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TOTALITY AND COMMUNITY: ROSENZWEIG VERSUS HEGEL

ABSTRACT
In his masterpiece *The Star of Redemption*, Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) shows as the notion of totality is a constant and central reference in the history of philosophy from Ionia to Jena. This paper aims to explain a different meaning of the concept of totality, reconsidering some aspects of the question starting from the philosophical reflection of Franz Rosenzweig and his opposition to the Hegelian thought. In particular, according to Rosenzweig, the concept of totality is the essential background in which one could rethink the concept of *community*. For this reason, the second part of this paper is focused on the implications of a different concept of totality embodied by Judaism.

KEYWORDS
Rosenzweig, Hegel, totality, community, Jewish thought

Introduction

The aim of this paper is the explanation of a different meaning of the concept of totality, reconsidering some aspects of the question starting from the philosophical reflection of Franz Rosenzweig and his opposition to the Hegelian thought. In particular, the concept of totality is the essential background in which Rosenzweig rethinks his understanding of *community*.

In order to try to outline at least the problem in a satisfactory manner, we will attempt to move on two fronts: on the one hand, we will try to outline a genealogy of the Hegelian totality, assuming – along with Rosenzweig – that the totality is the deepest essence of Western thought (at least as stated by Hegel); on the other hand, we will primarily survey the connection between Judaism and philosophy, indicating, in conclusion, a possible reformulation capable of putting aside the classic opposition between Athens and Jerusalem. The role and meaning of Judaism will be the link between the two moments of our essay: 1. the analysis of the decline of the Hegelian totality and the Rosenzweig's critique against the totality; 2. the relation between Judaism and philosophy on the basis of Franz Rosenzweig's thought.

Der Stern der Erlösung – the famous masterpiece of Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) – indicates a deep and radical philosophical crisis; it is an eclipse of what cannot be like that anymore, freed from every causality, deprived of every sequence – whether it is 'logical' or 'historical', it does not matter, since

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the result which combines them is the same. *Der Stern der Erlösung* causes a change of the form of thinking and calls into question the *logos* which "from Ionia to Jena" (Galli, Udoff [Rosenzweig] 1999) had constituted the only form of Western "thought". However, this decline does not have a univocal and self-evident meaning, but its meaning is complex and hidden in a dense and intricate conjunction of different elements. At the beginning of our brief analysis, it is important to clarify the methodological approach that we will use: we will analyze some passages of the Hegelian and the Rosenzweigian writings, trying a hermeneutical and critical analysis.

Decline of Totality

From the first pages, *Der Stern der Erlösung* starts with the indication of a *fact*: the "decline" of the Hegelian totality. *Der Stern* involves the verification of the "topological" indication of this decline – that remains a 'fact' as such. Therefore, the decline of the Hegelian totality acquires a double meaning: in a sense, it represents the place where *Der Stern* can rise, namely it can "find" the space where it can constitute itself; in another sense, it indicates the instance in front of which *Der Stern* is placed, in other words, it shows the philosophical operation Rosenzweig should perform. The problem is already evident: if in a sense *Der Stern* questions the Hegelian totality, causing its decline, in the same way that decline is presupposed by *Der Stern* because without this decline, the latter could not exist. "The presupposition" cannot be separated from the concreteness of *Der Stern*, since it is always its effective existence: two moments with just one gesture. The meaning of this duplicity that produces many problems has to be understood from this, as we have already indicated.

Two explanations are needed: the first one is about the meaning that the Hegelian thought has in this paper, the other one is about the connection between Judaism and philosophy. The purpose of this inquiry is to show how these two questions represent only one question. What has to be specified in order to understand what follows is that the decline of the Hegelian totality does not represent a specific and particular event in the thought of a philosopher (in Hegel's thought, in this case). In fact, it concerns the whole history of Western thought, of which Hegel is not simply an heir, but the most radical fulfilment. This means that when we mention Hegel in the next pages, we refer to the single thinker as much as the broad range of the philosophical action, with which from Jonia to Jena the logos has been thought and articulated, both in a philosophical sense and in a political and theological-political sense. At the same time Hegel is the paradigm of a philosophical operation and an instance that makes each infinitude the "missing" part of its own finitude, welding the two extremes (finite and infinite) in the Totality, which is the perfect and total inclusion of the mediation (so, we can say according to Hegel that the Totality is really untranscendable). This form of thinking, this articulation of the logos indicates that every excess from its own *nòmos* is always within the framework

of its own *nòmos*. Therefore, it is connected to it and so inconceivable out of its own mediation. Every *otherness* ends in the untranscendable force of its own *sameness*, in which the otherness is not simply removed or deleted, but "conserved" in the sameness of its condition of *being-other*. The meaning of this form of logos is clearly explained in a passage of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*: "The power of Spirit is only as great as its expression, its depth only as deep as it dares to spread out and lose itself in its exposition." (Hegel 1977 [1807]: 6)

