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The Language Game of Divine Love according to Franz Rosenzweig and Karl Barth¹

Summary: Language games can be opening and narrowing. On the base of this double sense my paper compares the language game of divine love according to Franz Rosenzweig and Karl Barth. They were contemporaries not only regarding their early publications. Both discovered revelation in the face of liberal theology which regarded it as a problematic, mythological concept. However, this similarity is contradicted by difference, based in the Christological dogma which can have a tendency to narrow the common basis of the two authors' theological language game. There is also an anachronism, brought about by Rosenzweig's anticipation of the concept of analogy which Barth came to years later. The emphasis of my paper lies on the question how the opening function of theological language games can be promoted. In Rosenzweig's "speaking thinking" there can be found a trace to an answer.

Zusammenfassung: Sprachspiele können eine öffnende oder verschließende Funktion haben. Auf der Basis dieser doppelten Bedeutung werden die Sprachspiele der göttlichen Liebe bei Franz Rosenzweig und Karl Barth verglichen. Diese Autoren waren Zeitgenossen nicht nur hinsichtlich ihrer frühen Publikationen. Beide entdeckten die Offenbarung im Angesicht einer liberalen Theologie, die diesen Begriff als problematisch, mythologisch ansah. Diese Ähnlichkeit muss aber auf einen Unterschied bezogen werden, der im christologischen Dogma gründet, welches tendenziell die gemeinsame Basis der theologischen Sprachspiele beider Autoren beschränkt. Zudem hat Rosenzweig die Denkfigur der Analogie schon vorweggenommen, die Barth erst Jahre später entwickelte. Es geht mir um die Frage, wie die öffnende Funktion theologischer Sprachspiele begünstigt werden kann. In Rosenzweigs »Sprachdenken« findet sich die Spur zu einer Antwort.

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I Language Games in the “Star of Redemption”

Following Eric Santner, in the “Herzbuch” of *The Star* we find the witness of divine love in the form of a “language game”.² According to Wittgenstein all forms of language expressions in practical contexts fit under this term. “The speaking of language is part of an activity, a form of life”.³ Spoken rituals of everyday life, jokes, technical terminology and even philosophy and theology are language games.

The broad meaning of the term implies: much skill is necessary to participate in special language games like those last two. In order to understand the nuances of the language game of divine love in the revelation-chapter of Rosenzweig’s *Star of Redemption*, one has to presuppose *first* the language games of occidental philosophy, and *second* of Christian theology, including the Augustinian, reformatory and liberal tradition of the 19th century. However, this is not all of the complexity. To grasp Rosenzweig’s specific portrayal one also has to consider the languages of liturgy. In ritual repetition they remember the basic texts of *Star II* providing the grammar of logos, eros and pathos. The use of those texts in the worship service of the synagogue and the church constitutes the practical context of the language game of divine love.⁴

Focussing on *Star III* and the biblical quotations in *Star II*, the broad meaning of the term language game has to be supplemented by a narrower definition. According to Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, “the individual words in language name objects – sentences are combinations of such names. In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea, that every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word.”⁵ Moreover it is the use of words that identifies them as belonging to a specific language game. Jewish understanding of divine love refers to the siddur as well as to Talmud and Midrash. In Christianity the letters of Paul are authoritative and decisive. However, both traditions of reading the Hebrew bible as the basis of description

2 Eric L. SANTNER, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life. Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 65, cf. 92. Franz ROSENZWEIG, *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988 [= GS II; vgl. DERS., *Gesammelte Schriften I–III* (= GS I–III) (Den Haag: Neijhoff, 1979–1984)]. Rosenzweig refers to the second book of the second part as “Herzbuch”, dealing with revelation (GS II, 174–228).

3 Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), 23.

4 Not only in this respect Rosenzweig and Barth can be read as neo-orthodox authors (cf. Emil L. FACKENHEIM, *To Mend the World. Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (New York: Schocken, 1982), 133 et al.).

5 Quoted according to: David G. STERN, *Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations: An Introduction* (Cambridge: University Press, 2004), 1.

of the language game of divine love coincide in the point Rosenzweig makes with his motto for *Star III*: “in tyrannos”. The common historical sense of those liturgies consists in a resistance against all claims of worldly institutions to be absolute, be it Caesars or kings or totalitarian ideologies competing with the only religious legitimate claim on man as a whole.

