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Loving the Neighbor-Thing: Freud with Rosenzweig

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By exploring the theological dimensions of Freud's writings and revealing unexpected psychoanalytic implication in the religious philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig's masterwork, *The Star of Redemption*, I offer an argument for understanding religions of revelation in therapeutic terms. The key concept in this new understanding is "the neighbor." The being whose proximity we are enjoined to inhabit and open to according to the imperative of neighbor love is, for both Freud and Rosenzweig, a subject at odds with itself, split by thoughts, desires, fantasies, and pleasures that it can never fully claim as its own and that, in some sense, both do and do not belong to it. Against this background, love of neighbor and psychoanalytic listening can enter into a new and creative proximity.

I

In recent years, as part of a general effort to dismantle the impediments to tolerance and cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly "global" age, scholars have attempted to historicize those impediments, to provide a genealogy of their origins. The thought and hope behind these efforts is that a better grasp of the historical roots of intolerance and of patterns of ethnic, religious, and national enmity will help the citizens of the new global order work through these antagonisms and establish a genuine "ecumenical" framework for living with difference. Several notable efforts in this regard have traced the origins of the most extreme forms of ethnic, national, and religious antagonism to the invention of monotheism in the West.

Regina Schwarz (1997) argues, for example, that through the dissemination of the Bible in Western culture, its narratives have become the foundation of a prevailing understanding of ethnic, religious, and national identity as defined negatively, over against others. We are ‘us’ because we are not ‘them.’ Israel is not-Egypt [p. x].

Schwartz is careful to note that this negative pattern of identity formation could become a source of real violence, “could only carry force when it was adopted by groups who held the reins of power in Christendom” (p. x). But it is nonetheless with the system of distinctions, or rather, the system for the making of distinctions, introduced into the world through the Hebrew Bible that a new symbolic machinery for the production of extreme forms of enmity and violence entered human history. In Schwartz's view, the principle of this new symbolic machine was that of *scarcity*:

When everything is in short supply, it must all be competed for—land, prosperity, favor, even identity itself. In many biblical narratives, the one God is not imagined as infinitely giving, but as strangely withholding. Everyone does not receive divine blessings. Some are cursed—with dearth and with death—as though there were a cosmic shortage of prosperity. And it is here, in this tragic principle of scarcity, that I find the biblical legacy to culture so troubling [p. xi].

The exemplary instances of identity formation on the basis of a principle of scarcity involve issues of kinship, notably the giving of a blessing to only one of two siblings, a pattern clearly operative in the momentous symbolic investiture of Jacob as “Israel:”

The tragic requirement of collective identity that other peoples must be identified as objects to be abhorred is manifest in the violent exclusions in Israel's ancestral myths of kinship, assuming especially poignant expression in the story of the blessing of Jacob. Here the cost of granting a future to Jacob, that is, the cost of creating Israel... is literally the curse of his brother, Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites.... Structures of inheritance, descent, and the conferral of symbolic property in the narrative are in the service of a system wherein identity is conferred at the cost of the (br)other. The Israelites and the

Edomites cannot enjoy equally blessed futures. Like the divine favor denied Cain, there is not enough blessing to go around [pp. 79-80].

Schwartz ends her study with an urgent appeal to reimagine the biblical narratives with a boldness exemplified by such “revisionist” readers of the Bible as Luther, Milton, and Freud:

My re-vision would produce an alternative Bible that subverts the dominant vision of violence and scarcity with an ideal of plenitude and its corollary ethical imperative of generosity. It would be a Bible embracing *multiplicity instead of monotheism* [p. 176; italics added].