No "latency" is then allowable, nothing "beyond of *meaning*" is conceivable, because – according to Hegel – even the *non-meaning* is a *meaning*, out of its 'abstract' and negative position. The work of this dialectical structure is already operative from the beginning: as exemplified by first categories of *The Science of Logic*, where – talking about the problem of the commencement (*Anfangen*), that is, the movement through which the Being, from its original Immediacy, takes on the concreteness of being (*ens*, *Dasein*) – Hegel firmly claims that this movement is *zeitlos*, *atemporal*, *without-time*: 'before' the Being, the Being is already 'present'.

In this awareness of the goal and purpose of the philosophical thought, Hegel is really the most coherent inheritor of Western philosophical tradition; he is the *last* philosopher as much as he achieves the ancient sentence of Aristotle: "Therefore chaos or night did not exist for an infinite time, but the same things have always existed (either passing through a cycle of changes or obeying some other law) since actuality is prior to potency."[1]

However, so far we have just briefly indicated the accomplished form of the Hegelian thought as thought of the Totality, but we have not considered its preparation and its inception. It is a central point for our analysis, because the place where the Hegelian speech rises and is conceived indicates the great importance that is bestowed upon it. The Hegelian thought does not lead out in logical and conceptual horizon. On the contrary, far from being exclusively a logical space, it is first of all a historical place instead. It is necessary to specify that it is historical, but neither "historicist" nor "historiographic". When we use historical, we refer to the deepest meaning of the term, considered as the place where the depth of the Spirit appears, a horizon where the *operativity* of the Spirit (*Geist*) completely becomes the "world" and "community", where history as a whole, indeed, exposes and manifests itself.[2] In order to indicate the meaning of this horizon and the Hegelian philosophical operation connected to it, we have to focus on the Early theological writings. In two of his famous early writings, that is *The Positivity of the Christian Religion* (Hegel 1996a) and *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate* (Hegel 1996b) Hegel addresses harsh, sometimes even scornful pages to the Jewish people. These pages are generally ignored by interpreters or, sometimes, reduced to the simple development of the Hegelian thought. In other cases they are settled once and for

1 *Proteron energheia dynameos*, *Met*. XII, 1072a 7-9, W.D. Ross (tr.).

2 So – according to Hegel – in a double sense: historical and historic. For a punctual explication of this double sense in Hegelian philosophy of history, see: Peperzak 1994.

all with disdain because of the more or less hidden "anti-Semitism" that can be found in those pages.[3] However, the relevance of what is written in those pages has to inspire prudence and deep critical attention. There is in fact a necessity that Hegel pursuits in these pages, in a way that is almost obsessive, and with reasoning and polemics that are particularly harsh. We must highlight that it is an entirely philosophical necessity: it aims to neutralize the potential hindrance that the Judaism might have represented, as a first step of his philosophical reflection. The deepest meaning of the Hegelian thought depends on the "success" of this operation.

The Origin of Hegelian Thought as Opposition to Judaism

Hegel's analysis starts with the dawn of the people of Israel, the vocation of the first Patriarch of Israel: his analysis is a rigorous exegesis, a second reading of the biblical text. Thinking back over Abraham's history, Hegel shows how the connection between the patriarch and his God is based on a complete exclusion of every other relation: because of the covenant with God, Abraham abandons everything, breaks every tie he had with his land, his past and his blood, because – Hegel presses for a univocal and controversial biblical translation – the God of Israel is a jealous (*qanna*) God (*Ex.* 20:5), God closed in the *unknowability* of his reluctance who wants an exclusive connection with his own "chosen" people. That is why in his work *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate,* talking about the deep difference that separates Abraham from the legendary founders of ancient civilizations, Hegel writes: "Cadmus, Danaus, etc. had forsaken their fatherland too, but they forsook it in battle; they went in quest of a soil where they would be free and they sought it that they might love. Abraham wanted *not* to love, wanted to be free by not loving." (Hegel 1996b: 185). It is a "not-love", a negativity that, according to Hegel, characterizes the Jewish essence. He thinks that this characteristic is brought in the bosom of the family of the sons of Israel by Moses. The exodus from Egypt, the liberation from slavery, which is the constitutive "event" of the People of Israel, ends with the acceptation of a new burden made of crystallized rules and precepts. Hegel writes again: "The liberator of his nation was also its lawgiver; this could mean only that the man who had freed it from one yoke had laid on it another. A passive people giving laws to itself would be a contradiction." (ibid: 191)