In my understanding the motto of *Star II* (“in theologos”) refers to an antagonism between the Christian and the Jewish exegesis of the bible. In a critical and constructive way Rosenzweig comes to terms with a Christian theology that had denied that Judaism represents an equal language game of divine love in the practical contexts of his life. He opposes just the “supersessionist agenda” that had “typically funded traditional [...] theology”.⁶

A last point preludes my comparison of Rosenzweig and Barth. The special language games of philosophy discussed in *Star I* (“in philosophos”) are relevant for my survey insofar as the critique of the “philosophy of all” concerns those protestant theologies which place the Christian claim of generality over – in their view – Jewish particularity.

II Contemporaries

Barth developed his new conception of theology in the same time in which Rosenzweig shaped his “new thinking”. The commentary of Paul’s letter to the Romans was published in the first edition in 1919, the *Star* in 1921. Both refer to the recent World War as a catastrophe.⁷ They search for a new beginning in the “power of the origin” (*Kraft des Ursprungs*), as Barth writes in his famous “Tambach-speech” (ibid., 10). Both work on the notion of wonder as the most beloved child of faith (11) – the wonder of God’s revelation (12), the wonder of faith (13). As Rosenzweig writes in his early essay “Atheistic Theology”⁸ revelation is not a matter of mythology (ibid., 285) but the central theological term (290). Both give witness to an experience that the soul woke up to its “conscience of immediacy”⁹, both debate with Goethe und Nietzsche (ibid., 27) – the line could be drawn further.

⁶ Mark R. LINDSAY, Barth, *Israel and Jesus. Karl Barth’s Theology of Israel* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 57, referring to Kendall Soulen.

⁷ Karl BARTH, “Der Christ in der Gesellschaft,” in: Jürgen MOLTSMANN (Hg.), *Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie*, Bd. 1 [1962] (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1995), 3–37, 3.

⁸ Vgl. Franz ROSENZWEIG, “Atheistische Theologie”, in: ROSENZWEIG, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), 278–290.

⁹ BARTH (see above, n. 7), 14.

Rosenzweig and Barth have taken notice of each other. However, in spite of his contacts to the Patmos-circle Barth never managed to read the *Star* as a whole although his friend Kornelis Heiko Miskotte never tired of encouraging this effort.¹⁰ On his side, in his letters to Buber Rosenzweig witnesses an early fascination for the new theological conception of the Swiss reverend of Safenwil. At the same time he criticizes his dialectical negativism. On February 14, 1923 he writes: “I am myself a former Barthian for some years. It is about 10 years ago that Rosenstock cut out [wegoperiert] my barthianism.” (GS I/2, 893f.) A roguish trick (*Spitzbüberei*) he calls the method of the early Barth. In the end he leaves nothing (letter of the 24.12.1922 [GS I/2, 875f.]). Of course this is written long before the *Church Dogmatics* was published, beginning in 1932 (with the doctrine of the word of God – as revelation).

In my paper I want to show that the language game of the *Church Dogmatics* has more in common with Rosenzweig’s “new thinking” as the letters to Buber foreshadow. However, even if the complete Barthian oeuvre is at issue, the *Star* has the power to send an orientating beam giving light to the Christian-Jewish dialogue. This beam has the potential to open even the narrowing aspects of Barth’s understanding of the language game of divine love, which are imposed by his dogmatic framework.¹¹

III Analogies

1 The language game of divine love in *Star II* as a challenge of the Christian stereotype of a Jewish religion of law

What belongs to the perhaps most widespread contents of the drama of Christian anti-Judaism is the idea of a Jewish religion of law which has found its negation, elevation and conservation (*Aufhebung*) in the Christian religion of love.¹² For this idea it has been indeed dramatic that Judaism refused to accept

¹⁰ LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 27. Cf. Rinse H. Reeling BROUWER, “Glauben Sie denn im Ernst, die Juden müssten uns lehren, die Bibel zu verstehen? Eine systematische Analyse von Miskottes Versuch einer Antwort an Barth,” in: *ZDTh* [Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie] 2 (2012), 60–85.