In another recent critique of monotheistic religious traditions, the well-known German Egyptologist, Jan Assmann (1997), has also argued that monotheism has been the single most important impediment to cross-cultural translation, communication, and understanding, and therefore the single most important source of negativity and intolerance in the Western World. According to Assmann, it is only with monotheism that we encounter the phenomenon of a “counterreligion,” that is, a religious formation that posits a distinction between *true and false* religion. Before that, the boundaries between polytheistic—or as Assmann prefers, *cosmotheistic*—cults were in principle open, the names of gods *translatable* from cult to cult because of a shared evidentiary base in nature, i.e., in cosmic phenomena. Translatability is, in such a universe, grounded in and guaranteed by ultimate reference to *nature*. Monotheism, by contrast, because grounded in (revealed) *scripture*, tends to erect a rigid boundary between true religion and everything else, now rejected as “paganism.” “Whereas polytheism, or rather ‘cosmotheism,’ rendered different cultures mutually transparent and compatible, the new counter-religion blocked intercultural translatability. *False gods cannot be translated*” (p. 3; italics added). For Assmann, this rupture in patterns and possibilities of cultural translation and, thus, of a genuine cultural pluralism—a rupture that has been codified in the West as the Mosaic distinction between Israel in truth and Egypt in error—must be understood as a profound historical trauma, and indeed as one that continues to haunt the West in the guise of violence against racial and cultural “others.”

My sense is that such arguments, well-intentioned though they may be, miss something fundamental about monotheism. The crucial problem here lies with the understanding of alterity, of “otherness.” The multiculturalist, pluralist conception of otherness that is in the background

of Schwarz's (1997) and Assmann's (1997) work is limited to the otherness of *predicates*, of more or less fixed sets of cultural, national, sexual, or ethnic orientation and identification—let's call it the otherness of “predicative being.” Within such a framework of understanding one of the privileged strategies of fostering cross-cultural communication is through some form or another of “getting to know you” projects; the thought is that once I have gotten to know the cluster of features that make up the other's orientation in the world, I will no longer fear this other's strangeness; it will, in a word, cease to be strange.

What I argue, however, is that there is another dimension of otherness, one not limited to the foreignness of predicates, of legible cultural markers of a symbolic identity, and furthermore that it is precisely with this dimension of alterity that the Judeo-Christian tradition is ultimately concerned. Equally important to us here, however, is that it is—or at least this is my argument—this dimension or register of alterity that is at the forefront of attention in the tradition inaugurated by Freud's work. What I am suggesting, in other words, is that the “neighbor” we are enjoined to love as ourselves in the Biblical traditions and the *other-with-an-unconscious* to whom one listens with a new kind of care and attention—indeed, why not say *love*!—in the psychoanalytic clinic, are deeply related.

As the Slovenian philosopher, Slavoj **Zizek** (1997) has suggested, we already catch a glimpse of this dimension of strangeness at the level of linguistic experience. Apropos of the elementary experience of trying to understand a word in a foreign language, Zizek writes,

we really understand it only when we perceive how our effort to determine exhaustively its meaning fails not because of the lack of our understanding but because the meaning of this word is incomplete already “in itself” (in the Other language). Every language, by definition, contains an aspect of openness to enigma, to what eludes its grasp, to the dimension where “words fail.” This minimal openness of the meaning of its words and propositions is what makes a language “alive.” We effectively “understand” a foreign culture when we are able to identify with its points of failure: when we are able to discern not its hidden positive meaning, but rather its blind spot, the deadlock the proliferation of meaning endeavors to cover up [p. 50].

I am suggesting, then, that the subject of psychoanalysis and the subject of neighbor-love emerge at the site/sight of just such deadlocks.

II

For me, this correlation of subjects has taken shape through a comparative study of the work of two great German-Jewish thinkers from the first half of the 20th century: Freud, whom I have already mentioned, and Franz Rosenzweig, who is no doubt relatively unknown to many in the psychoanalytic community. Born to an upper-middle class assimilated Jewish family in Kassel in 1886, Rosenzweig was on his way to becoming a professor of intellectual history when he became convinced that no amount of historical or cultural knowledge could provide the points of orientation for the shaping of ethical and political life in European modernity, that a new kind of *subjective* grounding would be required, and, finally, that such a new kind of “subjectivation,” if I might use that clumsy word, could not take place without the resources of theology (this was a view shared by a number of German-Jewish intellectuals of the period, most notably, Walter Benjamin).