3 The problem is not only to define if Hegel was or was not an anti-Semite. We have to understand the meaning of this strong opposition against Judaism; it is a constitutive opposition that hides an essential necessity for the Hegelian philosophy. In this way we do not ignore the tragic event of anti-Semitism, in reverse we want to underline its gravity which belonged to several philosophical experiences (although some of those considered themselves immune to it). On this complex and controversial point see Levinas' polemical revue of B. Bourgeois, *Hegel à Francfort ou Judaïsme, Christianisme, Hégélianisme* (1970), in Levinas 1990: 235–238. On the Hegelian interpretation of Judaism see: Mack 2003; Peperzak 1969; Legros 1997; Coda: 1987: 31–84; Cohen 2005.

The negativity of the Jewish conscience, where negativity means passiveness, "inactivity", renunciation of one's own freedom and work in exchange for an exclusive connection with God, becomes paradigm of the entire Hegel's interpretation of the Jewish essence. Furthermore, in reference to the exodus from Egypt, Hegel remarks the passiveness of the Israelites who are defenseless in front of their liberation, and the harshness turned into disdain:

> For the Jews a great thing was *done*, but *they* do not inaugurate it with heroic deeds of their own; it is for them that Egypt suffers the most diverse plagues and misery. Amid general lamentation they withdraw, driven forth by the hapless Egyptians (Exodus XII. 33-34); but they themselves have only the malice the coward feels when his enemy is brought low by someone else's act, only the consciousness of woe wrought for them, not that of the courage which may still drop a tear for the evil it must inflict. They go unscathed, yet their spirit must exult in all the wailing that was so profitable to them. The Jews vanquish, but they have not battled. (ibid)

This "duplicity" of the Jewish praxis, that is the passiveness of the people compared to the people themselves and the action of God, clearly indicates two senses of the Hegelian operation: on the one hand, the empty positivity of the precepts of the Jewish religion, which is enclosed within empty and strict rules, and on the other hand, the essential negativity of the jealous God, God who is always behind, uncognizable. Therefore, the authentic and genuine connection the people have with God will always be something else, something unreachable and ineffable. This kind of connection terrifies any praxis, makes every attempt of relating to God excessive: accepting the yoke of the precepts is the only possible connection. This is how Hegel continues:

> Henceforth the Jews clung all the more obstinately to the statutory commands of their religion; they derived their legislation directly from a jealous God. An essential of their religion was the performance of a countless mass of senseless and meaningless actions, and the pedantically slavish spirit of the people had prescribed a rule for the most trivial actions of daily life and given the whole nation the look of a monastic order. Virtue and the service of God was a life filled with compulsions dictated by dead formulas. Of spirit nothing remained save obstinate pride in slavish obedience to laws not made by themselves. (ibid: 178)

It is a negative and excluding connection indeed, since the positivity of the precepts does not fill up the distance, but it is its empty "shell": an "infinite separation" rules the connection between the people and God. According to Hegel, the inconceivability of this infinitive separation, of this radical scission that reduces each infinity to negativity (indeed, non-finite), is just expressed by the astonishment of Pompey, who entered the *secretum* of the Temple, and found only an empty space. This emptiness represents – in the Hegelian lecture of Judaism – the clearest expression of that *negativity* and that insubstantiality that characterizes not only the essence of the Jewish people, but even the essence of their God. Hegel continues his analysis:

> Though there was no concrete shape to be an object of religious feeling, devotion and reverence for an invisible object had nonetheless to be given direction and a boundary inclusive of the object. This, Moses provided in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle and the subsequent temple. After Pompey had approached the heart of the temple, the center of adoration, and had hoped to discover in it the root of the national spirit, to find indeed in one central point the life-giving soul of this remarkable people, to gaze on a Being as an object for his devotion, on something significant for his veneration, he might well have been astonished on entering the Arcanum to find himself deceived so far as some of his expectations were concerned, and, for the rest, to find himself in an empty room. (ibid: 192)