¹¹ Cf. LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 88. To give an example: “If Jesus was and is there *pro nobis*, Barth is equally certain that Israel as a whole was *against* him.” On this background, how is “the possibility of dialogue and respect [to keep] open”? (*ibid.*, 97)

¹² Adolf von HARNACK argued this way in his *Marcion. Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, [1924] (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1996), 196–235, 217, having prepared this in his *The*

its role in the script of the Christian drama of covenant. The legitimizing logic has been one of deficient modes: as a matter of Christian interpreted fact it seemed to be overdue for the Jews to have recognized the redemption Christ has brought for bondage under the observance of law – for all mankind. This insight of faith notwithstanding Judaism has not recognized the Christ in Jesus for over 2000 years. Following Paul the apostle (Gal 5, 1ff.) it refused to be brought home from the compulsion of law into the freedom of the children of God. In my conviction it is not possible to understand Christian anti-Judaism outside this context of theological presuppositions.

On this background for most of the Christian readers of the *Star* it must have been a surprise that Rosenzweig's claim of truth is related to an experience of revelation that shows God as a loving Thou. Taking the phenomenon of love between two lovers serious as a parable for the relation of God with Israel the command to love in the "sch'ma Israel" (Dtn 6,4ff.) makes sense only on the premise that a lover says to the beloved "love me". If this commandment is an expression of love, it must be able to accompany all determinations of law (cf. GS II, 196–198).

2 The language game of divine love in Jesus Christ as a pattern to interpret the first "uncancelled" covenant in Church Dogmatics

Following Rosenzweig the law is based in an analogous way to the foundation of the "law of Christ" by the gospel in Paul's letter to the Galatians (Gal 6,2). Speaking in the authoritative categories of protestant, especially Lutheran, Christianity we find the good news already in the Jewish law. The *tora* is established on grace.¹³ The demand is preceded by encouragement, the No by Yes.

Essence of Christianity [1900], referring to the "better justice" of Jesus (43ff; cf. JACOB TAUBES, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus* (München: Fink, 1993), 84). In the cloud of predecessors Martin Luther and Friedrich Schleiermacher easily find their places. To put it in other words: Be it Marcion, be it Luther or Harnack, they agree in the conviction: "lex non potest nobis monstrare verum deum" [The law is not able to present us the true God] (cf. HARNACK (see above, n. 12), 218).

¹³ Cf. LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 17, 35, 66f., 71f. et al. Barth corrects the impression that his description of "God the Father" could seem cold if there were not a "greater emphasis to the love of God the Father" (68, n. 33). "God the Father is none other than the King of Israel [...] as much in the New Testament as in the Old. He is 'the same Lord of the same covenant' (CD III/3, 176.179)" (LINDSAY, 68). Cf. 79f.

This is also the teaching of Barth.¹⁴ Already in the 1930s – and that means in critical confrontation with the so called *Deutsche Christen* – he defined the language game of divine love including the first “uncancelled” covenant. Barth affirms “that the Jews are not only elected by God but are indeed *loved* by Him.”¹⁵ Giving grace the first place and law the second he went further than most of his contemporaries to overcome the Christian stereotype of a Jewish religion of law. Figuring the notion of providence strictly as election, he goes so far to write in “The Doctrine of Creation”: “our own non-Jewish election ‘can be only in and with this other ...[I]n order to be elect ourselves, for good or evil we must either be Jews or belong to this Jew’” Jesus.¹⁶ According to the Christian witness God has elected mankind in him – this is the basis on which Barth perceives the divine world-government.¹⁷ The all encompassing christological form encloses the first (or traditionally speaking the “old”) covenant as well as the second or “new”.

In a philosophical perspective both authors give their Jewish and Christian answers to Nietzsche’s question how to find a founding Yes to one’s own being.¹⁸ The commandments of love in the “Sch’ma Israel” and in the good news of Paul are both legitimate expressions of a Yes spoken to man from the outside of his consciousness. The premises to communicate and to stay aware of this are the life of the synagogue on the one hand, and the practice of faith in the church on the other. However, all analogies in the founding determinations of the language game of divine love notwithstanding the *Church Dogmatics* does not coincide with the *Star*. In the frame of his theology of covenant

14 CD III/1, 330f. CD IV/1, 30f.

15 LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 79.

16 LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 83 quotes CD III/3, 225. It is possible to appreciate the theological pattern of covenantal complementarity Barth has developed (cf. n. 13). However, in order to understand Christianity it is necessary to pass through Marcion, although if one takes a different option – following Barth and many others. In fact Marcion was “a disciple of Paul” (cf. HARNACK [see above, n. 12], 198) who brought the extreme aspects of the apostle to view. Cf. n. 21.

