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„Dying for Love“ – Making Sense of an (Unwitting?) Inversion in Franz Rosenzweig’s *Star of Redemption*

1. Letters written, meaning to send

For some years now, I have been participating in conferences and debates on Franz Rosenzweig. A particular development among these debates cannot be overlooked: more or less “postmodern” philosophers seem to engage in slowly wrangling Rosenzweig’s work out of the hands of the narrower theological circles that – in the aftermath of the Shoah – engaged in Jewish-Christian dialogues and drew heavily from the dialogue sections of Rosenzweig’s work. During the last decades, Rosenzweig’s work has been discovered, and subsequently recognized as a towering figure not only behind the work of Emmanuel Lévinas, but also as contemporary to the works of Heidegger, Freud, and Benjamin, and hence, an inspiring source for present philosophy.¹ This article developed out of my contribution to “Rosenzweig for Beginners” about the “heartbook” of the *Star*.² I wish to make sense of a certain real-life problem that underlies his elaborate and much debated theory of love and dialogue. Rosenzweig was proud of being called by his mother, Adele, “profession: writer of letters” (*ein hauptberuflicher Briefeschreiber*).³ Many of his ideas were actually conceived of while writing letters to his friends and relatives. Over the decades there existed, however, a host of letters that were not available to the public, and were only utilized by scholars who had close personal relations with the family.⁴ When the “Letters to Gritli” appeared publicly in 2002, they greatly contributed to interpretations of Rosenzweig’s work, and helped clarify what had, until then, been gossip for dinner-conversations at academic conferences.⁵

The astounding love-story of Gritli and Franz has become a divisive issue in several respects: For some, it was just a juicy addition to their veneration of the spiritual hero, while Edith remained the real heroine. She stayed with him for the duration of his suffering and made it possible for Rosenzweig to produce a good deal of his work at that time. In this heroic marriage, people used to say, his alleged concept of – to put it ironically – “good clean Jewish love” proved to be true (*bewährte sich*).

In accordance with Edith’s will, Gritli’s letters were destroyed, while Franz’s letters survived the Rosenstock family emigration.⁶ Hence Gritli’s own voice remains silent to the readers of the following generations. To interpreters of the *Star*, Rosenzweig’s letters to the wife of his friend Eugen are a great source, as in these letters he commented almost daily on what was then his forthcoming work. Among those who have read the letters carefully, there are some who would say (at the dinner tables of conferences): “Rosenzweig died because of unfulfilled love for Gritli.” Certainly we would dismiss such an idea the morning after and return to our sober conference routine. Yet, whenever we peek into these letters, we feel as though we have returned from a diving tour to a very deep sea and come to the surface with a sad taste, thinking: Instead of walking the way to life and health, as the author had – full of hopes – proclaimed in the end of the *Star*,⁷ he declined into the life of a “good sick man.” Or, as Rosenzweig himself put it, the life of a “ghost,” who teaches what he knows to be true without being able to “live” it.⁸

In fact, Rosenzweig never really gave up on Gritli. To Gritli, he described his marriage with Edith – who knew about this unfinished story when they married – as a killing off of his inner “Liebeskräfte.”⁹ I wish to allow for this sad development in the real – or at least in the self-reflected – life of the author to comment on the high tone of love employed in the central part of the *Star*.

2. *The Second Part of Book II and its relation to Gritli*

As a matter of fact, this chapter of the book has it the other way round: no man dies for love (men die for more sublime causes), but, of course, if any, woman has to face death, when it comes to private “love”. If “in real life” (whatever this may mean) a man only comes close to suffer from unfulfilled love, a collective feeling of “honor”, “justice”, and “tradition” will make sure that a good clean female death will resolve his pain. Of course, in philosophy, things sound more “sober” and more “deep” simultaneously. Beginning with the famous quotation of *Song of Songs* 8:6, Rosenzweig already states on the first page:

It is true first for the beloved that love is as strong as death. Moreover, nature has given only the woman, and not the man, the capacity to die of love.¹⁰

Der Geliebten zunächst gilt es, dass die Liebe stark ist wie der Tod. Wie nur dem Weibe, nicht dem Manne die Natur es gesetzt hat, an der Liebe sterben zu dürfen.¹¹

To the modern reader this claim will prove contentious, no matter how hard-boiled she may be. It was a bit too much for me when I first read it, even though I was already well-trained in silently passing over all those disturbing gender biases that philosophers of earlier generations took for granted. And although I was a little intoxicated by compassion for the unhappy author of these lines, I still thought, “I should take a closer look.” In a way, this would be the very gesture by which I could prove what I had learned from the Jewish philosopher who, in his time, had to face a somewhat parallel problem: Hadn’t he gained his strength precisely by *not* silently passing over the anti-Semitism that was everywhere, not only in the texts, but also in the reality of German universities and armies at the beginning of the twentieth century? It is true that Rosenzweig did confront Antijudaism, especially *Christian* Antijudaism in the – systematically speaking – toughest and most substantial way.

Here our questions induced by “identity” (his as the question a Jew has towards Christian philosophizing, mine as the question a woman has towards male projections concerning love) cross: At the center of Rosenzweig’s resistance against Rosenstock’s permanent pressing towards conversion is Rosenzweig’s definition and description of love – the very *leitmotif* of Christian religion, if you believe its believers. Love, with Rosenzweig, seems to have been, at the same time a heartfelt real love as it was a weapon in a fight, a means of resistance or even more. In attempting to describe his struggle with Eugen Rosenstock in work and life, we might feel tempted to state that in life he lost the fight that he won in philosophy. The existential roughness of the two men’s conflict – which reflects the symbolic struggle between the two religions taking part in it – has been mollified not only by the emphasis on love and dialogue throughout Rosenzweig’s work, but even more so by its reception. The very fact of the author’s illness, as well as the near-holiness ascribed to him by contemporaries like Buber, Glatzer, and others, has done its work smoothing the rough edges of this fight.

But what role does love have in this fight between the two religions, and what particular part is played by the women involved? Rosenzweig’s turn to the law is usually described as a melting move, or at least as a move towards reconciliation.¹² Because he wrote so beautifully about love, and

because he opened a space where Christians and Jews could both feel good, even Christians could pardon his “Jewish stubbornness.” Those who did not subsume his love-chapter and his love-story with Gritli and Eugen to psychoanalytical patterns, find in the *Star* an apologetic of the absolute, or a philosophical support for theology, or a mystical legitimation of revelation that served Christian and Jewish purposes almost equally well in a time of unceasing secularization. The psychoanalytical reading, on the other hand, seems to work out nicely when analyzing the personal story that underlies the writing of the *Star*: The young man’s path from narcissism to maturity through a process of triangulation. At the end of this process, the initial head of the Jewish House of Study (*Lehrhaus*) in Frankfurt emerges, and agrees to the sacrifices that have to be offered in order to fulfill the great task of cultural work.

But could any of these readings really do justice to the man, the work, and the reader? If I protest the idea mentioned at the outset – that a woman should consider it a privilege that nature allows her to die for love – how would I accept that this man should be allowed to emotionally (and later, literally) die for his work; this very man who so fervently defended the soul’s protest against the death of the singular human being, the bearer of a proper name?

I am not going to start a revolution here. However, I think that in all of the harmony there remains a point of disagreement, a point of disturbance, a remnant of remnants that still says “no” to the smooth resolution of the affair, to the fate of the good sick man, and to death itself. Once upon this track, I was sure to find the disagreement in a slightly deviant reading of the very chapter of the *Star* written during an emotional and intellectual “height,” one Rosenzweig was sure he would never reach again in his life and writing.¹³

To me it seems as if this height was connected to the trembling speechlessness he expressed in one of his most intense letters to Gritli on August 15th 1918:

Dear Gritli,

– I am sitting in silence in front of these two words and do not want to write anything else, I don’t even have to write anything more, – and have I ever written anything else but these two words to you?