Hegel will compare this emptiness to the strength of the Christian kenosis, the perfect brilliance of the revelation of the depth of the Spirit.[4] It is an emptiness that has a completely different meaning from the empty Jewish negativity. In fact, what is "kenotized" in Hegel's philosophical Christianity is the emptiness of that separation, that is the distance between the Father and the Son, between the one who reveals and the one who is revealed. The "operative reality" (*wirklich*) of the Hegelian community is based on the removed emptiness and on that consumed transcendence.[5]

We have briefly illustrated the Hegelian interpretation of Judaism to underline the strong reduction that Hegel executes regarding Judaism. After this operation, Judaism is relegated to the margins of the Hegelian reflection, in a state of powerlessness and immobility; it is only a nonveritable moment in view of the Christian religion and its Revelation (*Offenbarung*). One needs to consider that Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* never mentions Judaism explicitly. It is on this complex and intricate background that Rosenzweig begins his philosophical reflection. Rosenzweig's philosophy neither represents a simple contrast to Hegel, nor the will to take the space that Hegelian philosophy had made its own back. But starting from the Hegelian form of thinking, Rosenzweig indicates its break and denounces its entire rift. It is a break that truly belongs to the thought and, at the same time, does not belong to it since it is exactly what reveals the 'Other' from the thought. It is then important to reconsider the meaning of this belonging, since it indicates the radical passivity of the thought regarding itself.

4 Hegel writes: "Their goal is the revelation of the depth of Spirit, and this is the absolute Notion. This revelation is, therefore, the raising-up of its depth, or its extension, the negativity of this withdrawn 'I', a negativity which is its externalization or its substance; and this revelation is also the Notion's Time, in that this externalization is in its own self externalized, and just as it is in its extension, so it is equally in its depth, in the Self" (1977: 492–493).

5 An unavoidable reference for this writing has been the reflection of Vincenzo Vitiello. Among his many writings, see 1998: 136–169.

Rosenzweig against the Totality

We have insisted a lot on the centrality of "presupposition"[6] with which *Der Stern der Erlösung* begins, that is the *Vom Tode*, that fear of death which cannot be brought to mind because it is the cause of every thought, of every possibility and all cognition of the All. This presupposition cannot be limited to every philosophical mediation-reflection. However, considering this "limitation" as an existentialist feature of Rosenzweig's thought is not just an oversimplification, but it also completely ignores the importance of its own philosophical operation: that limitation to the thought of presupposition is experienced in the thought itself. Rosenzweig's critique of the totality depends on what this limitation means; however, in order to understand its authentic importance, we have to examine in depth. If one flips through the pages, after the famous incipit, it is possible to find a passage charged with meaning, in which the articulation of the connection between *being* and *thinking* is presented. This is what Rosenzweig writes:

> The reflection where this happens goes something like this: granted that thinking is the one and universal form of being, then thinking has itself a content, a so-and-not-otherwise [*Soundnichtanders*], which is, in order that one might purely think it, not any less so-and-not-otherwise. It is this "specification" precisely, this its differentiation that gives it the power to identify itself with equally differentiated being. The identity between thinking and being therefore presupposes an internal non-identity. Because it is at the same time related to itself, thinking, which is of course totally related to being, is simultaneously a multiplicity in itself. So thinking, moreover, which is itself the unity of its own internal multiplicity, establishes the unity of being, and certainly, it is not in the degree where it is a unity, but a multiplicity. But now, the unity of thinking, insofar as it directly concerns thinking alone and not being, falls outside of the cosmos of being=thinking. (Rosenzweig 2005: 19)

If one does not consider the first part of the critique, since it does not distance itself from Hegel, it is interesting to note how the terms of the question are changed, proceeding with the reasoning. From the exteriority of the objection to the identity of being and thinking, the spotlight of the critique is moved to the "form" of the connection between this identity and the single terms. Therefore, the totality conceived as a connection between the two