At first tempted to convert to Christianity as so many friends and relatives in his circle had already done, he decided, in 1913, to dedicate himself to exploring the resources of his natal tradition (he had actually begun this exploration in preparation for his conversion!). After turning down an offer to begin an academic career in Berlin, he moved to Frankfurt, where he became the cofounder of and instructor at *das Judische Lehrhaus*, an innovative school for Jewish adult education. He undertook, with Martin Buber, a new translation of the Bible into German and wrote essays, reviews, and letters dedicated to the revivification of Jewish life and learning in Germany. In these and other ways he contributed to the great renaissance of Jewish culture in Weimar Germany.

We should also note that, remarkably, a good part of Rosenzweig's considerable productivity as a teacher, author, translator, and community leader was sustained in the midst of his struggle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) to which he finally succumbed in 1929. Rosenzweig's “theory,” if we might call it that, of the sort of subjective grounding he felt was at issue in European modernity he elaborated in his magnum opus, *The Star of Redemption*, which he published in 1921 but largely wrote during his military service during World War I. This enormously difficult philosophical intervention into the crises of modernity by way of an engagement with the religions of revelation has been at the heart of the recent revival of interest in Rosenzweig in North America and Europe; it has served for me as the central resource for thinking through the correlation I have proposed between the subject of neighbor-love and the subject of psychoanalysis.

Before I enter more fully into the details of that correlation, I would like first to note the ways in which it is already adumbrated in the writings of that most famous of Jewish messianic thinkers, Saint Paul. For Paul, too, what is at stake in the “good news” of the messianic advent figured in and through the resurrection of Jesus is the birth of a new kind of subjectivity that traverses and exceeds the markings any sort of cultural identity. As he famously puts it in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (quoted in **Meeks, 1972**). For Paul, this dimension that exceeds the terms of any social construction of identity is precisely the dimension that *situates the neighbor*. Another equally famous section of Romans 13:8ff implores: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandments, are summed up in this sentence, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (p. 89).

Finally, Paul goes on to suggest that the dimension that distinguishes the neighbor from the merely culturally, sexually, socially, or ethnically other and that furthermore makes the task of loving this peculiar entity so challenging, is precisely what Freud would go on to theorize as unconscious mental activity, a certain torsion in one's way of being in the world that both locates and dislocates us in the same stroke. As Paul puts it in Romans 7: 2 Iff: “So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members” (quoted in Meeks, **1972**, p. 80).

This other law at work “in my members” is, I would submit, what psychoanalysis has, from the start, staked out as its privileged sphere of investigation and intervention: a weird automatism of desire lodged in my body-psyche endowing it with an uncanny surplus of animation that both enlivens and deadens, both excites and inhibits, intensifies my existence and narrows the range of my possibilities. Elsewhere (**Santner, 2001**), I have tried to capture these oppositional determinations with the word undeadness, a term associated with the peculiar vitality of vampires and ghosts, elements of past life that have never been laid to rest. In all this it is a matter of capturing the paradoxical simultaneity of stuckness and agitation; we are, in our symptoms, *passionately stuck* (the Lacanians would speak here of a kernel of *jouissance*). I am suggesting that we approach the other as neighbor when we develop the capacity for attunement to this excess

of life that burdens and constrains her. Both Freud and Rosenzweig argue that this capacity comes into view in a new and urgent way under conditions of modernity, conditions that are, I would submit, still very much our own.

III

Before we can begin to address the nature of such attunement, it is crucial to get a handle on this peculiar dimension of existence that places such singular demands on our capacities for care, attention, and love—for tarrying in the proximity of the neighbor. Strangely, perhaps, the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan took a brief remark by Freud apropos of the neighbor as a point of departure for his own idiosyncratic conceptualization of the unconscious and of the ethical core of the analyst's answerability with respect to this dimension. The remark is taken from Freud's (1987) early and experimental text. Speaking of the perceptual experience of another human being—"ein *Nebenmensch*," the human being next to me, my neighbor—Freud writes: "And so the complex of the neighbor divides into two constituent parts the first of which *impresses* [*imponiert*; my emphasis] through the constancy of its composition [*durch konstantes Gefüge*], its persistence as a *Thing* [*Ding*], while the other is *understood* by means of memory-work..." (pp. 426-427; my translation).