Liebes Gritli,

– ich sitze ganz stumm vor den zwei Worten und möchte weiter gar nichts schreiben, habe

auch eigentlich gar nichts weiter zu schreiben, - und habe ich dir denn eigentlich je etwas anderes geschrieben?¹⁴

These words seem to express what he would only a few weeks later analyze as the experience of the ‘beloved soul’ and of the ‘loving soul’ melted into one. The centerpiece of the *Star* is probably the most precise description of the opposite to the conversion, for which Eugen Rosenstock so restlessly pressed his ‘friend’. It is the chapter in which, what I have elsewhere termed ‘anti-conversion’¹⁵ reveals how it becomes inversion.

It is indeed helpful to use the figure of “inversion” (*innere Umkehr* in his words) as a general key to Rosenzweig’s work. Inversion is at work when it comes to his attitude towards Christianity.¹⁶ It is a lack of sense for the inversion entailed in revelation for which he blames Islam.¹⁷ And inversion is at work as well when it comes to dealing with Hegelian philosophy.¹⁸ Inversion is certainly at work when Rosenzweig chooses, of all Biblical texts, *Song of Songs* as the central reference for his notion of revelation as he unfolds it in the second part of the *Star*.¹⁹ A series of brilliant inversions purify his attitude towards Jewish thought when it comes to apologetics, in one of his most important essays from the Lehrhaus-period, *Apologetisches Denken*.²⁰

However, inversion as a process is in need of a pivot point somewhere. Given the symmetrical architecture of the *Star*, one would certainly not go astray when looking for such a pivot point in the book Rosenzweig himself called “das Herzbuch”. While almost everything in this book’s inversions is perfectly functioning, its outer story – as it is documented in his letters to Gritli – provides for a second-level inversion that may have escaped Rosenzweig’s attention, or, more likely, he was fully aware of it and consciously suffered from its consequences, against which he had no remedy. In a letter from November 2, in 1918, Franz wrote to Gritli:

This book II 2, that I am just now writing, is even more yours than the Gritlium, precisely because it has not been dedicated to you from the beginning and is not dedicated to you now. It is not ‘for’ you but – yours. Yours – like I am. Sometimes I feel as if I were a child that does not know how to write, no matter how much he wants it, and you would direct my pen. Go on doing it, beloved.

Dies Buch II 2 an dem ich jetzt schreibe gehört dir noch viel eigener als das Gritlium, grade weil es nicht von vornherein für dich bestimmt war und es ja auch jetzt nicht ist. Es ist nicht „Dir“ aber – dein. Dein – wie ich. Manchmal ist mir, als wäre ich ein Kind, das nicht schreiben kann und es doch gern möchte und du führtest mir die Feder. Tu’s weiter, Geliebte.²¹

It would be mistaken to reduce the book’s content and rationale merely to a personal story, and I am far from attempting to do so.²² Rather, this letter gave me a further clue to the interpretation of Rosenzweig’s ideas as expressed in the central part of the *Star*. It provided a clue that solved two problems at once: It helped me confront the existential gender bias at the center of the very notion of “love,” and at the same time allowed me to preserve by a comparatively small move concerning the imagery, the splendid nucleus of Rosenzweig’s message as well as the deep respect for the suffering individuals in this story.

3. *A Changing of Imagery*

My attempt to make sense of the book’s discourse on the possibility of dying for love and the reality of another dying for love will be a detour on imagery. This detour will serve two functions: First, it will reaffirm the hermeneutical insight of how much all our systematic thinking is dependent on metaphorical relations to experiences in real life, and how far the repercussions of the metaphors used for systematic purposes work in reshaping our real lives. Second, it will not only make Rosenzweig’s work the object of a psychoanalytical interpretation, but such a detour will utilize a certain development in psychoanalysis to better illustrate the philosophical point Rosenzweig is trying to make in this chapter.

Rosenzweig writes to Gritli that he sometimes feels as if he were her child and she were his mother helping him write things a child could never write without a guiding hand. Corresponding to this is a sentence in the book itself, which reads: “For man, the woman is always mother.”²³ (*Das Weib ist dem Manne immer Mutter.*)²⁴ In the context intended by Rosenzweig, this passage marks the *second* inversion inside the deity itself. Just as in the *first* inversion the divine arbitrariness changes its nature *by the very process of creation* in order to become continuous creative power, so now his “eternal being” (*sein ewiges Wesen*) is transformed *by the very process of revelation* into a love that is always young as in the first moment. In Rosenzweig, God’s love is the love of the loving soul, “die Liebe des Liebenden” (*the love of the lover*). While much has been said in literature about the process character of these transformations by revelation, and about the way the God of “true revelation” changes his nature from a petrified and petrifying mythical deity into the event of a

living God who is acting out his love toward his creatures in every single moment; comparatively little attention has been paid to the question of God's motherly attributes. But the imagery on which Rosenzweig draws when describing God's situation before his revelatory crossing of the Rubicon (i.e., before the transformation of his God from a silent eternal being into the subject of living and loving action) is obviously classical imagery of the "motherly principle."²⁵

What would happen to our understanding if we transferred all his explanations concerning the inversive process of the revelation of love between the loving soul and the beloved soul from the realm of erotic love to the realm of primordial love between a mother and a child? In regards to love between man and woman, Rosenzweig himself was not entirely happy with his transferring language. Even if he sticks to the idea of a natural order, he admits that between real lovers:

The roles of the one giving love and the one receiving love go back and forth, although the roots of their sexuality always re-establish the unambiguous relationship of nature. (Galli 183)

die Rollen des Liebe Gebenden und Liebe Empfangenden hin und her [gehen], obwohl von den Wurzeln der Geschlechtlichkeit her sich immer wieder das eindeutige Verhältnis der Natur wiederherstellt. (Stern, 189)

Thus we transfer everything Rosenzweig associates with the beloved soul from the imagery of the female in an erotic relationship into the language of a small child, while transferring everything that is said about the loving soul from the imagery of a male lover into the language of a mother in early parenting. By doing so, we might make a leap in understanding the next step of Rosenzweig's proceedings concerning the mutual creation of man and God in this chapter of his work.

Rosenzweig writes:

Just as Creation is under the sign of the Yes, Revelation is under the sign of the No. Its original word is No. But its first audible word, its "root word," is I. (Galli 187)

Wie die Schöpfung im Zeichen des Ja, so steht die Offenbarung im Zeichen des Nein. Nein ist ihr Urwort. Ihr erstes lautes aber, ihr „Stammwort“, heißt Ich. (Stern, 193)

As to the love of the loving soul, this changing of imagery makes sense in more than one respect: First of all, it is the mother from whom the child

emerged, which is now there as an ‘other’ in an emphatic sense of the word. The baby signals by its mere being (or by crying) an unconditioned demand to be loved. There is a desire to love in the mother, but also the possibility to leave the child in the status of a ‘thing’ and to drop back into her own “oceanic silence” (*Meeresstille*, Galli 172; Stern, 177) after having given birth to the child. The specific motherly love is attraction to the child’s helplessness and imperfection rather than its not yet developed virtues, and motherly love grows (if things work out as they ‘should’) a little day by day, as Rosenzweig describes it, for the love of the loving soul. To the mother, the love for her child is an overwhelming experience, fresh and new with every single get-together and each new development in the beloved child. The parental love calls the child by its name into being and affirms this being every time it calls the object of love by its name. Furthermore, the mother or the parent is herself only mother inasmuch as she becomes active in revealing herself as loving parent to the child. It is precisely these actions that Rosenzweig, in the second chapter of Book II, attributes to the love of the loving soul.

