THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

MODERN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

Edited by Michael L. Morgan
Indiana University

Peter Eli Gordon
Harvard University

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521813129

First published 2007

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Morgan, Michael L., 1944–
The Cambridge companion to modern Jewish philosophy / Michael L. Morgan and Peter Eli Gordon.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-521-81312-9 (hardback)
ISBN-13: 978-0-521-01255-3 (pbk.)
1. Philosophy, Jewish. 2. Philosophy, Modern. 3. Jewish philosophers.
4. Judaism – History – Modern period, 1750–. I. Gordon, Peter Eli. II. Title.
B755.M67 2007
181′.06–dc22 2006031065

ISBN 978-0-521-81312-9 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-01255-3 paperback

7 Franz Rosenzweig and the Philosophy of Jewish Existence

PETER ELI GORDON

The thought of Franz Rosenzweig is arguably the twentieth century's most enduring monument to Jewish philosophy. Yet its deeper meaning continues to elude comprehension. No doubt this is chiefly due to the difficulty of Rosenzweig's major work, *The Star of Redemption* (1921). Composed in the heat of inspiration, it overflows with effulgent metaphor and sometimes extravagant claims to religious insight. More challenging still, it presumes the reader's intimate knowledge of Judaism and Christianity, along with much of the German intellectual tradition, not to mention a basic familiarity with both Hellenistic thought and Scholasticism. In style as well as substance it is a book that forbids immediate understanding.

A more helpful place to begin is Rosenzweig's 1925 essay, "The New Thinking: A Few Supplementary Remarks to the *Star*."[1] The essay represents Rosenzweig's contribution to a spate of philosophical manifestos that appeared in the era of intellectual ferment during the short-lived Weimar Republic (Germany's first experiment with democracy, lasting from 1919 to 1933). And it signals his conscious participation in a trend then called "the resurrection of metaphysics."[2] Specifically, it announces in programmatic fashion the various themes already familiar to a new generation tutored in Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson: the primacy of poetic language, the bankruptcy of rationalist and idealist philosophy, the constitutive-existential function of temporality, the linguistic, spoken, and always intersubjective grounding of human meaning, the paradigmatic import of religious revelation, and, perhaps most of all, the turn from theoretical knowledge to "life" itself as the chief field of hermeneutic inquiry. These are the foundational

For helpful suggestions on this chapter in its various stages of development, I am grateful to my co-editor Michael Morgan as well as to Martin Jay, Dominick LaCapra, Michael P. Steinberg, Vicki Caron, Mitchell Hart, Nina Caputo, Samuel Moyn, Eugene Sheppard, and Leora Batnitzky.

themes of Rosenzweig's "new thinking," summarized in the demand that there be a more cooperative – or "sibling-like" – relation between philosophy and religion.

The new thinking was a philosophical movement and hardly confined to Judaism alone. Of course, Rosenzweig was an acknowledged source of inspiration for younger Jews seeking to reclaim their heritage. And, along with Martin Buber (Rosenzweig's senior by eight years and his partner in the translation of the Hebrew Bible into modern German), Rosenzweig helped to create what Michael Brenner has called a "renaissance" of Jewish culture in Weimar Germany.[3] But, unlike Buber, whose philosophy was more accessible and dialogical in style, Rosenzweig's contribution to the "new thinking" was bristling with intellect and verged on impiety. And while Buber willingly served as a popularizing writer on Jewish doctrinal themes and became a sage for national and spiritual renewal, Rosenzweig was a philosophical modernist, a principled non-Zionist, and an esoteric thinker without apology. Even while Rosenzweig was dedicated personally and intellectually to the re-creation of modern Judaism, his work was not in any obvious sense continuous with prior traditions in Jewish religion. Philosophically, Rosenzweig is recognizable as a member in that broader stream of modern thinkers who staged a Nietzschean rebellion against German idealism. Religiously, he was largely sui generis. The opening lines of "The New Thinking" conclude that

> [*The Star*] is not a "Jewish book" at all, at least not what those buyers who were so angry with me take for a Jewish book. It does deal with Judaism, but not any more exhaustively than with Christianity and barely more exhaustively than Islam. Neither does it make the claim to be a philosophy of religion – how could it do that when the word "religion" does not occur in it at all! Rather, it is merely a system of philosophy.[4]

Its author's protest notwithstanding, *The Star* has been received chiefly as a Jewish book, and Rosenzweig himself has been widely commemorated as a paradigm of Jewish authenticity.[5] It may be precisely because of Rosenzweig's enduring appeal that his actual philosophy remains so poorly understood.

AN INTELLECTUAL SKETCH

Rosenzweig was born in the town of Kassel on 25 December, 1886. He enjoyed a comfortable childhood immersed in German music and

literature, thanks chiefly to the encouragement of his mother, Adele, with whom he felt a deep personal affinity. His father was a man of business, and the young Franz was acutely aware of their difference in temperament.[6] From his grand-uncle Adam, the young Franz derived an enduring passion for the Jewish religion, even while others in his circle, including his cousin Hans Ehrenberg (1883–1958) and his companion Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888–1973), had converted to Christianity. Throughout his life, Franz attempted to navigate, both personally and intellectually, between the worlds of Judaism and the German-Protestant establishment. The distinctive character of his thought is due in no small measure to their uneasy union.

After some hesitation, rejecting by turns both the medical profession and dreams of becoming a Goethe scholar, Rosenzweig decided upon a plan of historical and philosophical study at Freiburg under Germany's then-leading practitioner of *Geistesgeschichte*, or "history of ideas," Friedrich Meinecke. Taking his initial cue from Meinecke's studies in German political thought, Rosenzweig wrote a dissertation on the genesis of Hegel's theory of the state.[7] He finished his doctoral study by 1913.[8] *Hegel and the State* was Rosenzweig's most enduring contribution to German academic literature. Some interpreters have read the mature philosophy of Judaism in isolation from, or even in opposition to, the earlier Hegel book. But a careful reading reveals the continuity between them: one of the book's chief concerns is the irreconcilable conflict between political and religious existence, a theme that would reappear in the *Star*.[9]

This perceived rift – between politics and religion – also helps to explain Rosenzweig's admiration for the early-nineteenth-century German Idealist philosopher, Friedrich Schelling. In the summer of 1914, Rosenzweig made a fortuitous discovery of a fragmentary manuscript – dated from around 1800 and apparently written in Hegel's hand – and now known as the "Oldest System-Program of German Idealism." Rosenzweig concluded that the true author of the system-program was Schelling (a conclusion now generally discredited). The fragment calls for philosophers to forge a new alliance with poetry, and it ends with the ringing phrase, "*Wir müssen also auch über den Staat hinaus*!" ("We must therefore rise out and beyond the state!"),[10] a declaration that anticipates Rosenzweig's own turn from politics.[11]

The roots of this transformation were twofold – religious and political. Religiously, Rosenzweig was compelled to face the question of his Judaism and to resolve consciously upon his theological identity. During the night of 7 July, 1913, in Leipzig, Rosenzweig found himself in a heated conversation over the relative merits of Christianity and