What Lacan found to be so important here is the idea that the neighbor—and here he was thinking above all of that unique form of proximity sustained in the psychoanalytic session—enjoys a special sort of opacity that "impresses" rather than lending itself to scientific explanation or hermeneutic interpretation. Paradoxically, the only being that is truly thinglike, that cannot be penetrated by knowledge, is a human being rather than, say, a rock. It is, in other words, spirit rather than matter that enjoys the kind of impenetrable density that we typically associate with materiality. In this sense, both neighbor-love and psychoanalysis are varieties of "materialism."

In his own work—and here we should recall that **Rosenzweig (1921)** began *The Star of Redemption* during WWI—this dimension of the neighbor-thing first comes into view as the locus of death anxiety, as a dense core of existential loneliness that is, at some level, who we most truly are. "Only the singular can die and everything mortal is solitary." It is, in this view, death that separates out, that "distinguishes the singular from the AH" (p. 4). It is death that first endows existence with its singular density and materiality

—which makes it “matter” beyond reason. Rosenzweig characterizes this “materiality” as an “*unverdauliche Tatsächlichkeit*,” an “indigestible actuality outside of the great intellectually mastered factual wealth of the cognitive world” (p. 11). As in Heidegger (1927), the emphasis on finitude is understood here as a challenge to an entire philosophical tradition culminating in German Idealism. Rosenzweig (1921) begins the *Star* with a recantation of that tradition which he sees as exemplified in these famous lines from Friedrich Schiller's poem, “The Ideal and Life:”

If you wish to glide high on the wings [of spiritual form],
Throw off the fear of things earthly!
Flee from the dark and narrow life
Into the Kingdom of the Ideal!

Rosenzweig's polemical recantation (and, typically, Rosenzweig never cites the poem or mentions Schiller) reads:

All cognition of the All originates in death, in the fear of death.
Philosophy takes it upon itself to throw off the fear of things earthly,
to rob death of its poisonous sting, and Hades of its pestilential
breath. All that is mortal lives in this fear of death; every new birth
augments the fear by one new reason, for it augments what is mortal
[p. 3].

In the third book of the first volume of the *Star*, Rosenzweig more fully develops this thought of a death-driven singularity under the heading of the “*metaethical self*,” which he distinguishes from the concept of the “personality.” The personality signifies what is generic about a person, that is, everything about a person that can be subsumed under a concept, that can be subordinated to some sort of universal or genus. For Rosenzweig, the paradigm of this subsumption is sexed reproduction: “Natural birth was... the birth of individuality; in progeniture it died its way back into the genus” (p. 70). Rosenzweig abbreviates this subsumption by the equation $B = A$, signifying the entrance of what is particular, individual, distinctive [*das Besondere*], into the general or universal [*das Allgemeine*]:

Many predications are possible about personality, as many as about individuality. As individual predications they all follow the scheme $B=A$, the scheme in which *all the predications about the world and its parts* are conceptualized. Personality is always defined as an individual

in its relation to other individuals and to a Universal [p. 69; italics added].

But as he quickly adds, “There are no derivative predications about the self, only the one, original B = B” (p. 69). The self, that is, signifies *the part that is no part* (of a whole), a nonrelational excess that is out-of-joint with respect to the generality of any classification or identification.

To put it in the most mundane terms, when one reads “personal ads” in the newspaper, one typically finds listings of the positive attributes someone is searching for in a partner: stable professional life, loves travel, sushi, long walks on the beach, etc. All such attributes belong to the *personality*: any number of people can fit the bill, no one is truly singled out by these generic properties, and any number of other people might identify with the list as the resume of the kind of partner they would want. We are, so to speak, within the order of exchange and substitution, the order of B = A (the typical abbreviations used in personal ads, such as SWF, underline the generality of the “object” being addressed). But as we all know—and here we touch on the truth of what might at first glance look like mere sentimentality—when one truly loves another person, one loves precisely what is *not* generic about them, what can't be substituted for by someone else, in a word, what is irreplaceable.

But this singular “something” that Rosenzweig calls the (meta-ethical) self and that resists generic identification—that has no general equivalent—is not some other, more substantial self behind the personality, not, that is, some sort of true self that, say, assumes an ironic distance to the social roles of the personality; it is, rather, a gap within the series of identifications that constitute it, a lived intimation that this series is “not all.” (In the terms of Jonathan Lear's, 2003, book on therapeutic action, irony is not a stance one psychic agency assumes with regard to others but is rather a constitutive tension of the psychic apparatus as a whole.)