The imagery regarding the love of the beloved soul seems to fit even better to the situation between a newborn or a small child and its mother. It is the baby that is utterly dependent upon the love of its caring parent. To the baby, the time before the parental call is like no time at all. The beloved baby (again if things work out as they ‘should’) can rely quietly and in continuous confidence on the love of the loving parent even if this parent is not present at all times to the same degree. And (if things do *not* work out as they ‘should’) the baby will and can die for love. The young child’s soul literally cannot live on without being loved and – as many sad stories of brutally failed parenthood attest – will rather die than give up on a failing parent. Finally, the effect of the successful asymmetrical exchange between a loving mother and a beloved child is nowhere better described than in Rosenzweig’s sentences on the relationship between the loving God and the beloved human soul after the dialogical process of revelation, as will be clear from a combination of two following lengthier quotations:

Certainly, already beforehand, nothing could separate it from God, but this was only because in its absorption in the present it saw nothing outside of itself. Now it can open its eyes with full serenity and look around itself in the world of things [...] The soul can make its way into the world, open-eyed and without dreaming; from now on it steadfastly stays near God. The “You are mine” that is said to it draws a protective line around wherever

it sets foot; it now knows that it only has to stretch out its right hand to feel God's right hand coming to meet. It can now repeat: 'My God, my God.' Now can it pray. (Galli 198)

Gewiss, schon vorher konnte ihn nichts von Gott scheiden, aber doch nur, weil er in seiner Vertiefung in Gegenwärtiges nichts außer sich sah. Jetzt darf er ruhig die Augen öffnen und um sich schauen in die Welt der Dinge [...] Die Seele kann mit offenen Augen und ohne zu träumen sich in der Welt umtun; immer bleibt sie nun in Gottes Nähe. Das ‚du bist mein‘, das ihr gesagt ist, zieht einen schützenden Kreis um ihre Schritte. Sie weiß nun, dass sie nur die Rechte auszustrecken braucht, um zu fühlen, dass Gottes Rechte ihr entgegenkommt. Sie kann nun sprechen: mein Gott, mein Gott. Sie kann nun beten. (Stern, 205)

Here, you can almost hear the child saying "Mama."

At the end of the process (and of Book II, Part II), the beloved soul learns to speak for itself and to leave the inner circle of being loved. Again, experienced and attentive parents as well as any person familiar with the systematic descriptions of early childhood developments will recognize the pattern in this quotation concerning the access to the world:

[These forms of access to the world] are no longer offered to it through the love of the lover, this love from which it had always till now awaited the cue for giving an answer. If this longing is to be fulfilled, the beloved soul must step out of love's magic circle in which it is loved and forget the lover and itself open its mouth, no longer to answer, but to speak in its own name. For in the world, it is not a matter of being loved, and he who is loved must behave as if it depended only on himself and as if he was not loved, and as if all his love was not being loved, but – loving. And when the soul emerges from the miracle of divine love to enter into the earthly world, it is only in the most secret place of its heart that it will be able to preserve the word of the ancients which gives strength and a blessing for what it still must do, through the memory of what it experienced in that magic circle. As he loves you, so shall you love. (Galli 219f.)

[Diesen Zugang zur Welt] stiftet ihr nicht mehr die Liebe des Liebenden, von der sie bisher stets das Stichwort erwartet hatte, um Antwort zu geben. Soll dieser Sehnsucht Erfüllung werden, so muss die geliebte Seele den Zauberkreis der Geliebtheit überschreiten, des Liebenden vergessen und selber den Mund öffnen, nicht zur Antwort mehr, sondern zum eigenen Wort. Denn in der Welt gilt nicht das Geliebtsein, und das Geliebte darf es hier nicht anders wissen, als wäre es allein auf sich angewiesen und ungeliebt, und alle seine Liebe wäre nicht Geliebtheit, sondern ewig – Lieben. Und nur im geheimsten Herzen mag sie bei diesem ihrem Gang aus dem Wunder der göttlichen Liebe heraus in die irdische Welt der Alten Wort bewahren, das dem, was ihr zu tun bevorsteht, durch die Erinnerung des in jenem Zauberkreis Erlebten Kraft und Weihe gibt: Wie er dich liebt, so liebe Du. (Stern, 228)

There is no better description of the way in which a grown-up human being, ready to desire and to love and to think for herself, has transformed into a loving soul who can yet treasure the primeval love she was lucky to experience in early infancy. A last quotation will illustrate how closely Rosenzweig’s concern is connected in this chapter to a psychology of the “I.”

In a letter from November 15th 1918, Rosenzweig writes:

Dear Gritli, II 2 is ready. After that I went to the library to look up something and to add a little learned bombshell (i.e. that the word ‚me‘ – French ‚Moi‘, not ‚Je‘ – appears more often in the Song of Songs than in any other Biblical book.

Liebes Gritli, II 2 ist fertig. Dann ging ich auf die Bibliothek, um etwas nachzusehn und einen kleinen gelehrten Knalleffekt hineinzusetzen (nämlich, dass das Wort „Ich“ – frz. „Moi“, nicht „Je“ – im Hohen Lied häufiger vorkommt als in irgendeinem andern biblischen Buch).²⁶

4. *The Song of Songs as a Grammatical Proof of the Existence of God*

It is difficult to discern whether Rosenzweig merely added this observation – of the “I” being the most prominent word in the Song of Songs²⁷ – as an effect to the work, or whether he actually built the entire argument upon it. One of Rosenzweig’s typical moves in his love letters was to quickly change from very intense moments of “revealing” his heart and “speaking” his love to playful, almost gossipy, very light-hearted talk about his situation, common acquaintances and his philosophical work. It seems to me that the “I” insisting on being the very “I” it *is*, is very important to Rosenzweig – not only inside the argument but also in his own struggle with Eugen Rosenstock. Perhaps the glamorous move in this chapter, by which he says that the stubbornness of the I transforms into fidelity of the beloved soul, is – in his personal life – the very force that hinders him from really getting out of the auto-destructive relationship to Eugen and Gritli.

Not by chance does Rosenzweig claim that the Song of Songs is “the core book of revelation” (*das Kernbuch der Offenbarung*). It is not by chance that he opens the second part of his second book with the reading of Song of Songs 8,6: “for love is strong as death.” However, while much notice has been taken of the stated strength of love, time has come to ask for the *weaker* powers, in comparison to which death and love are held

to be so strong. The time has come to ask even further how Rosenzweig manages to gain a pivot *point* of inversion from such a *parallel* – if he does so at all. And the time has come to ask again, how, on the one hand, love is supposed to be as strong as death, when it can be considered a privilege to die for love’s sake on the other.²⁸

I won’t repeat here what has been explained in many a work on Rosenzweig: How his adversary is the philosophy of idealism, which, as he puts it in the chapter at hand, fell prey to the fearful error as if its own “creation” of the universe were already the universe itself.²⁹ It is obvious that Rosenzweig’s “Sprachdenken” is all about the introduction of the difference between not only God, World and Man, but also between the person speaking and the person listening, the reality of their encounter *in time*, and the fact that each speaker is also a potential listener and vice versa. However, if this is so, language can be both all and nothing. Language itself can live, die or kill. Language can be a dead way of mounting words. It can glamorously claim to create things, which in reality it cannot do. Or it can reveal, and by this revelation – in fact and in actual reality – create the pure presence of love. This latter, language’s ability to create the pure presence of love, however, is only possible if there are beings stable enough in themselves, whose desire for love and whose love can be awakened by an act of speaking. If so – and if we do not agree with the idealistic idea that language could create something out of nothing – what is happening in the act of speaking in Rosenzweig’s thought? And how would it translate into the theories of love between men and women or between parents and children? As far as I’m concerned, I have, of course, referred to the love between mother and baby, in order to come to grips with Rosenzweig’s description of the loving and the beloved soul – I hope to hereby save the plausibility of his argument, even if I cannot befriend myself with Rosenzweig’s philosophy of love, if I leave it in the realm of the erotic. It was for a reason that we invested decades of fighting the gender bias in this respect. Remains the question for the legitimacy of my approach. Can this be a valid interpretation of the text?