Judaism with his friend, the philosopher Eugen Rosenstock, who had converted to Christianity. Rosenstock challenged Rosenzweig either to give a coherent defense of his faith or to undergo baptism. Rosenzweig accepted this challenge, but he promised to convert only once he had reckoned with his Judaism. The correspondence between Rosenstock and Rosenzweig lays bare their profoundest theological disagreements, and it continues to inspire those who are interested in the possibilities for Jewish-Christian dialogue.[12]

But Rosenzweig's passage beyond Judaism did not go as planned. As he reexamined his faith over the next three months, he came to the conclusion that Judaism required no "completion" in Christianity. Nahum Glatzer, Rosenzweig's first biographer for the post-war American audience, claimed that Rosenzweig owed this new perspective to his spiritual awakening at a Yom Kippur service in a small, orthodox synagogue in Berlin frequented by Eastern European Jews. (The accuracy of this claim remains uncertain.) Rosenzweig's change of heart was far-reaching in its philosophical consequences. He now reasoned that "the development of Judaism bypasses the Jesus to whom the pagans say 'Lord' and through whom they 'arrive at the Father.' It [Judaism] does not pass through him."[13] By the end of October 1913, Rosenzweig had determined to revoke his former decision as "no longer necessary, and "in my case, no longer possible." In a simple and now famous phrase, he concluded that "I shall therefore remain a Jew." [*Also bleibe ich Jude*.][14]

Along with this personal trial of faith, Rosenzweig also underwent a trial of political disillusionment. For many of the "generation of 1914," the war experience was an apocalypse of near-theological proportions. Death now seemed of greater moment than cultural erudition, and intellectuals were newly attuned to the sheer facticity of everyday life as an object of metaphysical inquiry. This new intellectual sensibility was surely intensified by the very fractiousness of political life in the fledgling Weimar Republic: Politics seemed, to some thinkers at least, a merely technological maneuver without philosophical import. For Rosenzweig in particular, the war brought the German Idealist tradition of political speculation into disrepute: He now looked upon the Hegel book as an artifact of a world destroyed.

These two transformations, religious and political, conspired to persuade Rosenzweig that he must break with a great many of his prior philosophical and theological assumptions, most especially the logic of narrative-fulfillment that supported both Christianity and Hegelianism.[15] Once this rupture was achieved, the way was open for the development of a new philosophical perspective.

Already during the war, Rosenzweig had begun to write what he would call his "system of philosophy." The metaphysical architecture for the book was first laid out in a 1917 letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg, known as the "germ cell." Its contents followed soon afterward in a rush of inspiration. While guarding an anti-aircraft outpost in the Balkans, Rosenzweig sketched out the initial portions of the book on mail-grams that he sent homeward to his mother. Drawing sustenance from the rebellious tradition of anti-idealism – especially from Kierkegaard, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, and Nietzsche, as well as from the later religious philosophy of Hermann Cohen – Rosenzweig drafted the basic chapters for what he called '*The Star of Redemption, A World-Picture* [*Ein Weltbild*]' (the subtitle was eventually dropped).

Little in Rosenzweig's previous academic labors would have prepared his readers for the finished work, first published in 1921. A curious mixture of metaphysical speculation, religious history, sociological excursus, poetic analysis, and biblical commentary, *The Star of Redemption* comprises an affirmation of religious existence, both Jewish and Christian, against the oppressive tradition of idealism spanning Western thought from Parmenides to Hegel. It ranges across topics as diverse as Homer and Saint Augustine, Spinoza and Darwin, Luther and Goethe, Maimonides and Machiavelli. Its claims, taken in sum, guide the reader, both Jewish and Christian, toward the precipice of a this-worldly leap into religious commitment. But beyond this, there is little agreement upon the book's proper interpretation. *The Star* has been read variously as a manifesto of existential theology, a highly encrypted personal confession, a belated contribution to the Kabbalah, and, most recently, as a supplement to themes now flourishing in psychoanalysis and post-modernism. The dual offspring of German expressionism and Jewish belief, it is surely one of the most forbidding artifacts of Weimar culture. In its pastiche of styles and its very polyphony, it resembles perhaps nothing so much as a theoretical counterpiece to Mahler's *Song of the Earth*. Rosenzweig himself later called it "this great world-poem."[16]

The Star was to be the only substantial book of original philosophy Rosenzweig would ever write. By January 1922, he had been diagnosed with a rare form of progressive paralysis (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), which affected his speech, his hands, and his legs, and eventually imprisoned him inside his own body. Within a year, he could no longer leave his house of his own initiative. Doctors did not expect him to survive. Quite miraculously, however, he endured in this condition until the end of the 1920s, although he always considered *The Star* his sole contribution to modern philosophy. Yet even while *The Star* was his magnum opus, Rosenzweig remained intellectually productive until the final months

of his life. Aided by his wife, and outfitted with an ingenious writing machine, he authored numerous shorter and more accessible texts on matters such as Jewish theology and the theory and practice of translation, as well as critical reflections on the contemporary intellectual trends of his time.

He wrote a shorter, polemical work, *Ḍas Büchlein vom gesunden und kranken Menschenverstand* (available in English with the title 'Understanding the Sick and the Healthy'), an allegory that portrays the philosopher's misguided search for essence as a paralysis. He also forged a close bond with the neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen, whose final work, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism* (published posthumously in its complete form in 1919), came to occupy a special place in Rosenzweig's imagination.[17]

Like such figures as Leo Baeck and Nehemiah Nobel, Rosenzweig also became a charismatic force for the interwar flourishing of German-Jewish culture. His paralysis itself added poignancy and a martyr's prestige to his thought, and a small circle gathered at his home to explore the meaning of their neglected Judaism. He assumed a leading role in the founding of the famous Frankfurt *Lehrhaus*, an institute of adult Jewish education that drew many younger and often assimilated Jews toward a more sustained and substantive Jewish identity. In 1924, he produced a volume of German translations on the medieval Hebrew poetry of Judah Halevi, accompanied by an erudite philosophical commentary. And beginning in 1925, he undertook the monumental task of translating the Hebrew Bible into German in collaboration with Martin Buber.

Such acts of linguistic mediation expressed a more general ideal of diasporic identity, a way of being simultaneously a Jew and a German. In a remarkable letter from 1923, Rosenzweig relates that during an interview for a position at a Jewish school, he was asked to take a stand on the vexed question of German or Jewish allegiance:

> I retorted that I would refuse to answer this question. If life were at one stage to torment me and tear me into two pieces, then I would naturally know with which of the two halves the heart – which is, after all, asymmetrically positioned – would side. I would also know that I would not be able to survive the operation.[18]

To be sure, what Paul Mendes-Flohr has called the "dual identity" of German Jewish intellectuals could be sustained only so long as other Germans judged it admissible.[19] Yet the "German" side of Rosenzweig's identity was hardly contingent upon political conditions. In a letter composed in the autumn of 1929, just months before his death, Rosenzweig declared: "my Germanness would be exactly what it is today, even if

there were no longer a German Reich. Language is indeed more than blood."[20]

One may consider it Rosenzweig's good fortune that he did not survive long enough to see a new and more brutal German Reich destroy this ideal. In his last days, Rosenzweig was still at work translating the Bible into the language he loved. He was concentrating his remaining strength upon a section of Isaiah 53 that includes the famous passage concerning God's suffering 'servant.'[21] His final extant letter, dated just one day before his death, is addressed to Buber. It breaks off in mid-sentence: "and – now it comes, the point of all points, which the Lord had granted me in sleep: the point of all points for which it . . ." Rosenzweig died, at forty two years of age, on 10 December, 1929.