6 We chose to translate the German word *Voraussetzung* into *presupposition* according to the Hegelian, and more generally, idealistic custom. Hegel, i.e., tells of a *voraussetzende Reflexion*, a presupposing reflection. The word "presupposition" is more advisable than other terms, because it expresses clearly the sense of priority proper of the Latin prefix "pre-". It will not be possible to discuss this point specifically. About the problem of reflection in Hegel, see the essay of Henrich (1971). Among the first interpreters, Massimo Cacciari has underlined the importance of "presupposition" in Rosenzweig's philosophy, remarking the deep proximity between Rosenzweig and Schelling. For more on this, see: Cacciari 1985; 1986; 1994. On the relation between Schelling and Rosenzweig see: Mosés1982; Gibbs 1989; Bensussan 2000; Tilliette 1982; 1985; Bienestock 1992.

related terms is not in question anymore: what is called into question is the totality considered as a "term" of this relation. What Rosenzweig defines as cosmos "being = thinking", and here it is important to understand what the term cosmos means, becomes the subject of the critique: the change of perspective is very important. This is how Rosenzweig continues: "This cosmos itself, insofar as it is the overlapping of two multiplicities, now has its unity entirely beyond itself. In itself, it is not unity, but multiplicity, not an All that includes all things, but an enclosed unit which is infinite in itself, but not closed in. So, if the expression is permitted, an excluding All".

Rosenzweig reveals that it is one thing to talk about the omni-inclusivity of the totality that keeps the multiplicity in itself, and another thing to affirm that totality includes itself too, being the foundation of its own inner "unity". Rosenzweig does not deny the omni-inclusivity of the totality, that is its own nature of the unity of the multiplicity, but he denies that that very multiplicity can include itself. This would mean including itself not as a multiplicity but as a unity, or better including the form of that inclusion in itself. The totality would remain not-included. Rosenzweig then specifies: infinite means omni-inclusive, untranscendable, but not closed in, in other words: it is the undetermined compared to itself. In order to be more explicit, it has to be said that the totality does not mean infinite, which means something completely different. In Rosenzweig's words: "an excluding All", that excludes the unity of its inclusion from itself, being able to include everything except for the act of including itself.

That presupposition, limited to every mediation, appears again and with new force on this "shortcoming" of the omni-inclusivity of the totality. Maybe it is possible to say it more clearly: this "presupposition" is not something that designates an unknowable otherness beyond the mediation-reflection. It means that the mediation is essentially affected by an otherness which it is not able to know; this internal *otherness* represents the "residual" feature, the remainder of the "circularity" of the reflection that grounds the reflection. However, it is a "rest" which cannot be understood, which cannot be connected with the positivity of the meaning. In such a situation, we would have to say that "residual" is the reflexivity itself. In this way, the reflection-totality is completely transformed, or more: it is essentially *broken*. Out of this break the same distance the Hegelian action bridged over *re-emerges*; the same distance and now, at the same time, completely different. It is in fact the distance that originated from the break between totality and infinite, distance against which that totality formed itself, filling and consuming it. Now it appears again, imposing a deep reflection on its own meaning for the thought.

In contrast to the "omni-inclusivity" of Western thought, Rosenzweig proposes a different meaning of thought and the horizon of the Political.[7] This

7 The meaning of Western thought, with its golden rule *omnis determinatio est negatio*. On the violence of this rule in Rosenzweig, see: Bensussan 2013. For a Hegelian interpretation of Rosenzweig, see: Labarriere 1994.

different meaning of the mediation produces a constitutive tension, that is not immediately attributable to one of the two terms. As it is written in the book *Shemòt*: "HASHEM went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel day and night. He did not remove the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night from before the people." (*Ex*. 13.21) This distance between the pillar and the people of Israel represents this tension: neither the people nor the pillar bridge a gap to the other term, yet both show this tension. Then, the 'unknown' is not only the other term of the relation, but, at first, the distance that separates both terms. According to Hegel, that distance was the "unconceivable", or at the most conceived as empty negativity, and its reappearance sanctions the deep crisis of that philosophical paradigm, of that form of thinking. But how is it possible – if it can be possible – to "talk about" that decline we have indicated as a fact at the beginning? After all, no decline is really a decline if it is possible to prove its incompleteness. We should better wonder: if the decline of the totality means the decline of the condition of the possibility of each speech, what about the speech that testifies the existence of the decline?