Rosenzweig’s “bombshell” – an addition to the chapter he had just finished – may offer at least a pointer. As his remark on the “I” in the Song of Songs stands now, it looks like a very natural part of the argument: God as creator is alone, as long as his creation is only “a thing” or a world of things. He is even in danger of sinking back into the silence of his mere being. What Rosenzweig calls the “Dinghaftigkeit” of the creation, is also

termed a “*wall*”. Every weak language, then, is language that remains inside the walls of the permanent past tense of creation. All scholarly language, for Rosenzweig, belongs in this realm of the half-real. (This would, for him, certainly also apply to the language in which he himself is being put on the couch by the authors mentioned above. It would apply to the language of psychoanalysis in general.) To the language of the half-real, words like “creation”, “revelation”, and “redemption” are not a “house” but only a “courthouse,” to which a merely “created” person/ thing is being called in order to be classified or qualified or just questioned. Having a name, being called by a proper name, is already a beginning. To be called by a proper name means that one is entitled to be the resident of a real house. However, the divine call is nothing (and even renders the deity to *be* nothing) without the answer. The first answer of the created being to all other questions (except the calling of the name) is “no.” However, as such, it paves the way to the pivot point of inversion, in which the creator and the created, the loving soul and the beloved soul, exchange their key positions for a while – for a time of mere presence, imaginable or unimaginable as it may seem.³⁰ What Rosenzweig does here is the construction of an inversion with far reaching consequences. There seems to be a point (in Rosenzweig’s idea of dialogical revelation) at which the mortal human soul (the beloved) is the force that provides for “lasting” or constancy, while the eternal God is the one who, in his fresh and punctual love for his creatures, wanders from singular moment to singular moment, giving himself fully to each and every single moment. It is this point which is being prepared for by the basso continuo of the I=No.³¹ In the *Star*, what has been described as the effect of a bombshell (“Knalleffekt”) in the letter, reads as follows:

No book in the Bible exists where the world I recurs proportionally more often than here. And not merely the unemphatic I, but also, with the same frequency, the emphatic I, which is precisely the root word in the proper sense, the No become audible [...] In the whole of the book, there is only one brief passage where I remains silent [...] These are the words of love, which is as strong as death. (Galli 216f.)

Es gibt kein Buch in der Bibel, in dem verhältnismäßig das Wort Ich so häufig vorkäme wie hier. Und zwar nicht bloß das unbetonte, sondern durchaus auch das betonte, das ja das eigentliche Stammwort, das lautgewordene Nein ist. [...] Es gibt in dem ganzen Buche nur eine einzige kurze Stelle, wo er [der Grundton des Ich] schweigt. [...] Es sind die Worte von der Liebe, die stark ist wie der Tod. (Stern, 225)

Everything said up to this point was what can be said in a reifying manner *about* love. To follow is only the *speaking of* love itself. Rosenzweig pulls his lengthy interpretation of the Song of Songs (which is a brilliant piece of sarcastic commentary on the presumptions of exegetical discourse over the centuries) beyond the limit of just another Biblical interpretation and turns it into a proof of the existence of God by way of “grammar and more”:

For it is not possible for love to be “purely human.” When it begins to speak – and this it must do, for there exists no other utterance spoken besides itself than the language of love – so when love speaks, it is already changed into something superhuman; for the sensuous character of the word is full to the brim with its divine supra-sensuous meaning, like language itself love is at once sensible and supra-sensuous. (Galli 216)

Die Liebe kann gar nicht „rein menschlich“ sein. Indem sie spricht – und sie muss sprechen, denn es gibt gar kein andres aus sich selber Heraussprechen als die Sprache der Liebe – indem sie also spricht, wird sie schon ein Übermenschliches; denn die Sinnlichkeit des Worts ist randvoll von seinem göttlichen Übersinn; die Liebe ist, wie die Sprache selbst, sinnlich-übersinnlich. (Stern, 224.)³²

All this is nicely put together and makes perfect sense. It has been interpreted over and over again, and rightly so, as it marks a great advantage in the philosophical thinking of the relations between humans and between man and God – if this is a discourse one wishes to participate in at all. It could be of great value to everybody who thinks about language and about what happens between humans when they “speak love.” The crown of this part is certainly the point where Rosenzweig adds some *midrashic* wisdom that says God himself only exists if attested to by a human soul as his other.

When the soul confesses before the face of God and with this confesses and thus attests God’s being, then only does God, too, the manifest God, acquire being: “When you confess me, then I am.” (Galli 196)

Indem die Seele vor Gottes Antlitz bekennt und damit Gottes Sein bekennt und bezeugt, gewinnt auch Gott, der offenbare Gott, erst Sein: „Wenn ihr mich bekennt, so bin ich.“ (Stern, 203)

Furthermore, with these moves, Rosenzweig certainly has achieved what we could call in psychoanalytical terms, a “triangulation.” In addition, he has managed to set the beloved soul into the biblical imagery of God himself. In the love-revealing dialogue the beloved soul has won a victory

over death, even if this might last only for the moment. Love’s strength over death is emphasized when Rosenzweig writes about the *beloved soul*:

The ground under it is not swallowed up but overcome. The soul hovers above it. (Galli 217)

Der Grund liegt unter ihr, nicht versunken, aber überwunden. Sie schwebt darüber. (Stern, 226)³³

For a while, love has elevated the soul into the place of the biblical “ruakh elohim.” Only then has the process of revelation between the loving soul and the beloved soul revealed the two of them to full reality. From now on, with two souls fully developed in some processes of inversion and exchange, the imagery of love might truly shift into a scene between two adult lovers, who speak their love in the presence or in the language of God as the *third* who is always present when the two are together.³⁴

5. Two directions and the problem of sacrifice

It is a great temptation (and I would certainly not be the only scholar falling prey to this temptation), to merely recount the book’s rich wording about the sublime joy of love. How the souls die into each other, producing and suffering the overflow of love; how God yearns to love his creatures so much that he is ready to deny himself in order to be recreated when speaking his love; how the beloved soul comes into being by denying its past; how they take hold of each other in mutual love; how they give up on their “I” to have themselves rebuilt by and in the love of the other, and so on. One who has felt love will not be deaf to this language, nor will they be unmoved after reading the accompanying love-letters to Gritli.