THE STAR OF REDEMPTION: AN OVERVIEW

The Star is a work that forbids easy summary. Its basic aim is to provide a philosophical portrait of the deep structures that inform human religious experience. But the difficulty of this task is extraordinary. The philosophers' traditional view of religion, Rosenzweig suggests, has almost always failed to capture what religion truly means within the finite, this-worldly terms of human life. Philosophers habitually describe religion according to all the deficiencies of idealism. But here it is crucial to note that "idealism" for Rosenzweig is not the name for a specific movement: It characterizes the entirety of the metaphysical tradition from Parmenides to Hegel, or – in his phrase – "from Ionia to Jena." This tradition is animated by what Rosenzweig regards as a self-deception: Idealism conceives being as conceptual being only, and thereby loses sight of that difference beneath thought, the pre-conceptual existence upon which our thought must always depend. So "philosophy," at least as it has been conventionally practiced, seems to have obstructed our understanding of how we actually experience religion within the overall structure of human *existence*.

The book begins on a dramatic note, with a broad indictment of Western philosophy that borrows several phrases without acknowledgement from Friedrich Schiller's poem, "*Das Ideal und das Leben*" ("The Ideal and Life"):

> 'From death, from the fear of death, there begins all knowledge of the Whole. To cast off the fear of earthly things, to rob death of its poisonous sting, and Hades of its pestilential breath, in this task philosophy deceives itself.'[22]

For Rosenzweig, Schiller's model of transcendence seems to typify our customary image of redemption.[23] We construe redemption as a kind of metaphysical release, as if it required a casting aside of finitude and a flight from time to eternity. For Rosenzweig, however, philosophy after Hegel has reached a point of exhaustion and can at last recognize the spuriousness of this metaphysical dream. In a letter to Margrit Rosenstock written during the heat of composition, Rosenzweig remarked that "idealism simply *knows* nothing of redemption."[24] Philosophy, beginning with Nietzsche, Rosenzweig tells us, has admitted the priority of finitude over and against the nihilistic longing for release. Humanity thus always "remains [*bleibt*] within the bounds of creatureliness [*innerhalb der Grenzen der Geschöpflichkeit*]." The metaphysical-idealist tradition, which regards thought as the height of being, would have us strive for transcendence. But to be human is to cherish one's finitude and to *remain* always *in-the-world*: *The Star* thus aims at something like a redemption of philosophy *from* the philosophical tradition.

The first paragraph of the book ends by offering a direct rejoinder to Schiller, which again calls upon the poet's imagery:

> Man is not to throw off the fear of the earthly; he must remain in the fear of death, but he must remain. [*Der Mensch soll die Angst des Irdischen nicht von sich werfen; er soll in der Furcht des Todes – bleiben*.][25]

Rosenzweig therefore wishes to develop a better understanding of religion that accords with the post-metaphysical and eminently human desire to remain in the world. One might also be tempted to read the *Star* as the transposition into philosophical language of a biographical protest – Rosenzweig's personal decision several years before to "remain" (*bleibe*) a Jew. But this act of defiance is now staged not merely despite Christianity, but also despite the Christian-metaphysical vision of redemption as a passage beyond mortality. Indeed, the desideratum of the entire work is that since religious experience can never grant access to a realm beyond time, redemption itself must be reconceived such that eternity *itself* is understood as *eternity-in-time*, as a life within the bounds of human community.[26]

To portray human religious experience in this temporal form, Rosenzweig must undertake something like a descriptive "phenomenology." He must lay out the basic structures of religious life as they are manifest in both Christianity and Judaism. But he must take care not to indulge in philosophical talk about the "essence" of religious phenomena if they do not actually present themselves within the historical and cultural

horizon. Rosenzweig wants to pursue the description from the 'inside,' since human finitude forbids our trespassing beyond the mortality-constraints to discourse upon the "ideas" of revelation, redemption, and so forth. One of *The Star*'s many challenges is that it is so rich in interpretative detail: It contains a wealth of commentary on history, poetry, and religious ritual, phenomena described with a sympathy and precision that seems almost to invite the reader to imagine she is experiencing them herself. The method owes much to Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie* and its hermeneutic strategy of *nacherleben*.[27] Here, Rosenzweig's original subtitle, "a world-portrait" (*ein Weltbild*), proves helpful, since *The Star* is meant as nothing less than a portrait of our own religious world. Such a portrait would be impossibly complex were it not carried out in small and systematic steps. Accordingly, Rosenzweig breaks up the life-world of religious experience into its basic constitutive elements – God, Man, and World. Each of these is subjected to careful description, first in separation and then in temporal relation with the others.

The first part of the *Star* consists in a preliminary analysis of this structure and its three constitutive points – God, Man, and World – now shorn of their conceptual meaning. Rosenzweig calls them "irrational" objects. To pursue this analysis, Rosenzweig borrows creatively from the neo-Kantian "principle of origins," a logical instrument, modeled upon the calculus, which Hermann Cohen deployed to show reason's ability to generate finite magnitudes out of the thought of negation.[28] In Rosenzweig's hands, the principle of origins metamorphosed into an anti-idealist device: In an argument that anticipates Heidegger's thoughts concerning being-toward-death, Rosenzweig suggests that when we become alive in anxiety to our own mortality, we gain a unique glimpse into the nothingness that distinguishes our thoughts of being from being itself. And by thinking this nothingness, we can then perform a negation upon each of the three elements of our experience.

God, for example, is disclosed to be what Rosenzweig in his wholly modern usage calls the "metaphysical." Man is accordingly the "meta-ethical" and the world is the "metalogical." Each of the elements is found to emerge from a place of ontological independence, and each is therefore grounded in its own distinctive "nothingness" prior to any and all conceptual elaboration. Thus, before God is properly an object of knowledge, God is for human experience a sheer object of *privation* – an object of which we can say nothing. But since this nothingness is a nothingness distinctively of God, Rosenzweig discloses this divine being in its *difference from thought*. Pursuing the same strategy, Rosenzweig

claims that the essence of "meta-ethical" man is itself *nothing*. That is, no essence lies behind our concerned way of being-in-the-world: To be human is ultimately grounded upon nothing deeper than its own existential investment. Meta-ethical man is therefore a creature whose being is always – as Heidegger would say – "at issue." Or as Rosenzweig put it, drawing upon a biblical image, meta-ethical man is like "Jonah without the palm branches."[29]

In the second part of the *Star*, Rosenzweig aims to show how these distinctive elements emerge on the plane of temporality. They are, as Kant would say, "schematized," one with another, so as to form the three bridges comprising lived experience: God meets World in creation, God meets Man in revelation, and Man meets world in redemption. The resultant six "points" thus form the eponymous *Star*, the symbol famously associated in Jewish tradition with the shield of David. While the quasi-geometric 'star' system may seem little more than a contrivance, Rosenzweig exploits the structure to emphasize that the locus of our religious experience must necessarily be life-in-time. (In "The New Thinking," Rosenzweig reminds us that his new approach to philosophy differs from the traditional sort precisely in "taking time seriously.") The three coordinates of the book thus indicate the three basic temporal "tenses." *Creation* denotes the irrecoverable past (facts into which we are born), *revelation* signifies the immediate present (of divine as well as human love), and *redemption* points to the future (that is, the divine completion of our necessarily purposive but necessarily finite activity). It should be noted that Rosenzweig's breakdown of temporality into its three religious axes anticipates in some measure what Heidegger later calls temporal "ecstases" in *Being and Time*. When reassembled, the entire coordinate system of creation, revelation, and redemption allows us to orient ourselves within the space of religious experience. And Rosenzweig performs a hermeneutic description of that space.