Because the self pertains to that which in some sense persists beyond an individual's teleological integration/absorption into the life of the genus, “we should,” **Rosenzweig (1921)** writes, “be led to the inadequacy of the ideas of individuality and personality for comprehending human life” (p. 70-71). By means of the concepts of *character* and *defiance*, Rosenzweig circumscribes what remains/insists beyond these ideas; the self signifies nothing but the defiant persistence of one's character, its *demonic self-sameness*. This is what Rosenzweig tries to capture by the tautology, B = B: a distinctive

insistence on pure distinctiveness.¹ This insistence of the metaethical self leads him to the idea of the second birth and second death as constitutive features of human existence:

Character, and therefore the self which bases itself on it, is not the talent which the celestials placed in the crib of the young citizen of the earth “already at birth” as his share of the commonweal of mankind [*am gemeinsamen Menschheitsgut*]. Quite the contrary: the day of the natural birth is the great day of destiny for individuality, because on it the fate of the distinctive [*das Schicksal des Besonderen*] is determined by the share in the universal [*den Anteil am Allgemeinen*]; for the self, this day is covered in darkness. The birthday of the self is not the same as the birthday of the personality. For the self, the character, too, has its birthday: one day it is there. It is not true that character “becomes,” that it “forms.” One day it assaults man like an armed man and takes possession of all the wealth of his property.... Until that day, man is a piece of the world even before his own consciousness.... The self breaks in and at one blow robs him of all the goods and chattel which he presumed to possess. He becomes quite poor, has only himself, knows only himself, is known to no one, for no one exists by he. The self is solitary man in the hardest sense of the word: the personality is the “political animal” [p. 71].

Clearly this language suggests that the self emerges or, perhaps better, is “contracted,” in conjunction with some sort of trauma. And indeed, as Rosenzweig then indicates, the “birth” of the metaethical self is correlative to what Freud characterized as the emergence of *Tribschicksal*, the drive-destiny that distinguishes human existence from other creaturely life.

¹ “True, ethos is content for this self and the self is the character. But it is not defined by this its content; it is not the self by virtue of the fact that it is this particular character. Rather it is already self by virtue of the fact that it has a character, any character, at all. Thus personality is personality by virtue of its firm interconnection with a definite individuality, but the self is self merely by its holding fast to its character at all. In other words, the self ‘has’ its character” (Rosenzweig, 1921, p. 72). In his commentary on Schelling's *Weltalter*, the most important philosophical precursor to Rosenzweig's project, Zizek (1996) puts it this way: “That which, in me, resists the blissful submergence in the Good is... not my inert biological nature but the very kernel of my spiritual selfhood, the awareness that, beyond all particular physical and psychical features, I am ‘me,’ a unique person, an absolutely singular point of spiritual self-reference” (p. 59).

In his most explicit characterization of the death-driven singularity of the self, **Rosenzweig (1921)** writes:

Thus the self is born on a definite day.... It is the day on which the personality, the individual, dies the death of entering the genus [i.e., in sexual reproduction].... This speechless, sightless, introverted *daimon* assaults man first in the guise of Eros, and thence accompanies him through life until the moment when he removes his disguise and reveals himself as *Thanatos*. This is the second, and, if you will, the more secret birthday of the self, just as it is the second, and, if you will, the first patent day of death for individuality.... Whatever of the self becomes visible to us lies between these two births of the *daimon* [pp. 71-72].