We might, however, be at risk to forget about the problem of the (so-called?) female “privilege” to die for love and the impression that Rosenzweig himself might have died for love. Again I wish to draw on the letters from November 1918. On November 8, Rosenzweig reports from Freiburg, writing about his difficult state of mind. He then addresses Gritli directly, speaking about a great “flood” of letters from her:

“I am so happy that you are there, without any order. No, Gritli, you must live, you don’t have to reach an old age, we all won’t reach an old age anyway; but for the time being you have to live.”³⁵

Gritli was deeply affected by (or empathized with) the death of a com-

mon acquaintance and expressed that it would have been better if she herself had died. Unfortunately, the editors of the printed version have left out a sentence from Rosenzweig's answer, which seems to be of great importance to his fantasies in those days. As the internet-transcription reads, Rosenzweig writes:

“We shared the same feeling when the news arrived that Doris had passed away. I received your letter much later. But it felt as if she has gone down there like a sacrifice in your place. A horrible feeling, but so it came.”³⁶

His honesty is telling. Read in the context of his comments to the von Beckeraths in the preceding passage of the letter, and given that he was quite traditional, even in his generation, it is no real wonder that he sees Gritli as the sinner in their ménage à trois – and not so much himself (although he will later write a lot on divine wrath that he experiences to be as real as divine love). To almost all traditional ideas of proper behavior in marriage, she certainly was the sinner. But so was he, as he was intruding into a marriage. Cultural productions, in which similar constellations are being solved by the death of the woman outnumber any other fictional solution until this day: only a dead woman could atone for the sin of “adultery”. Traditionally, if the man is part and parcel of the “sinful act” or even its initiator, it is the woman who has to die for the act. In contrast, the man, however sinful he may be, is supposedly cleansed by the death of the woman. This traditional idea of the woman dying for the love of two sinners found its way into the *Star*, long before the real case of Ms. von Beckerath could make Rosenzweig transfer it to his own “sinful” love affair.

I wish, however, to go a little further in my ponderings of transgressions. Perhaps the writing of the heart-book of the *Star* was in more than one way the pivot point for the love between Gritli and Franz. In light of the Gritli-letters, I could not help reading the final parts of this book as the last outcry of hope that Gritli might make up her mind and decide for Franz. See, for instance, his paraphrasing of Song of Songs 8,1:

The beloved implores the lover to tear open the heavens of his eternal presence, which resist her longing for an eternal love, and to come down to her so that she can set herself like a seal upon his ever-throbbing heart and like a ring that fits firmly on his never-resting arm. (Galli 219)

Die Geliebte fleht, der Liebende möge den Himmel seiner allzeitlichen Gegenwärtigkeit zerreißen, der ihrem Sehnen nach ewiger Liebe trotzt, und zu ihr herniederfahren, auf

dass sie sich ihm wie ein ewiges aufs immerzuckende Herz legen kann und wie ein fest umschließender Ring auf den nimmerrastenden Arm. (Stern, 228)

Had Gritli spoken her love and decided in favor of Franz as her husband, her choice could have been seen as a plain victory and a real change. Eugen, the Jew, “one of the best,” as Rosenzweig was convinced, was lost to Christianity – not for pragmatic reasons in an anti-Semitic society, but because he was a real believer. He would lose his Christian wife to the very Jew whom he had urged in vain to convert to Christianity. It would be a victory won not in plain rivalry, but in the middle of love! To fulfill the very moment of love and revelation emphasized in the centerpiece of the *Star*; it was all in Gritli’s hand.

But Gritli did not choose Franz. Neither did she die.³⁷ Their affair went on, continuing to bring happiness and suffering to all its participants, but when Rosenzweig passed in his writing from the second to the third part of the book, he wrote to her:

I am going on to write in this half numbness so that I can hardly remember what I have written, but it all grows together nicely. But I long for you much more than I did when writing II 2. When I wrote that it was all the while as if you were with me when I was writing, that was beautiful. Now you are not with me when I’m writing, so I have to see you otherwise during the day.

Ich schreibe so in dieser halben Besinnungslosigkeit weiter, so dass ich mich hinterher kaum entsinne was ich geschrieben habe, und doch wächst immer alles ganz gut zusammen. Aber ich sehne mich jetzt mehr nach dir als bei II 2. Da war es eigentlich, als ob du immer dabei warst, wenn ich schrieb; das war immer sehr schön. Jetzt bist du beim Schreiben nicht dabei und so sehe ich dich sonst am Tag.³⁸

It is still definitely a love letter, and still this love is definitely very much an imaginary one, as the lovers don’t share much time together. But the imagination of fusion and permanent presence has given way to the language of longing – which both presupposes and includes knowledge about the reality of distance.

No sacrifice will help. As soon as Rosenzweig realized that he would be forced to sacrifice his love for Gritli and his dreams of winning over his rival, he seems to have collapsed. Long before all this happened, in his “I therefore remain a Jew” letter (“Ich-bleibe-also-Jude”), he wrote about his earlier attitude towards Christianity and Judaism: begrudging the church its historical victory. Perhaps, in his great audacity, he had

hoped at least to gain a momentary victory over Eugen. Some of his keen inversions in the book may – with further study – turn out to be a mounting achievement in regaining what had been taken from Judaism in the history of Christian anti-Jewish polemics. However, at least in the centerpiece of the *Star*, Rosenzweig came very close to offering a “Christian” and a “religious” argument rather than a “Jewish” one. When writing the *Star*, he must have been aware of what his Jewish teacher, Hermann Cohen, would have thought on the exchange between man and God, and particularly on sacrificing. For Cohen, monotheism, with its law and revelation, was all against sacrificing, particularly human sacrifice for one very clear reason:

In pagan consecration feasts, which are the climax of the sacrificial cult, with its asceticism as well as its voluptuousness, the difference between God and man is supposed to be abolished. In his sacrifice the Israelite never had such an immediacy: in his sacrifice the priest always stands between him and God. The Israelite could wish to become a priest, but never God. This is also the reason for overcoming the tendency to human sacrifice. The man or woman being sacrificed to God is supposed to become of God’s kind. Such a goal is considered blasphemous in the Mosaic law, and therefore human sacrifice could become an abomination.³⁹

In den Weihen, welche den Gipfel des Opferkultus bilden, mit ihrer Askese, wie mit ihrer Buhlerei, soll eben die Differenz zwischen Gott und Mensch aufgehoben werden. Eine solche Unmittelbarkeit hat der Israelit niemals in seinem Opfer: immer steht der Priester zwischen ihm und Gott. Er könnte nur Priester werden wollen, niemals aber Gott. Das ist der eigentliche Grund auch für die Überwindung des Hanges zum Menschenopfer. Der Mann oder das Weib, die dem Gotte geopfert werden, sollen dadurch seinesgleichen werden. Ein solches Ziel gilt hier als Gotteslästerung, daher konnte das Menschenopfer zum Greuel werden.⁴⁰

I am not saying that Rosenzweig blurs the fundamental distinctions drawn by Cohen. On the contrary, with his decision to found a Jewish home and a Jewish school for adults, Rosenzweig may have drawn precisely the consequences from his insights after the dream was over. He became something like a priest to his people.

“God’s command *ve-ahavta* founds a new category of love – the true (not projected, not staged) dialogue that is both (Christian) *agape* (*rachamim*) and (Jewish) *eros* (*din*). Only God can command love: ‘You shall love your LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.’ Rosenzweig’s turn to *das Gesetz* is not a turn *away* from love, but a turn *to* the love of God; a fundamental turn from love that is *projected* to love that is *commanded*. The love commanded by God opens

the gate of (Jewish) prayer. It is in prayer – enabled by the love commanded by God – that the DU of the *dialogue of truth* can stand in the place of the ER. And is not the Lehrhaus a token of love?”⁴¹

Certainly, psychoanalysts may look down on this story like the ruakh elohim merahefet al pne tehom.⁴² This is a particular temptation for professionals who combine psychological ideas of healing with religious ideas of a natural and necessary development. To them, looking back on love-stories that have received the final seal on their hearts not by love but by death – and death in actual reality and for the living creatures involved, is always stronger than love – may appear revealing. Every stage unfolds according to a transparent and well-explained master-plan and serves as an example for other, similar cases. In this case it seems to have arrived at a good solution (albeit with a question mark). However, wouldn’t this mean subsuming Rosenzweig’s life *and* work under a logic, one which his oeuvre – if I am reading accurately – protests against in every single word?

