Rosenzweig's explanation is a phenomenological view from within, *i. e.*, *from within the experience of the ethical subject that »I am«*, but it is not fideism.

Due to the distinction between transcendence and immanence, religious schematism entails the four main predicates of a *top-down causality, observational asymmetry, all-inclusion normative scope*, and the *kenoma-pleroma representation of time*. These predicates were articulated in *The Star of Redemption* along with the reflections on the crisis of paganism and the formation of the religious attitude of monotheism.

The Star's originality consists in essaying a narrative view from within the process of becoming religious of the mythical pagan world preserving some of the most relevant characteristics of the biblical time's sequence of Creation, Revelation, and Redemption, but abstracting from a detailed discussion of the social source of the notion of transcendence.

Phenomenology in the Hegelian sense could offer to *The Star* the prototype of an evolutionary, narrative, description of the experience implied in the process of becoming religious of a subject, as a view from within the process of formation of the transcendence/immanence binary. Indeed, *The Star* reconfigured the metaphysical concepts of God, World and Soul according to a new system which should be defined as a Religious System of Experience or as a *religious Phenomenology of Religion*.

But the differences regarding the young Hegel (before 1807) are significant since the Hegelian concept of a *Popular Religion* demands an account of the social, moral, legal, and political foundations of the religious attitude and was not a view from within¹⁰.

Thus, the method to obtain a view from within, or Rosenzweig's religious Phenomenology of Religion, is a fifth way beyond the alternatives

¹⁰ A detailed account of Hegel's evolution regarding his religious themes, along the 1790s, was given in Laurence Dickey, *Religion, Economics, and the Politics of Spirit, 1770–1807*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1987, especially: 143–179.

to describe the transcendence/immanence binary: the logical proofs of God, the pre-sociological essays of the young Hegel, Feuerbach's anthropological inversion of the binary, and Kierkegaard's existential fideism.

The three separate wholes of Paganism were taken as the starting points of a transformation giving rise to real relations¹¹. Real relations between the wholes convey what religion means in the biblical traditions, agreeing to different interpretations of God's interpellation of Man and World. The overcoming of the separate wholes in the narrative of the creation of the world by a unique, transcendent God, which by this act reveals itself as creator, set an entirely new horizon in History¹².

In the pagan view, there is no place for the biblical Creation since the notions of transcendence and immanence are absent, entailing the self-sufficiency of each whole. Only by finding the mutual belonging of each of them to the others, one would be able to speak of transcendence and immanence. Rosenzweig's system in *The Star* not only describes the crisis of paganism, as a transformation of the separation and isolation of the wholes but gives interpretative keys to understand the diversity of solutions to the riddle of the religious schematism of monotheism (as Judaism or Christianity).

The third part of *The Star* is an essay to deal with the unending theme of the relation of transcendence to immanence in God in a way that affects Humankind and the World, according to different approaches to God's message. Within the monotheist plurality, the religious code is self-sufficient and all-encompassing. By excluding the sacred and, at the same time, by partial elaborations of some of its contents, particularly in the case of Christianity, monotheist religion must exclude another code containing itself. The code only opens to exteriority if one recognizes that it can be articulated through many combinations.

Here, one of F. Rosenzweig's contributions was the explanation of two of the most important code configurations in Judaism and Christianity. He was persuaded of the irreducible validity of each pattern of the same code.

The Star acknowledged the plurality of the code's combinations in the distinction of Judaism and Christianity and, here, in its account of the three main historical varieties of the Church (represented by Peter, Paul, and John).

¹¹ *Star*, 96–97.

¹² *Star*, 99.

When the historical, aesthetical, and sociological details of the differences inside monotheism are taken into consideration the code becomes increasingly seen from the reverse of its closure, and a paradox emerges: there are multiple self-sufficient combinations of the same self-sufficient code, *equally valuable*. The paradox could be suspended, again, inside the code, by assuming the multiplicity in the incomprehensible richness of God's love, in transcendence, and (or) by representing it according to second-order observations, from the outside of its binary organization, from History and Society, as symbolic independent forms of communication. The strength of the religious code consists in its capacity to preserve its communicative capacities despite the existence of other solutions to explain its form of observation and communication. This is called Faith.

The tension between the closure of the code and the other possibilities of experience and communication was envisaged by Emmanuel Lévinas in an enigmatic remark in the fifth of his *Five New Talmudic Readings (Du Sacré au Saint)* regarding the meaning of the Aggadah in the Talmud: *La philosophie dérive pour moi de la religion. Elle est appelée par la religion en dérive et toujours probablement la religion est en dérive*¹³.