These lines were, of course, written around the same time that **Freud (1920)** was working on “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” his attempt to think through the connections between the drives, trauma, and the compulsion to repeat. The key idea for our purposes here is that the drives emerge in a specifically human constellation—a “second birthday”—that at some level throws us off the rails of our animal nature. Paradoxically, what is most animallike about us—our sexuality—is precisely where we are most out-of-joint with respect to any animal nature. We might say that whereas animal instincts orient, human drives disorient, leading us along utterly and often painfully idiosyncratic paths and detours. As **Lear (2003)** has put it, “It is only a slight exaggeration to say that there is nothing about human life we hold less in common with animals than our sexuality” (p. 152). In the Lacanian understanding of this “second birthday,” the traumatic advent of our drive destiny transpires as the formation of an addiction to a series of enigmatic signifiers pertaining to the desire of the “big others” in our lives—thus the infamous Lacanian formula, “the unconscious is the discourse of the Other.” We are “driven” because we are penetrated by enigmatic messages emanating from our caregivers and authority figures. It is around just such messages that, to use St. Paul's wonderful formulation, “the law ... which dwells in my members” gets organized.

IV

In a letter written to his cousin in 1917 in which he sketched out the structure of the *Star* (**Rosenzweig, 2000**), Rosenzweig distinguished between two

kinds of love, one which he associated with selfless devotion and surrender—the German word he uses is *Hingabe*—and a second, grounded in an eventful encounter and eliciting a different structure of fidelity. He clearly associated the first form of love with the pagan world—a world we, at some level, never leave—and the second with the religions of revelation, which establish the paradigm of such an eventful encounter. To put it in the terms we have already introduced, the first form of love is, for Rosenzweig, love in the third person, love understood as the giving of one's individuality over to a higher unity, cause, ideal, or totality; love as immersion of self into some sort of greater, more beautiful whole or universal (for Rosenzweig, Goethe was the modern master of such love as a principle of artistic activity and form of life). “Against such love,” Rosenzweig writes,

stands the other that rises out of the event, that is out of the most particular (thing) there is [*dem Allerbesondersten was es gibt*]. This particular goes step by step from one particular to the next particular, from one neighbor to the next neighbor, and denies love to the furthest until it can be love of neighbor. The concept of order of this world is thus not the universal [*das Allgemeine*], neither the *arche* nor the *telos*, neither the natural nor the historical unity, but rather the singular, the event, *not beginning or end, but center of the world* [pp. 56-57].

This eventful or revelatory love, in other words, is aimed not at one's personality, is not an invitation to participate in a system of relations and social exchanges, but is directed, rather, at that compacted, introverted, demonic bit of self-sameness that Freud characterized as one's “drive destiny” and that Rosenzweig abbreviated in the formula $B = B$. If revelation is, as **Rosenzweig (2000)** puts it, “capable of being a *center* point, a fixed, immovable centerpoint,” it is only because

it happens to the *point*, to the motionless, deaf, immovable point, the defiant I, the “I am when all is said and done.” My “freedom,” and to be sure not my freedom as the philosophers lie about it, in that they draw off from it the red blood of arbitrariness and let it run into the vessel of “sensuousness,” of “drive,” of “motives,” and admit as freedom only the bloodless residue of obedience to the law. Rather the total freedom, my full, dull, irresponsible arbitrariness, my whole “this is how I am when all is said and done,” without which every freedom of philosophers is lame from birth [Rosenzweig, **2000**, pp. 57-58].

The paradox Rosenzweig is touching upon here is that my freedom lies precisely there where I also seem to be most immobilized, most frozen in the contingent configuration of the drives that shape my singular, but also singularly constrained, life. The point he is aiming at is that any freedom worth its name will have to be one that does not simply open to new possibilities within an already existing frame of possibilities—within an existing system of world. The possibility for a fundamental shift in this structure is tantamount to a transformation of one's (drive) destiny, of the basic way one is characterologically (dis) oriented in the world. In the final volume of the *Star*, Rosenzweig puts it this way:

What then was the *daimon*, the character as distinct from the personality? Personality was an innate disposition, character something which suddenly overcame a man. Character, then, was no disposition: vis-à-vis the broad diversity of dispositions it was, rather, a dividing line or, better, a direction [*Richtung*]. Once man is possessed by his *daimon*, he has received “direction” for his whole life. His will is now destined to run in this direction which directs him once and for all. By receiving direction he is in truth already corrected [*gerichtet*]. For that which is subject to correction in man [*dem Gericht unterliegt*], his essential will, is already fixed once and for all in its direction [p. 213].