6. Remnant of Remnants and Other Inversions

In an essay on the second of inversion, Werner Hamacher analyzes the route that the Hegelian figure of speculative inversion has taken throughout the work of Celan. Dwelling on the process in which – with Hegel – the faced negation of the “I” can be transformed into pure energy of the “I,” he describes the speculative foundations Rosenzweig’s chapter on revelation seems to be partly built on.⁴³ The differences between Rosenzweig’s use of inversion and Celan’s use of the same figure much later are enormous. Yet they do have one thing in common: The genuine impulse of inversion is in both cases a vital protest against any subsumption of existential desires under notions, terms and concepts. Both Rosenzweig and Celan take resort to the figure of inversion since they believe that the individual cannot gain any liberty to speak (her love, as it were) by merely following the command or the law, if this is to be understood as ‘speaking under the rule of firm notions’. Instead of having the individual called to the court of the notions, as Rosenzweig glosses in the passage quoted above, the speaking human being, bearer of a proper name, calls the notions to court and demands that *they* legitimize themselves by proving that they have undergone the process of inversion or “*innere Umkehr*.” As a consequence, what Elata-Alster, Maoz, and Skradol affirm as Rosenzweig’s mature turn

from wrong conceptions of love to real and better ones, hardly fits into his own theoretical world nor into his own self-relation. The popular and, in a way, “sacrificial” recommendation, “If you can’t be with the one you love, love the one you’re with,” would never get rid of the remnant of protest: Neither Edith nor God with his command could entirely replace the one great love.

I suggest to take this seriously. If you subscribe to the theory of the rest or the remnant in Rosenzweig’s philosophy, you cannot simply dismiss the remnant of protest in his self-subsumption under the rule of his religion. The first time of his resignation, he still dared to address very honest sentences about himself – as being only his own ghost – to his beloved Gritli, who had been the “mother” to his loving I, and, at a later stage of their relationship, the addressee of his very mature, erotic desire.

It is true that I cannot speak for Rosenzweig or for the persons living close to him. What makes the public work and “private” oeuvre of this philosopher dear to me is not only his undoubtedly honorable and valuable contribution to strengthening the Jewish self-esteem in a time of trouble. This achievement is much debated in our day, as it comes with a deep skepticism towards political Zionism and simply was written some years before the Shoah.⁴⁴ But on a mere philosophical *and* existentially personal level, Rosenzweig may have been even more modern or postmodern than any of the present philosophers dealing with his texts. His outcry for the reality of love between *this* certain singular person and *that* certain singular person, his strong and stubborn attempt to regain any notion of this love for Judaism, his pleading, crying, stammering and stumbling for the mere purpose to be loved by his beloved, expresses a psychoanalytical wisdom without psychoanalysis. A wisdom beyond psychoanalysis and beyond gender bias as well.

In the end of II,2 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig sends the beloved soul, imagined as the female soul, into life and into speaking for herself.

To his personal story with Gritli, we could apply what Hamacher notes with respect to Celan: When Celan writes “their embrace lasted so long that love itself despaired on it”, Hamacher sees in this a strong statement against the abstract victory of abstract notions. In a similar way, Rosenzweig’s more “depressed” and desperate sentences concerning his love and life “after” his love affair with Gritli take position in favor of the concrete reality of love between two loving human beings and stand against the “common notion,” which “resigns” on the real lovers.⁴⁵

In other words: It is the protesting against death and the all too easy comfort of common notions by which even the gender bias is transcended in the end. At the end of the *Star* and after all inversions, we come out with an audacious hope: The woman will not die for love and nor will the man. But the strength of their love – one that has spun out of its primeval inversions – will make the general notions of Hegelian philosophy shrink, split, or even die. If, in the beginning of the *Star*, the fear of death was the force to frighten the easy comfort of general notions into the necessary process of inversion, in the centerpiece of the book love will do the same work.

When Rosenzweig wrote, the industrial revolution and the shock of World War I had shattered intellectual life all over Europe. What was previously considered a reliable world of categories and notions turned to dust. Not only in music, art, and literature, but also in philosophical, theological, and psychological thinking. Everything seemed to demand new orders. It would be something of a commonplace to state that, while Freud and psychoanalysis stepped forward into a more rational, more sober and more scientific way of speaking about human morals, Rosenzweig walked backwards into the world of theology and belief in revelation. Given the figure of inversion, however, and given the radical commitment to the non-identical – i.e. that in the individual human being that can never be subsumed under any identification or scientific notion – it may turn out that Rosenzweig's way was the more modern of the two. Especially today, when we learn more and more about the material functions of the human brain, theories like the theory of revelation expressed in the *Star* come pretty timely. The hundreds of love-letters accompanying the process of its emergence only add to this timeliness. Both convolutes together might do much more for anybody who really wishes to cope with the fact that we are always subjects and objects of our research at the same time, than a barely analytical description of how we as “developing things” function, could ever achieve.

As a further turn needed, we still wait for another turn to the law: to a law which would not be prescribing the individual, who and how to love and at what price; to a law which would not demand a self-sacrificing obedience to God; to a law which would not demand to sacrifice difference and love of the sexes either. We are, instead, still waiting for a law that would establish the anti-sacrificial ethics as a logic of the humanities that Hermann Cohen had in mind.

Notes

- 1 The first monograph on Rosenzweig and Heidegger to receive a broader reception was published in 2005 by Peter Eli Gordon: *Rosenzweig and Heidegger. Between Judaism and German Philosophy*. Equally visible became Eric Santner's attempt to combine psychoanalytical insights and Rosenzweig's philosophy in his *Psychotheology of Everydaylife* in 2001. There are many fine works in the meantime – and I will only offer a very select perspective on the literature.
- 2 This is the common project of several Rosenzweig-scholars who gathered for a first meeting in Belgrade in June 2012. Each had volunteered to present one chapter. I had the honor of delivering a talk on the central piece, which can be read (in German) on my homepage under <http://www.gesine-palmer.de/fileadmin/pdf/Herzbuch.belgrad.pdf>. As to literature, I freely acknowledge that I do not have the time to read and quote it all. I hope, this essay can contribute nevertheless.
- 3 Letter of Franz Rosenzweig to Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy November 11, 1919, in: Inken Rühle and Reinhold Mayer, *Franz Rosenzweig. Die "Gritli"-Briefe. Briefe an Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy*, ed. Inken Rühle and Reinhold Mayer (Tübingen: publisher, 2002), 472.
- 4 A first publication on this affair and some family issues is discussed by Hans Rosenstock-Huessy and Harold Stahmer in their contributions to *Der Philosoph Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929)*, Freiburg/München 1988, vol. 1, 105-107 and 109-137. Stahmer revised his considerations in: "Franz, Eugen, and Gritli, Respondeo *etsi mutabor*," in *Franz Rosenzweigs "neues Denken"*, ed. W. Schmied-Kowarzik (Freiburg and Munich: Alber, 2006), 1151-1168. For a more psychoanalytical approach to the relationship cf. Gerda Elata-Alster, Benjamin Maoz a. Natalia Skradol, "Narcissism and Creativity. Triangulation in Franz Rosenzweig's Life and Work in the Wake of the 'Gritli'-Briefe" in *Franz Rosenzweigs "neues Denken"*, 1195-1222. There are more valuable contributions to the letters in that volume. The last conference on Rosenzweig, held in Frankfurt in October 2014 under the title "After the Star" experienced a brilliant opening lecture by Bob Gibbs on these letters under the title "Who is You?".
- 5 Cf. e.g.: Ephraim Meir, *Letters of Love. Franz Rosenzweig's Spiritual Biography and Oeuvre in Light of the Gritli Letters* (New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt a.M., Oxford: Lang, 2006).
- 6 Cf. Rafael Rosenzweig's preface to the printed edition of the Gritli letters, Rühle/Mayer 2002, vols. 1-2. Edith is said to have burnt them after the death of Franz and to have demanded from Eugen Rosenstock to do the same with Franz's letters.
- 7 The last two words of the book read: "In's Leben." See also his smaller work *Understanding the Sick and the Healthy. A View of World Man and God* (best English is the translation by Nachum Glatzer with an introduction by Hilary Putnam: Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999). This work (which Rosenzweig himself did not want to publish, cf. about its history Gesine Palmer, "Die Qual der Kreatur bewährt vermutlich nichts" in: *Rosenzweig Yearbook, 1, Franz Rosenzweig today*, Freiburg/München 2006, 232-254, 238-244) actually stood at the beginning of my personal Rosenzweig-Studies in the 1980es and caused me to learn more about Jewish tradition.