17 Barth begins his “discussion of divine providence” in “The Doctrine of Creation” (CD III/3). Cf. LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 64ff. His Christological interpretation of divine providence was carried out in face of the fact “that ‘providence’ was ‘a favourite [word] on the lips of Adolf Hitler’ (CD III/3, 33)” (64). In opposition to his discussion of radical evil (“das Nichtigte”) “the activity of God through which humanity is accompanied by God’s providential care [...], is God’s eternal love” (LINDSAY, 67).

18 Vgl. Karl LÖWITH, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche. Der revolutionäre Bruch im Denken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1986), 212; Georg PICTH, *Nietzsche* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988), 163.198; Hans Martin DOBER, *Die Moderne wahrnehmen. Über Religion im Werk Walter Benjamins* (Gütersloh, 2002), 248–253.

there is no doubt for Barth that the law – and the term means mostly *tora* following the letters of Paul – is fulfilled in Christ as its *telos* (Romans 10,4).

IV Difference

1 Dialectical negativism and a thinking in analogies

At the time when Barth worked with the instruments of an “antinomian dialectic” (to speak with Dietrich Korsch), a “paradox dialectic” relative to Kierkegaard (to speak with Michael Beintker, another Barth scholar), Rosenzweig had already transformed this kind of thinking. In the medium of the Song of Songs he describes the original experience of the wonder to be a soul beloved by God. The pattern of interpretation is a correlative analogy. This is the case also on the occasion of grounding the “work of revelation” through the commandment “as He loves you, so shall you love”.¹⁹ In the *Star* as a system of analogies Rosenzweig has overcome the dialectical negativism he had become aware of in the early Barthian writings.²⁰ It might as well be that he had found traces of the alien God of Marcion in the commentary on Paul’s letter to the Romans.²¹

Evidently beginning with the Anselm-studies in the end of the 1920s the later Barth has himself transformed his paradox-dialectical method into a think-

¹⁹ ROSENZWEIG, GS II, 228 [Der Stern der Erlösung]. I owe this translation to Nahum N. GLATZER, *Franz Rosenzweig. His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken, 1998), 90. Rosenzweig’s own critique of the fundamental notion of Cohen notwithstanding in my interpretation those analogies can be understood as *correlations*.

²⁰ Cf. the quoted letters to Buber and: ROSENZWEIG, *Kleinere Schriften* (see above, n. 8), 132 [Die Einheit der Bibel]. In the “system of philosophy,” which Rosenzweig intended to give with the *Star*, in the end he frees faith and knowledge or religion and science of the dualism in which the dialectical negativism had captured them. “Wenn Wissenschaft und Religion nichts voneinander wissen wollen, aber doch voneinander wissen, taugt weder die Wissenschaft noch die Religion etwas”. Nota bene Rosenzweig thought this philosophical claim could reconcile science and religion with Hegel, although he dismissed the idealistic attempt to anticipate the truth of the whole in the logic of thought. Cf. FACKENHEIM, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel’s Thought* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967).

²¹ In a letter to Margrit Rosenstock Rosenzweig writes, before 1913 he had been “a Marcionite” himself (FRANZ ROSENZWEIG, *Die „Gritli“-Briefe. Briefe an Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy*, hg. v. Inken RÜHLE u. Reinhold MAYER (Tübingen: Bilam, 2002), 736), and in a letter to Buber, that over the years he had been “a Barthian” (ROSENZWEIG, GS I/2, 893). Barth’s early negativism (cf. *ibid.* 876) and Marcion’s “strange God” are obviously similar, although the later Barth withstood Marcion’s critique of the Old Testament. Cf. n. 16.

ing in analogies (which has some roots in the early writings). This provided him the potentiality to determine the relation between identity and diversity in a new way.²² Now he gained a multilateral notion of God (*einen mehrseitigen Gottesbegriff*) which Rosenzweig had demanded in a letter to Buber (24.12.1922 [GS I/2, 875f.]). Together with this he was able to face the challenge to go on from the determination of revelatory origin (*Ursprung*) to the realities of life.²³ He made this possible by establishing an “*intellectus fidei*” in the life of the church – not primarily in general culture. The *Church Dogmatics* gives orientation to church life²⁴, and this orienting reflection is destined to emanate to general culture – paradigmatic for this aspect is the essay *Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde*.²⁵ The conditions and circumstances of this world as a whole, and especially the Christian relation to Israel, find their evaluation now in the pattern of analogy to the Christian witness of original revelation. This was Barth found an answer to the question how the rationality of faith can be correlated to common rationality. In the view of Fackenheim we are confronted here with a “fideistic one-sidedness”.²⁶