This translation only vaguely captures the series of puns at work in this cluster of terms: direction, correction, to direct. For in German, the word “gerichtet,” translated here as “corrected,” also means *judged* and even resonates with the word for execution (*Hinrichtung*). Direction and law, destiny and judgment, are deeply intertwined here (it is, of course, this very entanglement that forms the target of Paul's polemic against the Law). To put it in more psychoanalytic language, *drive destiny* and *superego* belong together. But Rosenzweig quickly adds to this passage concerning the fixity of our fundamental world-orientation the following: “Fixed, that is, unless there occur the one thing that can interrupt this once-and-for all again, and invalidate the correction [*Gericht*] along with the direction [*Richtung*]: the inner conversion [*die innere Umkehr*]” (p. 213).

Because I've already noted the closeness of this view of things to Lear's (2003) recent psychoanalytic work, let me cite his characterization of what such a conversion might mean. Apropos of a case presentation involving

a woman whose fundamental direction in life was organized around disappointment—who had been, as it were, sentenced to a life of disappointment—he indicates what successful therapeutic action would involve. It would require, he writes,

a moment in which the world itself shifts: there is, as it were, a possibility for new possibilities. This “possibility for new possibilities” is not an ordinary possibility, like all the others, only new. The fact that Ms. C. inhabited a world meant that she lived amidst what for her were all the possibilities there were. For her, there simply was no possibility of experiencing, say, a promotion as a success rather than as a disappointment. One cannot simply add that possibility to Ms. C.'s world piecemeal, as though everything else about her can remain the same, only now it is possible for her to experience promotion as a success. Rather, the order of possibilities itself has to shift so that now success becomes an intelligible and welcome aspect of life. The possibility for new possibilities is not an addition of a special possibility to the world; it is an alteration in the world of possibilities [p. 204].

V

I end these reflections by noting the quandry to which they ultimately lead us. It is the quandry that always arises when one makes use of the language of religious traditions to explore what one otherwise would take to be a strictly human problem, in this case, what it means to radically alter one's frame of possibilities, to intervene into the basic coordinates of one's desire (in Lacanian terms: to traverse one's fundamental fantasies). For Rosenzweig, the chance to experience such a fundamental change of direction in one's life is just what it means to experience the force of divine love, the effects of grace, the event of revelation. What is revealed in revelation is not some truer self, some dark secret buried under the pretenses of our ego-life, our life amidst the multiplicity of identifications we enjoy (or suffer from), but rather, to use a phrase of Harold Bloom's (1987), the “hissings of more life” and the subject capable of becoming answerable to them. For Rosenzweig (2000), however, such blessing's only truly come into view in the practice of neighbor-love instituted by the divine word. As he put it in his letter of 1917, to be touched by the word of God is to enter the space of a

new capacity, a capacity—and indeed, *partisanship*—for intersubjective relations and community beyond the terms of identificatory classifications, of merely predicative being.

[A]fter this word has for the first time opened the deaf ear, man indeed also actually recognizes in the neighbor one who is like him, recognizes him not merely as B2, B3, etc., as fellow inhabitant of the same world, fellow member of the great equation $A=B$ [R. changed this to $B=A$ in the *Star*]... [R]ather I recognize that he *is no He She It, but rather an I*, an I like me, no fellow inhabitant of the same space without direction and middle point, no travel acquaintance along the journey through time without beginning and without end, but rather my brother, the consort of my fate ... my brother not in the world, not in forest and shrub, in bush and water, but rather in the Lord.

That is, only the fact that the word has gone out from the One God to the metaethical self— $B = B$ —only that, Rosenzweig writes,

leads $B = B$ out beyond itself, and only in this *event* that has occurred to it can it think another $B = B$, to which the same has occurred, a neighbor, that is like You. It discovers the other, not from its own *essence* and its heart's pure regions, but rather from the *occurrence* that has occurred to him and from his heart's deafness [Rosenzweig, 2000, pp. 62-63].