- 8 “Good sick man” is not a quotation. It is just an attempt to qualify the function of the sick individual in the psychic and social balance of groups, who often can bare the outstanding genius and the stubborn individual only, if the latter pays for his/her attitude by severe suffering. On the details cf. Palmer, “Die Qual der Kreatur bewährt vermutlich nichts,” 251.
- 9 Letter to Gritli on February 3rd, 1921: “I have married Edith without loving her. Hereby my own forces of love have expired, and I am today, as if I were a child of 12 or 10 again. I live, however, in an atmosphere (the Jewish) in which my right to exist rests on my ability to love. Hence, everything I am doing is but a lie. I pretend to live, I talk about life, and am a dead body. That’s all. And nothing changes ... It is only the law of inertia according to which I go on living as if I were still alive. In actual reality I should undergo habilitation and deny everything I have been living up to now”. (*“Ich habe Edith geheiratet, ohne sie zu lieben. Dadurch sind die Liebeskräfte überhaupt in mir erloschen, ich bin wieder wie als 12 oder 10jähriges Kind. Ich lebe aber in einer Atmosphäre (der jüdischen) wo meine Existenzberechtigung darauf beruht, dass in mir Liebeskräfte sind. Also ist alles, was ich tue, Lüge. Ich markiere den Schein des Lebens, ich rede vom Leben und bin eine Leiche. Das ist alles. Und daran ändert sich nichts. [...] Es ist nur das Trägheitsgesetz, nach dem ich das Leben so weiterlebe, als lebte ich noch. In Wirklichkeit müsste ich mich habilitieren und alles verleugnen, was ich bisher gelebt habe”*) in Rühle/Mayer 2002, 721f. I have been dealing with this extensively in my aforementioned “Die Qual der Kreatur bewährt vermutlich nichts.”
- 10 The Star of Redemption, trans B Galli, 169.
- 11 Elata-Alster/Maoz, and Skrabol even see him – from their psychoanalytical point of view – resolve his oedipal conflict in turning from a love that is projected to a love that is commanded (ibid., 1222). Their description is very seductive indeed. Yet, I will try a somewhat different constellation here.
- 12 Especially instructive for this point see, e.g., Hanoch Ben Pazi, “Na’aseh Ve-nishma’: A Generative Foundation of Judaism in Franz Rosenzweig’s Thought,” in *Franz Rosenzweigs “neues Denken”*, 1013-1029. A very special reading of Rosenzweig’s attitude concerning the “congregation of neighbours” cf.: Kenneth Reinhard, “Forcing the Messiah. Paul, Rosenzweig, and Badiou,” in *Rosenzweig Yearbook 4 (2009): Paul and Politics*, 79-106. Cf. also Haviva Pedaya, “Fathers and Sons. The Mirror Community and the Image Community,” in *Rosenzweig Yearbook 6 (2011), Peace and War*, 137-190, esp. 166ff.
- 13 Letter to Gritli from November 14, 1918: “Dear, dear – I won’t ever again write something like this Book II 2 ----- Tomorrow morning I might finish. Yours, Franz.” “Liebe, liebe – ich werde nie wieder etwas schreiben wie dieses Buch II 2 ----- Morgen früh werde ich wohl fertig. Dein Franz” (Rühle/Mayer 2002, 189).
- 14 Letter to Gritli, August 15th, 1918, (Rühle/Mayer 2002, 118).
- 15 Cf. my “Thinking to Stay. Franz Rosenzweig’s Anti-Conversion and the New Pauliners,” in *Rosenzweig Yearbook 3 (2008): The Notion of Europe*, 157-164, and the extended version of this text in German: “‘Wir würden es jederzeit wieder tun.’ Einige Überlegungen zu Rosenzweigs Anti-Konversion im Kontext der neueren Paulusrezeption”, in: *Rosenzweig Yearbook, 4 (2009), Paul and Politics*, 25-58. See also Gesine Palmer, “Antinomianism Reloaded – Or the Dialectics of the New Paulinism”) in *Is there a*

- Judeo-Christian Tradition? A European Perspective*, ed. by Emmanuel Nathan and Anya Toploski, de Gruyter, 2016.
- 16 Yearbook 6, *Peace and War*, Freiburg/München 2011, has new perspectives on this subject by Eveline Goodman-Thau, Renate Schindler and John H. Smith. In vol. 4 (Paul and Politics) there is, of course, also a lot of comparatively fresh material.
- 17 Vgl. dazu “*Innerlich bleibt die Welt eine.*” *Ausgewählte Schriften zum Islam*, esp. my introduction and Yossef Schwartz’s Essay “Die entfremdete Nähe. Rosenzweigs Blick auf den Islam,” 111-147. Cf. also Rosenzweig Yearbook 2 (2007): *Criticism of Islam* in which many aspects of the subject are being discussed by Slavoj Žizek, Wayne Cristaudo, Gesine Palmer, Gérard Bensussan, Martin Brassler, Felix Körner, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, Otto Pöggeler, Yossef Schwartz and Magnus Striet.
- 18 Almost the entire first volume of the proceedings of the Kassel conference is dedicated to the problems of fundamental philosophy in Rosenzweig. To those familiar with the work of Emil Fackenheim, Rivka Horvitz, Stéphane Moses, Reiner Wiehl, Bernhard Casper, Yehoyada Amir, Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik, Leora Batnitzky, Norbert Samuelson, Wayne J. Froman, Benjamin Pollock, Petar Bojanic, Francesco Paolo Ciglia, Leonhard H. Erlich, Heinz-Jürgen Görtz, and many others, it should not be difficult to find their way through the literature.
- 19 Cf. Rosenzweig, *Star*, 217: “this essential book of Revelation, as we have seen the Song of Songs”; Stern, 225: “Kernbuch der Offenbarung, als welches wir das Hohe Lied erkannt haben.” Again, a lot of work has been done on the question of the simile (*Gleichnis*) in this context.
- 20 “Apologetisches Denken,” in: Franz Rosenzweig, *Zweistromland. Kleinere Schriften zur Religion und Philosophie* (Berlin and Wien: Philo, 2001), 63-73. About this see also Gesine Palmer, <http://www.gesine-palmer.de/fileadmin/pdf/j-em06.pdf>.
- 21 Letter to Gritli from November 2nd, 1918, Rühle/Mayer 2002, 177). „Gritlianum“ is Rosenzweig’s title for a sketch in the form of a dialogue between body and soul. This sketch Rosenzweig noted during a stay as a guest in a hospital directed by his friend Victor von Weizsäcker. It is called “Der Schrei”, and has been republished together with the letters to Gritli with Rühle/Mayer 2002, 826-831. It is promising food for thought for a rich dinner for Jungian psychoanalysis.
- 22 Of course many scholars have tried to come to grips with the relationship between the letters and especially this chapter of the *Star*. One particularly fresh and sophisticated example is Yehudit Kornberg Greenberg’s contribution to *Franz Rosenzweigs Neues Denken*, vol. 2, 830-44.
- 23 Galli, 172.
- 24 “for the maternal is always that which is there already, the paternal is only an addition; for man, the woman is always mother.” Galli 172; “denn das Mütterliche ist stets das, was schon da ist, das Väterliche kommt erst hinzu; das Weib ist dem Manne immer Mutter”: Franz Rosenzweig, *Stern der Erlösung*, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, 177.
- 25 “God’s inner ‘nature,’ the infinite oceanic silence of his being” (Galli 172; “Gottes innere ‘Natur’, die unendliche Meeresstille seines Seins”, SE 177) is in need of revelation. God is here not appearing in the image of an ethereal being whose “ruakh” is hovering above the world’s waters but is himself figured in the oceanic silence of his being? Rosenzweig performed, as if in passing, another strange inversion of traditional imagery.