Pretending to resolve this question is useless: the difficulty remains and it is a structural and a constitutive difficulty every speech on the decline has to face as the form of logos, of every speech and thought is what fades. The "empty space" is not simply the contrary of the full space as much as the omni-embracing totality is not the contrary of the desert. Then it would be only a mere overturning, it would be another aspect of Hegel's philosophy. The thought must take charge of the burden of thinking about that distance again: thinking about that distance again also means thinking about this time again, the form we live in the world. Edmond Jabès writes:

> De l'exil, un jour, l'exilé se détourne. Il devient'exilé de cet exil, comme si, o paradoxe, l'exil était le lieu d'asile qu'il lui fallait, périodiquement, quitter. Ainsi, au commencement, il y aurait eu l'exil, origine et raison de notre errance. Je me suis senti l'exilé de l'exilé, le jour où je me suis reconnu juif. (1985: 93) [8]

Judaism becomes one of the most radical expressions of this reflection.

Modernity and Judaism

Starting from the first decades of the nineteenth century, a notable number of Jewish thinkers appeared in the philosophical landscape. Apart from rare exceptions, we are used to considering such an event as an "exclusively" Jewish fact. Moreover, when these thinkers are considered as philosophers, people stop asserting the influence of their "origin" on their thoughts. When the

8 "From the exile, a day, the exiled turns away. He becomes the exiled from this exile, like if, paradoxically, the exile would be the place of refuge he has to leave periodically. So, in the beginning, it had been the exile, origin and reason of our wandering. I felt myself to be an exile from exile the day I recognized myself to be Jewish."

intention is highlighting the "Jewishness" of their origin instead, people remark its absolute difference and non-involvement in the philosophical world: the opposition between Judaism and philosophy produces many distinctions, such as "Jewish philosophy", "Jewish thought" or simply "wisdom of Israel". It is understandable if we consider the problem in a historical-critical way: the peripatetic philosophers are different from the masters of a certain Talmud school. During the nineteenth century, these distinctions became completely ineffective as the basis to understand the problem.[9] It is an irrefutable fact that an element of Judaism appears in the philosophical scene, a fact which has its own characteristics and "cultural" peculiarities, but which is still mainly philosophical: thus, we do not refer to the delimitation of a branch of knowledge, but to the articulation of thinking, that is the "appearance" of the philosophical question. First of all, this means there is no Jewish philosophy in the nineteenth century that is not already a philosophy as such; and yet not because the adjective "Jewish" has to be subject to "philosophy", least of all because some thinkers of the nineteenth century happened to be Israelites. The discussion topic here is not what is "Jewish", or at least not on this level, but the essential importance of what is philosophy: "Torah" – that is the Jewish element in philosophical landscape – does not indicate the subject or the content of the philosophical interrogation; at the same time, it does not represent the "given" (*positum*) towards which the philosophical activity is oriented. In reverse, "Torah" is *sic et simpliciter* what questions (and unsettles) Aristotle (where, in this metaphor, Aristotle represents Western philosophy). In other words: "Torah" is what *questions* the form of thinking and the structure of philosophical praxis like it has been "from Ionia to Jena" (and also beyond).

This change questions the way in which the connection between Judaism and philosophy has always been seen: what was still important to Herman Cohen becomes meaningless to Rosenzweig.

This lack of importance expresses itself in the extreme harshness of the other meaningless opposition: "Athens *and* Jerusalem", which is by now a hermeneutic stereotype, too simple and fruitless, uselessly reduced to an empty label under which crucial problems for the comprehension of our time are dismissed. Those who try to put the opposition from the outside, thinking in this way to claim a previous independence of Jerusalem from Athens, do not notice that, in force of this opposition, they do nothing but presuppose a "common" territory which has been already decided. It has been completely decided starting from a part of the dichotomy: in other words, Athens epitomizes philosophy, which imposes its own *nòmos*. In a completely extrinsic way, a "foreign" thought, which is almost "exotic", is opposed to Athens: Jerusalem. However, the meaning of this opposition is never discussed nor questioned in this way; on the contrary, it is assumed as such.

9 An important contribution to this problem is in: Hughes, Wolfson 2009; Morgan, Gordon 2007.

The meaning of the opposition between philosophy and Judaism is clear to great thinkers' eyes: it is not a coincidence that from Maimonide to Herman Cohen, in order to defend the independence of each term, a deep conciliation was attempted, welding Athens and Jerusalem in a neuralgic point, as Cohen does in his last maybe "unconscious" but surely desperate attempt to find the perfect synthesis of the two terms in the Jewish-German harmony in Germany of his time.