Although I don't think that God need or ought to be brought into the psychoanalytic setting, I do think that it can only be productive for those working in and around this field to consider the thought that the kind of love operative in the process of therapeutic action derives its logic and its ethical force from the religious traditions that invented the language of neighbor-love. Moreover, these very traditions have much to gain from the study of the “talking cure.” The marvelous irony here is that the tradition inaugurated by Freud—that most famous of “Godless Jews”—may be our greatest resource for bringing new life and meaning to religious thinking and practice that seeks to be responsive and answerable to that uncanny being, the neighbor-thing.

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Translations of Abstract

Explorando las dimensiones teológicas de los escritos de Freud y revelando la inesperada implicación psicoanalítica en la filosofía religiosa del trabajo principal de Franz Rosenzweig, "La Estrella de la Redención", ofrezco un argumento para el entendimiento de las religiones de la revelación en términos terapéuticos. El concepto dominante en esta nueva interpretación es "el vecino." Aquel ser cuya proximidad nos es impuesta para habitar de acuerdo con el imperativo de lo que amor al vecino es, tanto para Freud como para Rosenzweig, un tema en desacuerdo consigo mismo, dividido por pensamientos, deseos, fantasías,

placeres, nunca puede proclamarse por completo como propio y cual, en cierto sentido, ambos pertenecen y no pertenecen a este. Contra este fondo, amor de vecino y escucha psicoanalítica pueden entrar en una nueva y creativa proximidad.

En explorant les dimensions théologiques des écrits de Freud et en relevant des implications psychanalytiques inattendues dans la philosophie religieuse de l'oeuvre maîtresse de Franz Rosenzweig, "The Star of Redemption", je propose une compréhension des religions de révélation en termes thérapeutiques. «Le prochain» constitue le concept clef de cette nouvelle compréhension. L'être, à proximité duquel on nous enjoint d'habiter et auquel on doit s'ouvrir selon l'impératif de l'amour du prochain, est, selon Freud et Rosenzweig, un sujet en conflit avec lui-même, clivé par des pensées, des désirs, des fantaisies, des plaisirs qu'il ne peut jamais reconnaître comme étant pleinement à soi et, lesquels en même temps, dans un certain sens, sont et ne sont pas à lui. Dans ce contexte, l'amour du prochain et l'écoute psychanalytique peuvent passer à une nouvelle proximité créatrice.

Sulla base dell'esplorazione delle dimensioni teologiche delle opere di Freud e dell'inaspettata scoperta di alcune implicazioni psicoanalitiche nella filosofia religiosa del capolavoro di Franz Rosenzweig "The Star of Redemption" [La stella della redenzione], propongo di comprendere le religioni della rivelazione in termini terapeutici. Il concetto chiave in questa nuova comprensione è quello di "prossimo". L'essere, in prossimità del quale siamo lieti di abitare e verso il quale siamo aperti ad accogliere l'imperativo dell'amore per il prossimo, è - secondo Freud e anche secondo Rosenzweig - un soggetto strano con se stesso, scisso da pensieri, desideri, fantasie, piaceri, non può mai avere delle grandi pretese dato che, in un certo senso, appartiene e nello stesso tempo non appartiene ad esso. Su questo sfondo, l'amore per il prossimo e l'ascolto psicoanalitico possono entrare in una nuova e proficua prossimità.

Ich möchte Argumente dafür liefern, die Religionen der Erlösung auf therapeutischer Ebene zu verstehen, indem ich die theologischen Dimensionen in Freuds Schriften untersuche und die unvermuteten psychoanalytischen Implikationen in der Religionsphilosophie von Franz Rosenzweig in seinem Meisterwerk "Stern der Erlösung" aufzeige. Das Schlüsselkonzept in diesem neuen Verständnis ist "der Nächste". Es wurde uns auferlegt, die Nähe dieses Wesens zu bewohnen und uns ihr zu öffnen gemäß dem Gebot der Nächstenliebe; dieses Wesen ist nach Freud und Rosenzweig ein Subjekt, das mit sich selbst uneins ist, gespalten durch Gedanken, Wünsche, Phantasien, Freuden, die es niemals vollständig als seine eigenen beanspruchen kann und die in gewissem Sinn sowohl zu ihm gehören als eben auch nicht. Auf diesem Hintergrund können sich Nächstenliebe und psychoanalytisches Zuhören auf eine neue und kreative Nähe einlassen.

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