2 The Schibboleth of Christology

Speaking with his former survey on Hegel Fackenheim interprets the Barthian theology as emerging out of the “crisis of the Hegelian Middle”.²⁷ In this line of interpretation Barth is “writing at the post-Hegelian Christian right”.²⁸ Indeed, Christology being its general form the Barthian theology seems to be an heir of the “philosophy of all”. As the Australian interpreter Mark Lindsay writes, “for Barth the only mode of the Word of God that can, without qualification, be

22 Cf. Michael BEINTKER, *Die Dialektik in der ‘dialektischen Theologie’ Karl Barths* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1987), 253.

23 Cf. Dietrich KORSCH, *Dialektische Theologie nach Karl Barth* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 72.

24 Only under this premise the theological doctrine of Barth is possible and makes sense (cf. the introduction to CD I/1). Following Beintker this development in the Barthian thinking can be proved from 1931 on (DERS. (see above, n. 22), 183).

25 Karl BARTH, *Rechtfertigung und Recht. Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde* [Theologische Studien 104] (Zürich: TVZ, 1979), 49–82.

26 This “fideistic one-sidedness” is unable to face the Holocaust as an event hurling not only Judaism but also Christianity into crisis. Fackenheim has made efforts to overcome this by his “Jewish encounters with Hegel” (FACKENHEIM, *To Mend the World* (see above, n. 4), 9).

27 FACKENHEIM, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel’s Thought* (see above, n. 20), 223–242.

28 FACKENHEIM, *To Mend the World* (see above, n. 4), 133.

identified with God's revelation is Jesus Christ".²⁹ On this premise he "regards the revelation attested in the Old Testament as genuine to the extent that it points toward Jesus Christ" (ibid., 58). However, in the scheme of promise and fulfillment or just partial and full realization no equal claim of truth in Judaism and Christianity is possible.³⁰ Grounded is this structural asymmetry in a "recognition of faith under a bow of the one covenant" that covers the whole.³¹ Up to the late doctrine of reconciliation (*CD IV*) Barth puts emphasis on a "common foundation in grace" (ibid.). Yet one can find passages which are no more acceptable for today's conscience, typifying the man of the Old Testament in comparison to the man of New Testament³² or "the covenant in the Old Testament", which seems "hidden in obscurity" to "the form of fulfillment" in the New (*CD III*/, 181). As Lindsay has shown the language in Barth's doctrine of Israel in parts is "patronizing and derogatory".³³

Therefore it seems legitimate to identify Barth as "the last great Christian supersessionist thinker", as Fackenheim has called him.³⁴ However, on a basis of a rereading of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* it seems necessary to call the blame of supersessionism into question. As Lindsay has shown in the Barthian language game of divine love we find quite a lot of opening aspects transforming this traditional Christian form of thinking. In his "Doctrine of Creation" Barth expressively appreciates Jewish particularism without trying to overcome it in Christian terms of generality.³⁵ And regarding his own tradition of Reformed

29 LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 57 quotes *CD I/1*, 115–117. This is founded already in the discussion of divine providence. In "The Doctrine of Creation" Barth argues that "providence is in fact faith in Christ" (LINDSAY, 64).

30 LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 55, 57.

31 Friedrich-Wilhelm MARQUARDT, *Verwegenheiten*: Theologische Stücke aus Berlin (München: Kaiser, 297). Vgl. LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 79. *CD IV/1*, 671, cf. LINDSAY, 100; *CD III/3*, 190, cf. LINDSAY, 72.

32 *CD IV/1*, 671, cf. *CD III/3*, 28.

33 LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 66, 100. This is the case in the chapter "The Divine Ruling" (§ 49.3) in *CD III/3* ("The Doctrine of Creation") as well as in the later "Doctrine of Reconciliation" (*CD IV/1*). In the "doctrine of divine providence" Barth "comes closest to disembodiment of Jews and depicting them through the faceless cipher of an 'Israel-concept'" (LINDSAY, 67 refers to J. MANGINA).

34 FACKENHEIM, *To Mend the World* (see above, n. 4), 284. This post-Holocaust perspective of interpretation puts emphasis on the fact that the Christian pattern of being overcome lead Barth to "recognize the Holocaust as the greatest Jewish catastrophe" but prevented him from asking "whether it might also be a Christian catastrophe". "It was overcome before Auschwitz had ever occurred [...] Every subsequent Good Friday, Auschwitz included, is after Easter, overcome in advance." (ibid., 133, cf. 192, 292f.)