What could be understood here by a permanent drift (*dérive*) of Religion towards Philosophy if not the retention in the religious code of what could be otherwise described from the outside of it?

In many aspects of the terminology, F. Rosenzweig's *Star* is indebted to the ontological European tradition even if the forms of thought that evolved »from the Ionian islands to Jena« were made questionable by the philosopher. The notions of substance, essence, creation, creature, and life are some of these concepts. He submitted the use of such terminology to a critical renewal leading to obvious deformations of former meanings. But there are many reminiscences to remind.

One of the concepts to recall is his metaphysical and mystical use of the notion of God's Life.

The concept reminds Schelling's reading of some Jewish sources in *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* and in the fragments on the *Weltalter*¹⁴ where a joint appropriation of Neo-Platonism and cabalistic notions took place to describe God's revelation as a coming

¹³ Emmanuel Lévinas, *Du Sacré au Saint. Cinq Nouvelles Lectures Talmudiques*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1977, 156.

¹⁴ See my comments on Schelling's appropriations of Jewish sources in: E. Balsemão Pires, »Liberdade, Força e Individuação – a partir dos fragmentos sobre as »Épocas do Mundo« de Schelling«, *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra* n° 39 (2011), 57–100.

to terms of the God's living essence with itself by disclosing a difference within itself. Thus, the conceptual framework of the *Star* seems much more intertwined with the metaphysical traditions of Neo-Platonism and, particularly, with Neo-Platonic traces in German Idealism than one would be inclined to concede if the reference to the continuous path »from the Ionian islands to Jena« would not include Rosenzweig's terminological resources.

Despite the tribute paid to the Ionian islands, the development of the second part of *The Star* shows how the three wholes of the pagan, mythical world, participate in relations that have a meaning for a subject, as a person. The possession of meaning overcomes the pagan separation by defining an inner source of value.

Through the personal value of revelation, a »new beginning« takes place as a passage from the substance to relation, launching a triple openness across the three wholes. Language, Time, and personal multiplicity are the main ingredients of a »conversion to the manifest« which is properly called revelation.

The concepts used to describe a world without innerness, without a subject, cannot remain the same after the »new beginning«. A critical process is taken place that leads, at the same time, to revelation and to the change of the mythical description of reality into something different that should be called, for the first time in Human History, *religion*. The complete development of the process entails a conceptual redesign that ends only when the concepts appropriate to the mythical reality are reconfigured to ensure the appropriate expression of the religious experience according to its new code.

The religious schema serves to produce meaning used as religious meaning in diverse forms of communication. It is the frontier distinguishing transcendence/immanence the real source of the productivity of the binary in its capacity to generate meaning and not one of the sides disconnected from the other. The binary can be assumed in theoretical views and first-person descriptions. In theoretical views, it became the central theme of theological theories. In first-person descriptions, it was assumed by mystical writers describing the appealing force of the Divine in conversion. Both possibilities are anchored in the same binary code of religious schematism.

Finally, religious Phenomenology of Religion offered to these possibilities a common ground, securing an explanation of theological premises from a view closely connected to personal experience, as a narrative view from within. The narrative account ensures a medium able

to reconfigure first order into second-order descriptions as if an »I« would be capable of assuming the stances of a »We« or the role of an impersonal subject of theory.

II – From Revelation to Redemption – Judaism and Christianity as two modes of the religious schema

1. Alone in Prayer

The search for the meaning of prayer is at the beginning of the third book of *The Star*.

Communication in prayer reveals free humankind in front of many alternatives and in front of God. In Creation and Revelation, God put humankind under his power, but in the process of Revelation, the Human Being is free to accept or reject. God wished this freedom.

The meaning of prayer is related to the scope of the human freedom of will regarding God itself and discloses the addresser-addressee structure of Revelation, inchoately social.

In the form of communication typical of the prayer, God puts the Human Being on probation and the Human Being provokes God in a game combining the search for confidence and circumvention. The game of confidence and circumvention is played with high risk for both because they are both free. F. Rosenzweig concludes from the manifold tensions developing across the prayer that the unique thing that is not in the hands of God is »the fear of God«.

The power of prayer lies precisely in this oscillation between being tempted by God and submitting God to probation. Man's will to accelerate the World's Redemption can be understood as the act of the Human Being submitting God's love to probation. But the real game to be played is not limited to prayer. The conquest of confidence is only ensured in the love of the fellow human beings which justifies the reference to the biblical precept of the love of the neighbor.