Revelation holds a pivotal position in the book, since it is God's love that lays down the model for human love and community. Humanity pursues the "work" of redemption, although it is important to note that "redemption" itself is neither a mere extension of human love nor in any sense a purely human achievement. "Actual" redemption, Rosenzweig tells us, emanates from God alone: It is an event of which humanity "knows neither the day nor the hour."[30] Given this emphasis on divine as against human agency, Rosenzweig's theism remains largely unqualified. Indeed, it can be fearsome: In a decision imposed from beyond, God separates friend from foe, a choice that casts the enemies of the divine into a void.[31] Ethics, then, which some interpreters would assign

a vital position in Rosenzweig's philosophy, seems in fact consigned to its periphery.

Here we may pause to reconsider the much-discussed relation between Rosenzweig and Levinas.[32] An obvious point of comparison is Rosenzweig's insistance that God, Man, and World cannot be collapsed into a metaphysical unity: According to the *Star*, "God alone plants the sapling of his own eternity . . . utterly beyond time into eternity."[33] God therefore remains in an important sense "other" to the intraworldly realm of human experience. This Rosenzweigian stricture anticipates Levinas's idea that the human "other" exceeds all totalization.[34]

But the resemblance between Rosenzweig and Levinas is misleading on several counts. First, it is crucial to note that *The Star* never violates the hermeneutic principle that any and all philosophical description of the religious life-world must remain fully *within* the world. In a letter to Margrit Rosenstock, written in 1918 while he was composing *The Star*, Rosenzweig affirmed this principle:

> [I]t becomes now more clear to me, what I meant when I said to you that *love does not overstep the bounds of life* [my emphasis]. In life, I love the neighbor, into whose eyes I look, who looks in my eyes, and love him, perhaps, 'sitting within the shadow of God,' and love him "in" God. Indeed, I love him more than I love or can love God. For it must be so. God's face "can no man see and remain living [*bleibt leben*]."[35]

Although Levinas cited Rosenzweig as an important influence, Rosenzweig's doctrine of love appears critically distinct from Levinas' later notion that the self's relation to the face of the other somehow captures a phenomenon beyond all ontological horizons. Levinas surely borrowed from Rosenzweig's philosophy, but Rosenzweig himself saw love as constrained always to the holistic bounds of life, and he insists that human love can appear only within this field as it is staked out by the divine. In *The Star*, either the face of the other is experienced as being-in-the-world or it cannot be experienced at all. To "remain," in Rosenzweig's dictum, "within the bounds of creatureliness" applies to the human experience of divine love no less than to the experience of other created beings.

Specifically, Rosenzweig reserves the term "revelation" to describe only how God attains a mode of worldly and experiential being, quite apart from any mystical or non-experiential facets of God's "secret being."[36] Revelation for Rosenzweig is a movement *into-the-world*, a movement from God to the human soul that does not shatter but rather confirms the coherance of human life. Rosenzweig elsewhere complains

that "anthropomorphism" is a misnomer since it exaggerates God's "infinite" and ineffable being: God's ability to conform to human experiential categories, claims Rosenzweig, should more correctly be termed "theomorphism."[37] Revelation is therefore an event that is destined to become *a piece of the world*:

> [God's] revelation to the soul has now entered the world and become a piece of the world. Not that something strange is entering the world with it. [*Indem aber Gott so tut, ist seine Offenbarung an die Seele nun in die Welt getreten und zu sinem Stück Welt geworden. Nicht als ob mit ihr etwas Fremdes in die Welt träte.*] Rather revelation remembers back to its past, while at the same time remaining wholly of the present; it recognizes its past as part of a world passed by. But thereby it also provides its presentness with the status of something real in the world. . . . The presentness of the miracle of revelation is and remains its content; its historicity [*Geschichtlichkeit*], however, is its ground and its warrant.[38]

Rosenzweig seems explicitly to deny the metaphysical view of revelation as an awakening to alterity. On the contrary: Revelation becomes "a piece of the world." Rosenzweig will argue later in the book that redemption itself is that event whereby God becomes "like time." Here he argues that God's love becomes like the world. Revelation, therefore, begins from alterity but ends by conferring unity upon temporal experience.

But why does Rosenzweig wish to *deny* that revelation introduces "something strange" into human experience? Doesn't a Jewish philosophy require some idea that revelation is a transformative event? The surprising answer is that for Rosenzweig, revelation brings *consolation rather than disruption*. It effects a peculiar state of "quiet" defiance, and it lends the otherwise anxious soul a pride for merely existing, a pride "which spreads out under and around man like the still waters and supports him instead of transforming him beyond recognition." Revelation accordingly becomes a piece of human experience and it inspires in humanity a special kind of pride that "can simply – be; and nothing more."[39] Revelation for Rosenzweig is therefore quite different from the trauma Levinas imagines it to be, since it is revelation which grants one the security of being sheltered: The soul enriched by revelation "knows that nothing can befall it" and that "no power can rob it of this consciousness which carries it wherever it may go and by which it is perpetually surrounded."[40] Divine love prepares the soul for the possibility of a life

of splendid isolation – an existence wholly in-the-world but nonetheless set free from the distortions of worldly attachment. Revelation, one might say, is the precondition for peace.

It is also important to note that even while Rosenzweig sees revealed love as lending the soul an unworldly character of "quiet defiance," revelation itself remains essentially compatible with history. Rosenzweig has been interpreted as an "anti-historicist," as if in his abandonment of Hegelian political thought he came to share Kierkegaard's antipathy for history in general. But this neglects Rosenzweig's peculiar ability to unite in his thinking seemingly contradictory intellectual positions. In fact, revelation does not contradict the historical nature of being human but actually serves as its justification: In Rosenzweig's words, while the "presentness" of the revealed miracle is its "content," its historical facticity is its "ground." To live in accordance with a revealed tradition naturally requires that revelation become a living inheritance that may be passed on from generation to generation, not only through history but actually gaining its truth-status *in and through* its historical transmission. Revelation finds its highest validation not in opposition to the past but instead in what Rosenzweig expressly called its "historicity" (*Geschichtlichkeit*). This generously historical perspective on the nature of divine revelation would seem to suggest that Rosenzweig was as much an heir to German historicism as a rebel against it.