- 26 Rühle/Mayer 2002, 189.
- 27 It is probably more than a coincidental observation in our times, that in professional mediation the very first step to be taken by the participants is to go back to “I-messages”, in order to take the “deictal” aggression out of the communication.
- 28 In my “time has come” formulations I may have missed texts by other scholars who might have asked these questions already.
- 29 SE, 209-213.
- 30 “[A]ll the true sentences relating to it must be words that came from its own mouth, words brought forth by the I. This one sentence alone, saying it is as strong as death, is an exception (Galli 217); “[A]lle wahren Sätze über sie [die Liebe] müssen Worte aus ihrem eigenen Munde, ichgetragene, sein. Nur dieser eine Satz, dass sie stark ist wie der Tod, macht eine Ausnahme“ (Stern, 226).
- 31 “It is only when the I recognizes the You as something outside it, that is to say when it grows from monologue to genuine dialogue, that it becomes that which we have just defined as saying aloud the original No. The I of the monologue has not yet become a ‘but as for me,’ it is not an emphatic I, an I that obviously speaks only for itself; actually, as we saw already in connection with the ‘let us make (man)’ in the narrative of Creation, it is not yet a manifest I, but an I still hidden in the secret of the third person (Galli 188f.); “erst indem das Ich das Du als etwas außer sich anerkennt, also erst indem es vom Selbstgespräch zum echten Dialog übergeht, wird es zu jenem Ich, das wir soeben als das lautgewordene Urmein beanspruchten. Das Ich des Selbstgesprächs ist noch kein ‘ich aber’, sondern ein unbetontes, eben ein, weil bloß selbstgesprächliches, so auch selbst-verständliches Ich und also, wie wir es schon an dem ‘Lasset uns’ der Schöpfungsgeschichte erkannten, in Wahrheit noch kein offenes Ich, sondern ein noch im Geheimnis der dritten Person verborgenes” (Stern, 195). This is not by chance almost precisely what, for instance, in the work of Jessica Benjamin, has been described as the process of individuation in a relationship of *mutual* recognition between the very small child and the mother, who is more than just an “environment” for the infant.
- 32 Don’t miss the way of speaking about the superhuman here and brought home to theology by the attentive reader of Nietzsche.
- 33 The “Grund” is denominated earlier in the chapter: “This darkness is the nothing that resodes at its origin as created ‘foundation’” (Galli 177); „Dies Dunkel ist das Nichts, das ihr als geschaffener ‘Grund’ zugrunde liegt“ (Stern, 182).
- 34 This is a logical consequence of his interpretation of the figure of the king in the Song of Songs, cf. SE 221-224.
- 35 Rühle/Mayer 2002, 179.
- 36 A psychoanalytical reading would certainly find further evidence in his first outburst, when he wrote about the death of Doris v. Beckerath: His immediate idea is that Grilli could also die, and he pleads with her repeatedly, to stay (cf. Rühle/Mayer 2002). Pleading with someone to stay means, in psychoanalytical reading, that you can imagine (and maybe even wish for) him or her to go.
- 37 Somehow the story shares, in all its tragic developments, some comic aspects with the story of Kierkegaard’s forsaken fiancé who, instead of dying as he “feared” she would, simply got married to another man.
- 38 Letter from November 21st 1918, Rühle/Mayer 2002, 197.

- 39 Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*, trans. Simon Kaplan (New York: Unger, 1972), 339.
- 40 Hermann Cohen, *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*. 2d ed., Wiesbaden 1988, 394.
- 41 Gerda Elata-Alster, Benjamin Maoz a. Natalia Skradol, “Narcissism and Creativity. Triangulation in Franz Rosenzweig’s Life and Work in the Wake of the ‘Gritli’-Briefe”, *Franz Rosenzweigs “neues Denken”*, 1222.
- 42 “The analyst’s attention, floating like a spirit above the waters, is first of all an openness to the transparency of words, their shadowy roots as well as their fruits of light. The follow-up to that story will tell us what price analysts are paying today for the sacrilegious obstinacy driving them to take the place of the Holy Ghost, and if, away from the armchair, they will still know how to experience love with naked bodies and veiled words”: Serge Leclair, *A Child Is Being Killed: On Primary Narcissisms and the Death Drive*, trans. Marie-Claude Hays (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 70 [Serge Leclair, Ein Kind wird getötet. Eine Abhandlung über den primären Narzissmus und den Todestrieb, aus dem Französischen von Monika Mager, 125f.).
- 43 Werner Hamacher, “Die Sekunde der Inversion”, in: *Entferntes Verstehen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1998, 324-368, esp. 327 (for the death-problem) and 358 in sum: “Die Inversion lässt sich deshalb als die Figur der historischen, ästhetischen und hermeneutischen Selbstbeziehung des Subjekts, als die privilegierte Trope der Subjektivität charakterisieren. In ihr bezieht sich die Sprache nicht bloß auf sich selbst – in ihr und als sie *ist* sie allererst wirklich.” Rosenzweig would not accompany the author here: he left the Hegelian pattern for his own way when he began to speak positively about God. Still the scheme is recognizable.
- 44 Cf. the criticism by Micha Brumlik, “Aus der Sicht des Bleibenden. Franz Rosenzweigs Philosophie des Christentums”, in: Werner Stegmaier (ed.), *Die philosophische Aktualität der jüdischen Tradition*, FfM 2000, 415-428. I have tried to smoothly address this criticism in my: “Selbständige Anlehnung. Franz Rosenzweigs *Stern der Erlösung* als Kommentar ohne Text”, in: *Rosenzweig als Leser. Kontextuelle Kommentare zum “Stern der Erlösung”*, Martin Brassler (ed.), Tübingen 2004, 521-534, n. 7, 525-527. I relate to it further in my aforementioned “Antinomianism Reloaded”, which is in the process of editing.
- 45 Hamacher 1998, 331.