The Star adds: Love acts as if not only God wouldn't exist, but even as if the World wouldn't exist. According to Love, the fellow human being replaces the world and thus it bewilders to the eye what is seen (*Die Liebe handelt so, als ob es im Grunde nicht bloß keinen Gott, sondern sogar keine Welt gäbe. Der Nächste vertritt der Liebe alle Welt und verstellt so*

*dem Auge die Aussicht*¹⁵. The transformation accomplished through the prayer modifies the world order in a human world (*Das Gebet stiftet die menschliche Weltordnung*¹⁶).

As a way toward redemption, a solitary prayer is not enough.

In solitary communication, a special illumination must take place and should assist as a guide to the way towards the others as fellow human beings. *The Star* develops the tension between closeness, proximity, and distance or remoteness as the ground of the soul's uncertainties in prayer regarding what should be the object of love's election. Here, the soul could be tempted to desire what is not yet sufficiently close to her, she could choose the still distant, and unapproachable, instead of the true neighbor. Thus, F. Rosenzweig clarifies the implicit questions of any act of prayer in its search for illumination: »who is our fellow man?«, »who among humankind is our neighbor?« At what time?

These interrogations introduce the complex political-religious figure of the tyrant of the Kingdom of Heaven¹⁷ (*Tyrann des Himmelreich*).

In his love and illumination, the addresser of the prayer could become a tyrant.

He desires the acceleration of time, seeking the object of his love and care in what is not yet nearby. The tyrant tests God with his enthusiasm and forces the world's order to enter a route this world cannot yet sustain.

In these passages, *The Star* comments on some messianic currents, the mystical passion and emphatic beliefs asserting the self-referential structure of the connection of God to its Redemption. In the thesis proclaiming that God is the object of its own Redemption (*grade insofern er nicht bloß Erlöser, sondern auch Erlöster, die Erlösung also ihm Selbsterlösung ist...*) is the most extreme form of the religious schema linking immanence to transcendence¹⁸.

In the language of the prayer, the form of the communication with the Absent is seized by the religious schema, meaning that the assessment

¹⁵ *Star*, 298.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Star*, 268–330. Commenting on the perversions of the prayer and elucidating the expression »in tyrannos« at the beginning of the third part of the *Star*, the contribution of Bernard Casper remains instructive: B. Casper, »La prière comme être voué à l' au-delà de l' essence. Quelques considérations sur Rosenzweig dans la perspective de l'oeuvre de Lévinas« in: Jean Greisch & Jacques Rolland (eds.) *Emmanuel Lévinas. L'Éthique comme philosophie première. Colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle*, Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1993, 259–271.

¹⁸ *Star*, 303.

of the Human Being's degree of illumination in prayer, regarding what is close and the inaccessible, intersects with God's redemption as self-redemption.

Prayer's inclusion in God's self-redemption entails a riddle and a code. The riddle is the precise formula to closeness and remoteness in the Human Being's actions' circle and the code is the exact connection of every singular prayer with the time of the world in God's self-redemption.

The prayer brings the believer into a time made of qualms, in between self-centeredness and exaltation, and God's redemption takes its way in the time of the world through the trails open by the Human Being's qualms.

2. The Hour and the Communal prayer

The favorable time in prayer is only accessible to the true believer, even if it coincides with the fortunate opportunity in Goethe's egoistic prayer. Only the true believer can approach the right moment, not too soon and not too late, to ask his requests.

F. Rosenzweig's approach to the hour led him to an analysis of the qualitative religious time. In the propitious hour, eternity and time coincide, demanding the repetition of the instant, as *nunc stans* in time.

The transformation of the natural time into religious time, in the propitious hour, is a decisive theme of the third part of *The Star* since it introduces the phenomenological analysis of religious feasts. The possibility of such transformation is an assumption required for the statement of the self-referential character of religious time and its inclusion in the transcendence/immanence code. The circular re-entry of the religious time is a characteristic of religious ceremonials, already mentioned in other descriptions of Philosophy of Religion.

The passages on the meaning of the hour show how the repetition of religious time is different from the succession of seasons in cosmic time, not only because the propitious hour entails the belief of the capture of *nunc stans* in the repetition of the instant, but because, in the feasts, the association of the personal meaning of repetition with communal ceremonials is real.

The Star's introduction of the community in the explanations of religious time is somehow abrupt since the opening background of the intertwining of the *nunc stans* with succession was the prayer of the individual. This could give the impression of additive relations or at