35 LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 69f.

Christianity he corrects the notion of providence by the christological concentration of his thought.³⁶ Even the sharp critic Katherine Sonderegger has to admit that Barth's "insistence on covenantal solidarity precludes [... his] theology of Israel from being straightforwardly 'supersessionist decree'".³⁷

Regarding other contemporary theologies the Barthian language game of divine love has an eminent opening function. Yet, regarding the mutual recognition of different claims of truth in Judaism and Christianity the Barthian language game indicates narrowing aspects as well. In the perspective of Rosenzweig these narrowing aspects can be brought into an opening to which aspects in the thinking of Barth reveal themselves. In contrast, however, Rosenzweig doesn't need a christological pattern for his presentation of the experience which is represented in the "Sch'ma Israel". The form of dialogue in the Song of Songs suffices as a parable to describe the origin of the covenant which generates its dramatic history under the category of redemption. His theory of the two ways leading to the one truth which is in God opens the possibility of giving the Jewish and the Christian version of the drama of covenant equal theological right. A prismatic view from the outside of theological discourse makes this possible. The perception searching beam, coming from Rosenzweig's *Star*, generates a variation of colors in which a different constellation of theology is possible. (The metaphor of prisma I owe to Dietrich Korsch).³⁸

V Theology as "thinking thinking" and "speaking thinking"

In Rosenzweig's perspective Barth's theology of Israel to a large extent can be understood as "thinking thinking" which still needs to be supplemented by a "speaking thinking" (I have to do without further examples).³⁹ However, in his

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 66. This inner perspective of self-correction, however, doesn't lose its problematic aspects in the external perspective of Jewish thought.

³⁷ LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 68 quotes Sonderegger. Lindsay opposes the thesis of Fackenheim (Lindsay [see above, n. 6], 102, cf. 82f.).

³⁸ KORSCH (see above, n. 23), 42.

³⁹ The term "speaking thinking" is introduced in: ROSENZWEIG, *Kleinere Schriften* (see above, n. 8), 386f. [Das neue Denken]. To give an example for my thesis, the attempt of Barth suffices to integrate the historical experience of the Shoa into the pattern of *theologia crucis*. On this line of interpretation Barth said in a radio message on the "Judenfrage und ihre christliche Beantwortung" that the difference between Jews and Christians in truth would be the common subject of the Jew on the cross. Already at that time this view was irritating (Eberhard BUSCH,

anthropology given in *Church Dogmatics* III/2 one finds a dialogical thinking *par excellence*. Consequently following his christological premise the “basic form of humanity” has its original in Jesus as the ideal of God (*Bild Gottes*). Yet this prototypical humanity is common to all men as fellow-beings. The new covenant is taken as a model for the ability of man-in-general to become an “alliance partner” (*Bündnispartner*) of God. Anthropology, developed under these premises, will have to exclude “the possibility of a humanity without the fellow-man”.⁴⁰ On the contrary, as the being of Jesus has been a being-in-relation-to others, so human life in general will have to be realized in relation to others. The heroic solitude of the self being celebrated by Nietzsche is impossible in this anthropology.⁴¹

The similarity to Rosenzweig’s “new thinking” is striking in Barth’s description of language as the basic aspect of humanity. The first step of a real encounter is *to see* the fellow-man. An opening for the other takes place in one moment, in a glance of the eye – like Rosenzweig Barth concurs with the history of

Karl Barths Lebenslauf (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1979), 331). – It is possible to appreciate this view as a Christian model of interpretation which has found its reflection in “Night” of Elie Wiesel or on pictures of Marc Chagall, figuring Jesus as a Jew on the cross. However, this is no more than a possibility because there is an exegesis of the “*abed adonai*” of *Jesaja* in Jewish tradition without christology and *theologia crucis* (like Hermann Cohen did in his late philosophy of religion). If Barth finds confirmation of the promise that God will not forsake his people in Christ, although through the deepest contestation, this remains a perspectivist view of his theology. Furthermore, to interpret the Shoah as crucifixion of Judaism and the founding of the state of Israel as its resurrection (cf. LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 60) means to relate to history in an immediate way. The early Barth would have denied this option by restricting “natural theology”. His later argument, however, comes near to the one of E. Berkowits (LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 77). These consequences of the Barthian theology of Israel point to its unsolved problem to be self-contained. This problem can be brought to an opening with Rosenzweig who presupposes the mutual recognition of Judaism and Christianity as self-reliant religions.