It is redemption alone that provides *The Star* with unambiguous purpose, since it is necessary to live with some anticipatory sense of redemption if one's religious life-world is to be structurally complete. (This claim also applies to the system itself: Without some sense of "meaning" the star-shape would be merely symmetrical and would lack a definite orientation.) Rosenzweig argues that one can only live out the experience of redemption within a community. So the last third of the *Star* lays out a detailed reconstruction of Christianity and Judaism as the two basic communal systems in which redemption comes to be a lived experience. (There are also some rather crude passages concerning Islam, which Rosenzweig failed to grant almost any positive theological importance.)[41] Perhaps one of *The Star*'s most famous ideas is that Christianity and Judaism are internally incompatible but mutually reinforcing religious life-worlds, both of which stand as necesssary witnesses to redemption. Christianity, claims Rosenzweig, construes redemption as an activity unfolding through history, and it is therefore progressive, forging God's kingdom in worldly action. Judaism, on the other hand, Rosenzweig regards as uniquely capable of experiencing redemption in the present, and it is therefore conceived as cyclical, the collective figure

of eternity within time. The remaining portions of the book offer a multifaceted discussion of both Judaism and Christianity, justifying the distinctive roles each is meant to play in human affairs. The *Star* ends with a famous exhortation that the reader should leave the book aside and return to the serious work of redemption in life.

JUDAISM AND ETERNITY-IN-TIME

The *Star* can hardly be understood as emerging out of an unambivalent and organic bond to the Jewish tradition. But the reader should note that its tripartite structure recapitulates the liturgical order of the Jewish Day of Atonement, or *Yom Kippur*: It opens in a mood of abjection, exposing the human being in radical separation from God and in fear of her possible death. But through the encounter with divine love, we pass from abjection to reconciliation, and at the end of the text we find ourselves inscribed once more in the book of life. In its closing pages, the text moves through a "gate" (*Tor*) which recalls the gates of repentance mentioned in the *Yom Kippur* liturgy. Here Rosenzweig constructed a visual pun: The text points, quite literally, beyond itself such that the reader is enjoined to close the "book of life" and pass "into life" itself (*ins Leben*). *The Star* is unmistakably a work of modern philosophy, but it is modeled on an unmistakably traditional remnant of Jewish ritual.

The centerpiece of the *Star* – what Rosenzweig called the 'fire' at its core – is its striking portrait of Jewish life. The Jews are the light unto the nations, the exemplary community from which redemption radiates to the perimeter of the world. In a conceptual analysis recalling his Hegel book, Rosenzweig sees the Jews as ontologically torn from world history. (For Hegel, Judaism represented the so-called "religion of sublimity" in that their theology is ostensibly torn between God and World.) Rosenzweig calls the Jews a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a community of fate: Their very existence constitutes a breach in the historical continuum, an irruption of the future into the present. But against Hegel, Rosenzweig considers this fate an ontological privilege, since it grants to the Jews alone an anticipatory taste of the world's future redemption.

Rosenzweig offers several conjoined explanations for the privileged status of the Jews. Because they remain open to the eternity of future-redemption, they exhibit a profound indifference to history. They alone seem to discern that the surrounding nations in their struggle for security place undue trust in political and geographical roots. Regimes rise and fall, while the Jews persist beyond the war-plagued chaos of secular time.[42] But precisely because they remain eccentric to history, they

come to occupy the central role in the narrative of redemption, since they alone now dwell at the gathering place where all nations will eventually arrive. The Jews alone come to live *in-and-from* their experience of redemption, and they do so with such intensity that their presence in history is evacuated of all meaning. Living wholly for the sake of the always "not-yet" of the future, they draw strength from what Rosenzweig calls the "terrestrial repetition" of yearly and weekly ritual.[43] This unique temporality sets them free from the flow of secular history. Uprooted from land and state, they seek rootedness wholly in themselves – "*Verwurzelung im eigenen Selbst*."[44] The sole mark of their belonging lies in what Rosenzweig provocatively calls "the dark wellsprings of the blood."[45]

In this portrait of the Jewish condition, great emphasis is placed upon the Jews' exemplary status. The Jews remain separate and utterly unique, but it is this very fact that grants them an unparalleled universality. It would thus be wrong to construe the notion of "blood community" along the lines of race or ethnicity.[46] It is, instead, a form of nomadic group-identification, a "self-rootedness" that evokes the self-enclosed and circulatory structure of the Jewish liturgical calendar itself. It therefore provides a bold illustration of Rosenzweig's belief that the Jewish community has "its temporality" apart from the time of the nations.[47] Here one must note the critical distinction between temporality and history: The Jews, too, are fully in time. But because they detach themselves from political events, they experience time not as succession but instead as cyclical. The Jews are therefore self-rooted while lacking roots in political history. They are, in other words, "uncanny," or *unheimlich* – that is, not at home.[48]

One may find it surprising to read Judaism described as a religion "without a history." Judaism is more customarily seen as a *narrative* religion, as the unfolding romance between God and His Chosen People. But history to Rosenzweig meant political struggle, while the Jews are "chosen" precisely so as to consecrate themselves without compromise or distraction to God alone. In their conspicuous indifference to secular time, they exemplify the Christian-Stoic ideal of this-worldly-asceticism, a mode of being "in the world" but not "of the world."[49] The peculiarly ascetic quality of the Jewish people in *The Star* prompted Leo Strauss to remark that for Rosenzweig, "the truly central thought of Judaism" is Israel's chosenness, since "he looks for a Jewish analogue to the Christian doctrine of Christ."[50]

It is the Jews' separation, then, that permits them to fulfill their unique role as "light unto the nations."[51] Because they resist the idolatry

of history, they never yield to the lustrous vagaries of power and the arrogance of identifying redemption with their own, all-too-human political narrative. To be sure, in the eyes of the nations, such resistance can only appear as a kind of "constriction."[52] Rosenzweig freely grants that the Jews' claim to exceptionalism can make them at times the object of fierce resentment. But he remains sufficiently Hegelian to believe that current strife is the precondition for future unity. The Jews are the embodiment of hope: the present sign of the world's final and complete reconciliation. Nothing could be further from Rosenzweig's purposes, therefore, than a post-modern surrender to fragmentation. He insists that there is a singular and coherent truth that will eventually be revealed to all humanity, and he accordingly described *The Star* as a "messianic theory of knowledge." The true aim of the book, therefore, is to recuperate within the landscape of human experience that "totality" that idealist philosophy failed to achieve.[53] Judaism's very quiescence is the projection within history of the eternal peace that shall come to all nations only at history's end.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rosenzweig's legacy has been marked by controversy. His clear indifference to Jewish politics earned him the opprobrium of many Zionist thinkers, who found it scandalous if not unintelligible to maintain that in the modern period Jews dwell in some imaginary precinct "outside" of history. His rather fanciful star-shaped "system" and his thirst for the 'primordial' in religion aroused the strong antipathy of modernist Marxists such as Georg Lukács, who condemned Rosenzweig as an irrationalist reactionary, or modernist culture-critics such as Siegfried Kracauer, who scorned his poetic style as anti-modernist if not archaic.[54] Gershom Scholem regarded Rosenzweig's Germanic brand of Judaism as predestined for failure: The Buber-Rosenzweig Bible seemed to typify the naiveté of the German-Jewish experience, since, Scholem believed, it would be shunned by other Germans and would reach no audience except the German Jews themselves.[55] Others made Rosenzweig into a post-war icon for Jewish "existential" identification, although this posthumous celebrity did not always require a rich understanding of his philosophy.