The fact that Herman Cohen asked the American Jews to do something to avoid the US intervention in the war against Germany, the true birthplace of the Jewish ethos, is not only an anecdote, but also the expression of a "feeling", of a vision of things: philosophical and political. It is useless to reaffirm how tragic and illusionary the result of the Cohenian attempt was.[10] All of this is not valid for Rosenzweig anymore, not because his thought is based on a different horizon compared to Cohen's, but because he lives through the crisis of that horizon, where what is first of all questioned is the meaning of philosophy. The Hegelian totality does not fade because a different cultural "element" opposes it. The critique here, besides its methodological concern, focuses on the contents of the problem: there is no escape from the Hegelian totality contrasting different lexical or cultural peculiarities, as if that exact totality did not include also those peculiarities. We do not have to have the deceptive illusion that we can escape from Hegel "speaking" in Hebrew, with the broader meaning this entails: Rosenzweig, Lévinas or Derrida did not have that illusion.

Judaism does not simply represent an "otherwise" in respect to philosophy, but it is the claim against the philosophical pretension to take possession of whatever "otherwise".

Conclusion

We have tried to indicate some points we consider essential to understand the instance that Franz Rosenzweig's philosophy poses to philosophical reflection. Obviously, it is only an outline of a future work we will undertake. We have underlined the form, or at any rate, the form of the relation between Judaism and philosophy according to Franz Rosenzweig's philosophical suggestions. We tried to indicate that according to Rosenzweig the "thought of totality" is the great sin of philosophy. Judaism has always represented the opposition to this totality, denounced its impossible autonomy and auto-foundation. For this essential and critical task, Judaism has paid an enormous price, showing at all times the Achilles' heel of the totality and – but it is an aspect that we did not debate on this paper – the falsehood of the form of the political state. We have followed some suggestions and "traces" strewed in Rosenzweig's writings trying to re-think these problems and propositions. If in Rosenzweig's passages there is complete awareness of all this or if some parts of his speech

10 For more on this, see: Derrida 1991. Another important and evocative book is: Mosés 2008.

remain hidden instead, we believe it is irrelevant for the present questions. After all, *re-thinking* a thought always means thinking again about something that belongs to somebody else, somebody who did not know to be the owner of it. Actually, rethinking a thought means looking at a place that somebody else was not able to look at. The paradigm of this act of rethinking something imposes a "distance" on the thought, a distance from which the philosophical question springs up, which is always – to quote Derrida – the question over the question that is never "original". Rethinking, thinking again about something is also – to use a Talmudic expression – "doing" *midrash*: interrogating, retaking-repeating the word of the text, the same word that is already a comment itself. It is then a comment of a comment: *midrash*. "Doing *midrash*" here means avoiding the pretension to make a comment which tells the "truth", a comment which consumes and completes the meaning of the text in its gloss. It rather means a "reduction", a fragment, a "remainder" according to which Judaism appears as an "image" of, as opposite to the "thought of the totality". If philosophy wants to try to talk about its time – so, this time – it has to take charge of this instance of reduction, knowing that no "thought" can be called "new" without taking charge of the remains, the violence and the vileness of what is "ancient", "keeping" even what cannot be preserved. Without the *hybris* of wanting to get rid of it, there is still the demand of accomplishment, of being totalizing. On the contrary, the philosophical thought should be able to do itself "like a road in autumn: Hardly is it swept clean before it is covered again with dead leaves" (Kafka 1946: 144).

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Đakomo Petrarka

Totalitet i zajednica: Rozencvajg nasuprot Hegelu

Apstrakt

U svom remek-delu *Zvijezda iskupljenja* Franc Rozencvajg (1886-1929) pokazuje kako je pojam totaliteta stalna i središnja referenca u istoriji filozofije od Jonije do Jene. Ovaj rad ima za cilj da objasni drugačiji smisao pojma totaliteta, preispitujući neke aspekte pitanja polazeći od filozofskog promišljanja Franca Rozencvajga i njegovog protivljenja hegelovskoj misli. Konkretno, prema Rozencvajgu, pojam totaliteta je suštinska pozadina iz koje se može preispitati pojam *zajednice*. Iz tog razloga, drugi deo ovog rada usredsređen je na implikacije drugačijeg pojma totaliteta utelovljenog judaizmom.

Ključne reči: Rozencvajg, Hegel, totalitet, zajednica, jevrejska misao