40 Quoted according to: Karl BARTH, *Mensch und Mitmensch. Die Grundform der Menschlichkeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958) [= Auszug aus KD III,2], 14.

41 It is not accidental that Barth gives a long excursion into Nietzsche (*CD* III.2, 231–242) in order to outline this difference. – In a basic sense he writes: “It is not as he is for himself but with others, not in loneliness but in fellowship, that he is genuinely human, that he achieves true humanity, that he corresponds to his determination to be God’s covenant-partner, that he is the being for which the man Jesus is, and therefore real man.” (*CD* III.2, 243) [“Die Humanität Jesu besteht in seinem Sein für den Menschen. Aus der Verbindlichkeit dieses Vorbildes für die Humanität überhaupt und im allgemeinen folgt zunächst als weiteste Definition: Humanität schlechthin, die Humanität jedes Menschen besteht in der Bestimmtheit seines Seins als Zusammenhang mit dem anderen Menschen [...] nicht in der Einsamkeit, sondern in der Zweisamkeit ist er konkret menschlich [...] und] entspricht er seiner Bestimmung, Gottes Bundesgenosse zu sein” (BARTH, (see above, n. 40), 35).]

this metaphor *Augenblick*. To confirm and to intensify this momentary experience a second step is necessary: in *speaking* and *listening* man discovers “the [eminent] human sense of language” (51). The old insight of Socrates “speak, and I will see you” is taken here as a correction of a pure seeing in the way of representation. One has to introduce oneself in order to correct the first conceptions and ideas of visual encounter (in German the term *Vorstellung* means both). In the “event of language” (*Ereignis der Sprache*, 52) there is a check-up of the images (*Bilder*) of the other “in which exists one for the other in the first place and exclusively” (“in denen der Eine für den Anderen, der Andere für den Einen zunächst ausschließlich existiert” 52).⁴²

“Not to recognize [perceive] the other always means distress and anguish waiting for relief” (“das Nicht-Erkennen des Einen für den Anderen [ist] immer Lebensnot [...], die auf Beseitigung wartet” 58). It does not go too far to relate this “anguish and distress of life” to the recognition of Judaism as a self-sufficient religion, which exists independently of Christianity. The interpreters of Barth don’t agree on the question whether he argued consequently in his doctrine of Israel in order not to fall back behind his anthropological insights. In his christological perspective, so it seems, to a large extent he remained within the boundaries of a “thinking thinking”, not arriving to the full sense of the “speaking thinking” Rosenzweig and Rosenstock had practiced in their letters.⁴³ The “speaking thinking” has the potential to interrupt all tendencies to close or limit language games. In this sense Barth’s theology can correct the “thinking thinking” of his doctrine of Israel. Consequently Christian theology has to realize the definitive insight of Fackenheim that “the post-Holocaust Christian must repent of the Christian sin of supersessionism”⁴⁴, wherever traces of this traditional type can be found. On the way to this repentance the “speaking thinking”

42 “The I has thus to express itself to the Thou. A word spoken by me is my active self-declaration to the Thou, my spontaneous crossing of the necessary frontier of mere visibility in relation to the other [...] As I speak, I set the other in a position to compare his own picture of me with my own, with my own conception of myself. I help him to answer the immediate question whether his picture of me is correct.” (CD III.2, 254) [Erst in gegenseitiger “Selbstkundgabe zum Du hin” “versetze ich den Anderen in die Lage, sein Bild von mir mit meinem eigenen, mit der Vorstellung, die ich selbst von mir habe, zu vergleichen. Ich helfe ihm antworten auf die nahe-liegende Frage, ob sein Bild von mir das richtige sein möchte.” (KD III/2, 304).]

43 There is an exchange of 21 letters from Mai to December 1916 (ROSENZWEIG, GS I/1, 191–320). The “basic form of humanity” requires for Barth what Rosenzweig has called “speaking thinking”. “My own being and positing takes place in and with the fact that I am claimed by that of the other and occupied with it.” (CD III.2, 246) [So heißt es bei Barth, “dass ich dieses fremde Sein und Setzen [eines anderen Ich] als ein dem meinigen entsprechendes sehen, anerkennen und gelten lassen muss” (KD III/2, 294).]