Walter Benjamin considered *The Star of Redemption* one of the most enduring works of the 1920s.[56] One detects a Rosenzweigian strain in Benjamin's thinking, most especially in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History," which condemns the evolutionist model of history as barren,

and portrays history itself as ceaseless catastrophe. Benjamin's view of revolution as a "messianic" rupture into the "homogenous," "empty" continuum of political history pays homage to Rosenzweig's notion that genuine redemption is something altogether discontinuous with historical progress. And via Benjamin, this same notion is sustained, however faintly, in the late dialectics of the Frankfurt School, which bears witness to redemption only as if in a photographic negative, as the "messianic light" that enables us to see without deception the "cracks and fissures" of historical catastrophe.[57]

A more obvious inheritance can be found in the philosophical ethics of Emmanuel Levinas, who explicitly credited *The Star* for inspiring his own metaphysical opposition to totality and the associated idea that ethical obligation binds the self to the "other" as an always untotalizable "exteriority."[58] But whether Rosenzweig himself was similarly allergic to philosophical totality is far from obvious. Although he insisted that the ontological separation between God, Man, and World cannot be fully sublated into an idealist whole, he nonetheless affirmed that they are brought into a stable yet always temporal "relation," which he called "the new unity" (*neue Einheit*) and "the new whole" (*neue Allheit*). Indeed, the often-cited phrase at the beginning of *The Star* should not be understood as a thoroughgoing rejection of holism as such. *Rosenzweig rejects only knowledge of the whole; he does not reject holism as such*. He merely suggests that the "all" of the cosmos cannot be grasped as a single and self-contained object of *knowledge*. The attempt to seize the unity of being in an Absolute idea is tantamount to believing that one might view the world from "outside" – that is, from an Archimedian point of safety beyond the "flow of life." There is, accordingly, within the human perspective at least, no possibility of knowledge of the all (*Erkennen des All*), but it does not follow that there is no unity to the very fabric of things. On the contrary, Rosenzweig most signals his continued allegiance to monotheism when he affirms that the whole of the cosmos can indeed be subsumed under a single, redemptive principle leading to an ultimate and ultimately unified peace.[59]

But it is critical to note that Rosenzweig distinguished between the "work" of redemption (humanity's task) and redemption itself (a divine achievement). The distinction implies that the first may serve only as an *anticipation* of the second and not as its cause. Just as Rosenzweig's "messianic theory of knowledge" looks forward to the unity brought to the world by God, so, too, Rosenzweig can be said to hold a messianic theory of redemption, in that human action can only *anticipate* but cannot *bring about* the peace of the world. And we should also note

that for Rosenzweig the activistic, the social-political work of transforming the world is chiefly a Christian task, not a Jewish one: The Jews are meant to "embody" redemption precisely by remaining *inactive*. Rosenzweig's reduction of ethics (which is confined chiefly to a meaningful but wholly interpersonal love) and his stringently theological claim that "true" redemption comes from God alone frequently pass without notice in readings that wish to categorize his new thinking as a variant of activistic or socially-responsible humanism.

Rosenzweig was a philosopher who struggled to reconcile the conflicting demands of Athens and Jerusalem (in the terms made famous by Leo Strauss), to live and to think "between two worlds" (to cite a classic essay on Rosenzweig by Levinas).[60] He remained passionately committed to the Jewish religion even while striving also to embrace the riches of modern, secular philosophy. More specifically, Rosenzweig's thought appears as a testament to the possibility of religion even in the wake of Nietzsche's pronouncement that "God is dead." Indeed, one might gauge the true modernity of *The Star* by the generous view it takes of Nietzsche, who is named the "first real human being among the philosophers."[61] It is Nietzsche, as no philosopher before him, who first contemplates the meaning of divine existence in terms of human *life*. But he finds that God's will, if truly infinite, must conflict with the human will to power. Nietzsche's atheism thus follows upon the insight that any concession to divine freedom would mean compromising human sovereignty. *The Star* concludes: "The first real human being among the philosophers was also the first who beheld God face to face – even if it was only in order to deny him."[62] For Rosenzweig, therefore, the scandal of atheism is not specifically its denial of God but its failure to recognize that dimension of human experience which escapes human control. In one of his earliest essays, Rosenzweig criticized Jewish nationalists for seeking salvation exclusively in communal power and thereby losing sight of revelation, an error he called "atheistic theology." His mistrust of Zionism bears comparison with Nietzsche's critique of German nationalism: Like Nietzsche, Rosenzweig regards with suspicion any thinking that would exalt the momentary achievements of political history as the sign of divine favor.

The prominent position that *The Star* assigns to Nietzsche's atheism may serve as a warning against those interpretations that wish to install Rosenzweig within an uninterrupted and venerable tradition of Jewish thought. He was unmistakably modern in outlook. But if he resists facile classification as exclusively a "Jewish" thinker, it is also because he remained open, as very few Jewish philosophers before him or since, to

the fullest merits of "paganism." One should not find it at all surprising, then, that in one of his last essays, Rosenzweig drew a favorable comparison between his own philosophy and that of Martin Heidegger.[63]

But here, one suspects, the partnership between religion and philosophy was not quite so balanced as Rosenzweig claimed. Rosenzweig's search for the most "primordial" elements of faith brought him to the paradoxical insight that Judaism and Christianity were not "originally" religions at all: The former was a "fact" (*Tatsache*), the latter an "event" (*Ereignis*). This would appear to validate Rosenzweig's claim that *The Star* is not a philosophy of religion, since its true object of inquiry is that deeper stratum of human experience he called "the earthly path of revelation" (*der Erdenweg der Offenbarung*).[64]

Yet this experience in Rosenzweig's opinion could be found equally in Judaism, Christianity, and paganism as well (at least among the pagans who abjure their "official" Hellenistic philosophies).[65] We might conclude that Rosenzweig was a philosopher of Jewish existence, even if he did not create an essentially *Jewish* philosophy. At the end of "The New Thinking," he affirmed that "this is a Jewish book" but only in as much as "I received the new thinking in these old words, thus I have rendered it and passed it on." But he admitted that "to a Christian, instead of mine, the words of the New Testament would have come to his lips; to a pagan [. . .] although not words of his holy books [. . .] perhaps entirely his own words. But, to me, these words." *The Star* was indeed a Jewish book, but not one that dealt exclusively or essentially with only "Jewish matters." Rather, it was

> one for whom the old Jewish words come in order to say what it has to say, and precisely for the new things it has to say. For Jewish matters are, as matters generally are, always already past; but Jewish words, even if old, take part in the eternal youth of the word, and the world is opened to them, and they will renew the world.[66]

The question as to whether Rosenzweig was truly a "Jewish" philosopher admits of no determinate answer. He struggled to embrace simultaneously the particularism and the universalism at the heart of the Jewish faith. He cherished the Jews' incommensurable singularity, and he found messianic significance in the requirement that they remain utterly distinct among the nations of the world. But he also looked upon the seeming variety of religious experience as merely provisional, since he believed that all faiths must essentially share the single vision of a future without strife.