44 FACKENHEIM, *To Mend the World* (see above, n. 4), 285.

can be an elementary help to overcome the rupture of “theological trust” Fackenheim has described.⁴⁵

VI The unconscious other side of the drama of covenant

Sigmund Freud gave some insight into the unconscious side of the drama of covenant. Has it enough room in the theories compared?⁴⁶ The early Barth didn't want to know anything about that: “Stay away from us, you psychologists, with your insides” he wrote in his Tambach-speech 1920.⁴⁷ Rosenzweig on his part left enough space for the recognition of the unconscious as the dark ground of the soul in his metaethical conception of the human self.

To speak in terms of fact in the end I refer to the recently much debated letter Barth wrote to Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt on 5 September 1967. On account of the intense studies on biblical Israel, it says there, he had not found the time and strength closer to be engaged “with Baeck, Buber [and] Rosenzweig”.⁴⁸ Above that he was “decidedly no philosemite”. Rather “in the personal encounters with living Jews [...] he had to swallow down a totally irrational aversion”. It might be, Barth concludes, that this “reprehensible instinct [...] had retarding consequences” in his doctrine of Israel.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 280–284.

⁴⁶ See further Yosef H. YERUSHALMI, *Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1991). Cf. Hans Martin DOBER, “*Reflektierender Glaube*”. *Die Vernunft der Religion in klassischen Positionen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), 138–165, regarding YERUSHALMI: 156–160.

⁴⁷ “*Geht uns, ihr Psychiker, mit eurem Innseits!*” (BARTH (see above, n. 7), 34).

⁴⁸ Karl BARTH, *Briefe 1961–1968* (Zürich: TVZ, 21979), 420. Cf. the German text: Er habe, so Barth, ob der intensiven Beschäftigung mit dem biblischen Israel die Zeit und Kraft nicht gefunden, sich auch noch “mit Baeck, Buber, Rosenzweig” näher zu beschäftigen. Doch darüber hinaus sei er insofern “entschieden kein ‘Philosemite’”. Vielmehr hatte er “in der persönlichen Begegnung mit dem lebendigen Juden (auch Judenchristen!) [...] immer so etwas wie eine völlig irrationale Aversion herunterzuschlucken.” Es möchte sein, so Barth weiter, dass dieser “verwerfliche Instinkt [...] sich in meiner Israellehre retardierend ausgewirkt hat” (421).

⁴⁹ BARTH, *Briefe* (see above, n. 48), 421. One can find traces to those “retarding consequences” in the discrepancy between Barth's intention to integrate the historic and actual “Israel” into his theology under the guidance of the notions “election” and “reconciliation” on the one hand, and his language on the other which does not fit to the frightful experience of Auschwitz (cf. LINDSAY (see above, n. 6), 100 and 71, referring to § 49.3 of *CD III/3*). To be brought into focus are those passages in *CD IV/2* which connect the *pro nobis* of Christ with the refusal of

Here, the late Barth witnesses a feeling of ambivalence that did not leave him even after the most intense theological work during his lifetime. The refusal to accept the Christian good news – it is just this impenitence (*Verstocktheit*) Rosenzweig tried to explain in a famous letter to Rosenstock (cf. *GS I/1*, 249ff.) – seems to be the psychological basis for Barth’s feeling of ambivalence. Surmounting such a resistance will only be possible by recognizing the unconscious side of the history of revelation and to communicate with it in a “speaking thinking”. For it is the efficacy of those forces in the dark ground of the self which make the “you” dreadful (die das “Ihr” “grauenhaft” machen) as Rosenzweig writes in the *Star*.⁵⁰ In other words, to integrate the unconscious side of the drama of covenant opens deeper insights into the difference of the Christian and the Jewish *language game* of divine love. However, being a language game of *divine love* it bears the potential to open up all the tendencies to narrow or to limit the human, the all too human play of this game.⁵¹ This leads to the question of prayer which provides more than enough material for another paper.

the Jews or of Judaism at all. Referring to the Jewish authorities and the *vox populi*, having forced the condemnation of Jesus through Pilatus “the Jews” are being made responsible for the death of Christ. Cf. also *CD IV/1*, 670.

⁵⁰ ROSENZWEIG, *GS II*, 264.

⁵¹ I agree with E. L. Santner who made this thesis in his above cited survey (ibid. 84. 92). The ethical dimension of human life reaching beyond the functions of the super-ego depends on the language game of divine love. At the same time it is this ethical dimension *and* the prayer which found the language *game* in a primary seriousness.