These two facets of Rosenzweig's philosophy are not easily reconciled. On the one hand, it could be argued that Rosenzweig remained so bound to the specific, messianic core of the Jewish tradition that he was willing to pursue its logic even to the point of breaking from the non-redeemed world. His particularism would thus be a sign of just how jealously he guarded the purity of the universal. But if so, this would seem to be a particularism indefensible in universal terms, and untranslatable into the lexicon of another culture or religion. On the other hand, it might be inferred from the passage just quoted that he believed this messianic message can be found in various "words" or creeds. Judaism then, like all religion, would possess its true significance less for its doctrinal content than for its capacity to sustain for humanity that common experience of wonder – "the earthly path of revelation" – which the Greeks believed to be the origin of philosophy itself. This might seem an appealing solution, and it seems most in harmony with Rosenzweig's own claim that the new thinking is an ecumenical movement. But if so, the availability of a common language would appear to threaten the last remaining justification for Jewish exclusivity. Rosenzweig's philosophy is perhaps most fascinating for the way it portrays Jewish existence itself as the living embodiment of this unresolved – and, perhaps, unresolvable – dilemma.

Notes

1. Franz Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking," hereafter, ND. For English, I cite the new anthology, *Franz Rosenzweig's "The New Thinking,"* Alan Udoff and Barbara Galli, trans. and eds. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999); 67–102. I have amended the translation where needed and indicate accordingly.
2. See, for example, Peter Wust, *Die Auferstehung der Metaphysik* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1920); and Heinrich Kerler, *Die auferstandene Metaphysik, Eine Abrechnung*. 2. Auflage (Ulm: Verlag Heinrich Kerler, 1921).
3. Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). Also see Asher Biemann, "The Problem of Tradition and Reform in Jewish Renaissance and Renaissancism," in *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Fall, 2001), 58–87.
4. ND, 69.
5. His own misgivings about such categorization (in the lines just quoted) were omitted from the version of "The New Thinking" that was published in the English-language anthology as edited by his student Nahum Glatzer, in *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*. Nahum N. Glatzer, ed., 3rd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998). On the politics of the post-war reception, see my "Rosenzweig Redux: The Reception of

German-Jewish Thought," *Jewish Social Studies,* Volume 8, No. 1 (Fall, 2001), 1–57.

6. Franz Rosenzweig, *Die "Gritli"-Briefe: Briefe an Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy*. Inken Rühle und Reinhold Mayer, eds. (Tübingen: Bilam, 2002), hereafter GB. In this chapter, I provide only the dates of each letter. GB, April 29, 1918.
7. After the war, Rosenzweig emended his dissertation for publication as *Hegel und der Staat* (München and Berlin: Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1920). A one-volume edition was prepared in 1937 but destroyed by the Gestapo before publication; it was later printed in photostat (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1962). In what follows, I cite the 1962 edition, hereafter HS.
8. About Meinecke's *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation-State,* Rosenzweig observed in 1908 that "To have written such a book I would well give ten years of my life." In Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe*. (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935). No. 32. An die Mutter. (November 13, 1908, Freiburg), 41.
9. On Rosenzweig's relation to Hegel, see Ulrich Bieberich, *Wenn die Geschichte göttlich wäre: Rosenzweig's Auseinandersetzung mit Hegel* (St. Ottilien: Verlag Erzabtei St. Ottilien, 1989); Gérard Bensussan, "Hegel et Rosenzweig: le franchissement de l'horizon" in *Hegel et l'Etat.* Trans. Gérard Bensussan. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), xix–xliii; Paul-Laurent Assoun, "Avant-propos, Rosenzweig et la politique: postérité d'une rupture," in *Hegel et l'Etat*, Bensussan, trans., v–xvii; Shlomo Avineri, "Rosenzweig's Hegel Interpretation: Its Relationship to the Development of his Jewish Reawakening," in *Franz Rosenzweig,* International Kassel Conference, vol. II (1986), 831–838; Otto Pöggeler, "Rosenzweig und Hegel," *Franz Rosenzweig,* International Kassel Conference, Vol. II (1986), 839–853; Otto Pöggeler, "Between Enlightenment and Romanticism: Rosenzweig and Hegel," in *The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig,* Paul Mendes-Flohr, ed. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1987), 107–123; and Miriam Bienenstock, "Rosenzweig's Hegel," *The Owl of Minerva* 23.2 (Spring) (1992), 177–182.
10. "Das Älteste Systemprogramm des Deutschen Idealismus, Ein handschriftlicher Fund," reprinted in *Franz Rosenzweig, Der Mensch und sein Werk. Gesammelte Schriften* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984) GS, III, 3–59. Written in the summer of 1914 in Berlin, this analysis was first printed by the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften in 1917, 5. Abhandlung (under the direction of Heinrich Rickert). Against the Schelling-attribution, see, for example, the essays in *Hegel-Studien*, "Das älteste Systemprogramm, Studien zur Frühgeschichte des deutschen Idealismus," Beiheft 9 (1973). Rosenzweig's relationship to Schelling is discussed at length in Else Freund, *Die Existenzphilosophie Franz Rosenzweigs* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1959).
11. See especially Rosenzweig's "Concluding Remark" as translated in the excellent volume, *Frank Rosenzweig, Philosophical and Theological Writings*, translated and edited with Notes and Commentary by Paul W. Franks and Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2000), 79.

12. On dialogue, see Leora Batnitzky, "Dialogue as Judgment, Not Mutual Affirmation: A New Look at Franz Rosenzweig's Dialogical Philosophy," *Journal of Religion*, 79:4 (October, 1999), 523–544.
13. *Briefe*, 57. An die Mutter [Berlin] October 23, 1913.
14. *Briefe*, 59. An Rudolf Ehrenberg. [Berlin] October 31, 1913, p. 71.
15. See especially Stéphane Mosés, *L'Ange de l'Histoire. Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992); and David N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
16. ND, 150.
17. Rosenzweig, "Einleitung" in *Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften* (Berlin: Schwetschke und Sohn, 1924); Vol. I, V–LXIV. Although scholars, then and now, have disputed its accuracy, Rosenzweig's romantic portrait of his old teacher remains deeply appealing. Steven Schwarzschild, "Franz Rosenzweig's Anecdotes About Hermann Cohen" in *Gegenwart im Rückblick: Festgabe für die Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin 25 Jahre nach dem Neubeginn*. (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm Verlag, 1970), 209–218, especially n. 10 and n. 13. For the dispute over Cohen's image, see Jacques Derrida, "Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German," *New Literary History*. 22 (1991), 39–95; and the first chapter of my book, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
18. See Rosenzweig, *Briefe*, Letter No. 364, An Rudolf Hallo (Ende Januar, 1923), 472–473; and comments by Karl Löwith, in *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933*. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung und Carl Ernst Poeschel Verlag, 1986), 138–139.
19. See Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews, A Dual Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).
20. *Briefe*, 539. An die Mutter. October 6, 1929, 631.
21. See Martin Buber, "Zu einer neuen Verdeutschung der Schrift: Beilage zum ersten Band," in Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung*, Vol. I (Berlin: Lambert Schneider, 1956), 44.
22. Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung*, 4th edition. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993). In English as *The Star of Redemption*. William W. Hallo, trans. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985). Hereafter SE. All citations are from the 4th German edition; the number in parenthesis refers to the corresponding passage in the English translation.
23. The line occurs in the third stanza of the poem, "Das Ideal und das Leben," in Friedrich Schiller, *Werke, Band III: Gedichte, Erzählungen*. (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1966), 99–103. Rosenzweig also cites the poem in his lecture notes from 1924, "Glauben und Wissen," first published only in FR, III, 581–595; and recently translated as "Faith and Knowledge" in Franz Rosenzweig, *God, Man, and the World*. Barbara Galli, ed. and trans. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 97–121. For a discussion, see my book, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy*, esp. pp. 143–150.

24. Franz Rosenzweig, *Die 'Gritli' Briefe: Briefe an Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy*. Inken Rühle and Reinhold Mayer, eds. (Tübingen: Bilam Verlag, 2002), letter dated November 27, 1918; 200–201, emphasis in original.
25. SE, 4 (4).
26. SE, 463 (416).
27. Rosenzweig's debt to Dilthey extends back to *Hegel and the State*, the opening pages of which praise Dilthey's hermeneutic method for disclosing the *Weltanschauung* of the young, religiously minded Hegel. See my comments earlier on the Hegel book and in the list of secondary literature in the Bibliography in the present volume.
28. On Rosenzweig's use of Cohen's "principle of origin," see Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp. pp. 257–305.
29. Rosenzweig, "Urzelle" in *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1937), 359.
30. SE, 269 (242).
31. SE, 264 (237).
32. The relation between Rosenzweig and Levinas is discussed in Robert Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), and in Richard A. Cohen, *Elevations: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
33. SE, 290 (260).
34. On alterity as a point of continuity between Rosenzweig and Levinas, see Samuel Moyn, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).
35. GB, 13.4.1918.
36. SE, 182 (203).
37. Franz Rosenzweig, "Bemerkungen über Anthropomorphismus," in *Franz Rosenzweig: Der Mensch und sein Werk, Volume III: Zweistromland* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), 735–746.
38. SE, Hallo trans., 183.
39. SE, 167 (186).
40. SE, 168 (187).
41. As Gil Anidjar has noted, although *The Star* is often praised for religious ecumenicism, it displays a quite poor and stereotypical understanding of Islam.
42. In a dual exploration of theological themes in psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic themes in Rosenzweig, Eric Santner notes that Rosenzweig offers a critique of "Egyptomania" – that is, a critique of neurotic attachment to various "false" investments, such as the investment in state power. See Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
43. SE, 323 (291).
44. SE, 339 (305).
45. SE, 338 (304); Hallo omits the word "dark" in his translation.

46. The claim that Rosenzweig's notion of blood community might be read as ethnicity can be found in the indispensable commentary by Stéphane Mosès, *System and Revelation: The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig*, Foreword by Emmanuel Levinas. Catherine Tihanyi, trans. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).
47. On the Jews' special kind of internal and independent temporality, see especially SE, 364 (328).
48. The Jews are thus never "entirely at home" (*in keinem andern Land mehr ganz heimisch*). Elsewhere he characterizes them as "uncanny" (*unheimlich*), SE, 333 (300). For commentary, see Leora Batnitzky, "Rosenzweig's Aesthetic Theory and Jewish *Unheimlichkeit*," *New German Critique*, 77 (Spring-Summer, 1999): 87–112; and Susan Shapiro, "The Uncanny Jew: A Brief History of an Image," *Judaism* 46, 1 (1997): 63–78.
49. It is worth noting that Rosenzweig believed his philosophical portrait of the Jews bore a close resemblance to Weber's sociological portrait of the "*Pariah-Volk*" in Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale, eds. and trans. (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952), esp. ch. 13, "The Pariah Community," 336–355.
50. Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion.* Trans. E. M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), Preface, 13.
51. On the messianic and mission-theory element in Rosenzweig, see Batnitzky, *Idolatry and Representation*, esp. p. 11.
52. On "constriction," see Richard Cohen, *Elevations: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 21–22.
53. SE, 283 (254).
54. Siegfried Kracauer, "Die Bibel auf Deutsch: Zur Übersetung von Martin Buber und Franz Rosenzweig" Part 1: *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 70, no. 308 (April 27, 1926). Part 2: *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 70, no. 311 (April 28, 1926). In English in Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*. Thomas Y. Levin, trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). Martin Jay, "Politics of Translation: Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin on the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible," in LBIY, XXI (1976), 3–24. From Walter Benjamin, *Briefe an Siegfried Kracauer*. Edited by Theodor Adorno Archiv. (Marbach am Neckar), 1987, 16n. On Benjamin's hostility to Buber, see Momme Brodersen, *Walter Benjamin, A Biography*. Malcom R. Green and Ingrida Ligers, trans. (London: Verso, 1996); and Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin, The Story of a Friendship*. Harry Zohn, trans. (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), esp. circa July 1916. For George Lukács' critique, see Lukács, *Der junge Hegel* (Berlin: Hermann Luchtenhand Verlag, 1966).
55. Gershom Scholem, "On the 1930 Edition of Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption,*" originally published in *Frankfurter Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt,* X (1931), 15–17, reprinted in *Judaica* (Frankfurt am Main, 1963), pp. 226–234, trans. Michael Meyer, Reprinted in Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 320–324.

56. Walter Benjamin, "Bücher, die Lebendig Geblieben Sind." Originally published in *Die Literarische Welt*. May 17, 1929 (Jahrgang 5, Nr. 20), p. 6. Reprinted in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*. III (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), 169–171.
57. See, for example, Theodor Adorno's celebrated remark that "the only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption." From the entry, "Finale," in Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, *Reflections from Damaged Life*. E. F. N. Jephcott, trans. (London: Verso, 1978), 247.
58. Levinas, cited from *Totality and Infinity*, Alphonso Lingis, trans. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press), 28.
59. As Rosenzweig explains, "the eternal people" must "*look upon the world, its own world* as complete." SE, 364 (328), my emphasis.
60. Emmanuel Levinas, "Entre deux mondes. Biographie spirituelle de Franz Rosenzweig," in Amado Levy-Valensis, Eliane, ed. *La Conscience juive. Données et débats* (Paris: Pressses Universitaires de France, 1963), 121–149. Reprinted in *Difficile Liberté.* 3rd ed. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984), 253–281; and "Franz Rosenzweig. L'Étoile de la Rédemption" in *Esprit.* 6, 3 (1982), 157–165.
61. SE, 20 (18).
62. SE, 20 (18).
63. On the Heidegger-Rosenzweig comparison, see Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2003). Rosenzweig's essay contains remarks on Heidegger in the context of the 'Davos encounter' with Ernst Cassirer. See Rosenzweig, "Vertauschte Fronten." Originally published in *Der Morgen*, Vol. VI, No. 6 (April, 1930), 85–87. Reprinted in *Franz Rosenzweig, Der Mensch und sein Werk*, III., 235–238. Also see Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 13. Significantly, Strauss dedicated this book to the memory of Franz Rosenzweig. Also see Karl Löwith, "M. Heidegger and F. Rosenzweig, or, Temporality and Eternity," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Volume III, No. 1. (September, 1942), 53–77, and the German version (with variations), "M. Heidegger und F. Rosenzweig, Ein Nachtrag zu *Sein und Zeit*" in *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, 12, 2 (1958), 161–187. Heidegger, too, one may recall, saw Nietzsche as "*the sole true believer*" of the nineteenth century. See Martin Heidegger's 1943 lecture, 'The Word of Nietzsche: "God is Dead."' Quoted from Karl Löwith, "The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism" in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy, A Critical Reader*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 172.
64. Rosenzweig, "Das neue Denken," in *Kleinere Schriften*, 155.
65. ND, German text, in Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), 391.
66. ND, cited from Galli and Udoff, trans. 92.