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REVIEWS

PRIKAZI

ROBERTO NAVARRETE ALONSO, *LOS TIEMPOS DEL PODER: FRANZ ROSENZWEIG Y CARL SCHMITT*, ESCOLAR Y MAYO EDITORES, MADRID, 2017.

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Roberto Navarrete Alonso's monography entitled *Los tiempos del poder* [Times of Power] is essentially a *Differenzschrift*. Through an antithetical, one might say baroque, structure, the text offers a multidimensional and dynamic dialogue between Carl Schmitt and Franz Rosenzweig. Such a *contrapposto* method provides a comparative study of the scope of Rosenzweig's and Schmitt's political theologies, with which the two authors, each in his own way, attempted to respond to the deep political and historical crises that shook Europe in the 20th century, in particular in its first half (1914-1945).

The introduction notes that Carl Schmitt mentions Franz Rosenzweig in one of his notes, published after Schmitt's death under the title *Glossarium*. In the note, dated 23 May 1948, he cites Rosenzweig speaking about the fate of assimilated Jews in Germany. (Looking at Rosenzweig's relationship with Eugen Rosenstock and Hermann Kohen, Navarrete shows that in *Glossarium* Schmitt was wrong to mark Rosenzweig as a figure of an assimilated liberal Jew.)

There is also mention of an alleged reference to Schmitt by Rosenzweig, also in private correspondence. In a letter to parents, dated 22 July 1916, there is a certain

"Schmitt" of the University of Berlin. In the onomastic index of the first tome of Rosenzweig's *Gesammelte Schriften*, this "Schmitt" is identified as "Schmitt, Carl." However, this is an error, since Carl Schmitt became a professor in Berlin only in 1928. Therefore, based on Franz Rosenzweig's writings published so far, there is no written mention of Carl Schmitt (although they belong to the same generation; the first was born in 1886, the latter in 1888).

Roberto Navarrete says that Schmitt's mention of Rosenzweig in one of his notes represents nothing more than an excuse for a confrontation of their approaches regarding the problem of political theology, which Rosenzweig also calls "messianic politics." *Los tiempos del poder* presents the thesis that Rosenzweig's opus can be read as an "anticipated critique" of Schmitt's ideas.

Navarrete begins with the notion of secularization as the horizon from which it is possible to properly connect and confront Schmitt's and Rosenzweig's positions regarding the given problem. The monography points out that the third part of Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption* (1921) can be read from a political-theological point of view. Particularly important to that end is Rosenzweig's notion of "the mundanization of the world", brought in

relation with the notion of secularization (Rosenzweig uses “Säkularisierung” in his correspondence, but “Verweltlichung” in *The Star of Redemption*). The origin of the mundanization of the world should be sought in the act of radical institutional separation of church and state, which is the event leading to the confusion between religious and mundane, that is, creation of the possibility of the absolutization of the political. The joining of the previously separated instances of *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the figure of the secular sovereign has resulted in the divinization of the world, a perverse and paradoxical effect of the process of its secularization.

Rosenzweig claims that the nationalisms of European peoples are the result of the secularization of the idea of messianism. In other words, European nations have come to see themselves as chosen, making their politics messianic politics. Rosenzweig formulated a sketch of this thesis in an important letter of 7 November 1916 to Eugen Rosenstock. Its elaboration – believes Navarrete – is the first book of Part III of *The Star of Redemption*. The realization of messianic politics, as a historic mission of the ‘chosen’ peoples, leads to imperial intentions and wars, whereupon follows that historical events turn into a theodicy, a process that justifies evil.

Seen more narrowly, the two central themes of *The Star of Redemption* – a radical condemnation of history in its political dimension and the defining of Judaism as a community placed on the margin of political reality and historical temporality – cannot be comprehensively understood without consideration of Rosenzweig’s reflections on Hegel’s philosophy of history and politics. In *Hegel and the State* (1920), Rosenzweig presents how Hegel developed his theory of the State based on the will of the individual, not the nation; however, later German nationalism saw Hegel’s apology of the state as a kind of strategy for legitimizing its egotistic goals. However, upon the historical catastrophe of German policy in World War I and his grasping of the essence of development of the German state in the course of the 19th

century, Rosenzweig took an anti-Hegelian position by way of condemnation of the idea of the unconditional disposability of the individual to sacrifice for his or her State. Embodied in the nation state, messianic politics justifies the abuse of its power.

On the other hand, Carl Schmitt claims that secularization is the essence of modern political theory, that is, that the secular order of the modern state is characterized by the absence of any relation with transcendence. Since the origin of modernity comprises the diminishment of any form of transcendent legitimation of the political, the loss of the Absolute manifests as the absence of divine grounding and, in general, the grounds of the real. By analyzing the genealogy of modernity in *Political Theology* (1922) and other writings, Schmitt notices its progressive tendency towards depolitization and dehumanization. Towards depoliticized and dehumanized reality, if the essence of the human is to be the *zoon politikon*. Schmitt’s response to the perceived loss of substantial *auctoritas* is his theory of the sovereign. In order to reconstruct the origin and nature of modernity, Schmitt reaches for establishing functional analogies between the domains of the ecclesiastic and juridico-political.

If all the central notions of modern state theory are secularized theological concepts, then the erstwhile role of God corresponds the role of the Sovereign. Schmitt emulates and draws on Catholic theory, but – adds Navarrete – the established analogy is not substantial, but has a formally-functional nature, since Schmitt defends the specificity of the modern. Despite the modern epoch’s characteristic of “silencing theologians,” according to Schmitt the church still ought to remain a functional model for the State and Sovereign regarding representation and visibilization, except this time not of God but of the People.

Ultimately – concludes Navarrete – what happens in Schmitt is a theologization of politics. The sovereign doctrine, secular in origin, turns out to be substantially theologized with the introduction of the Catholic basis on which he sought to build his idea of *katechon*. Although

its origin is postulated as entirely secular, Schmitt's political theology nevertheless succumbs to the temptation of divinization of world and politics.

In accordance with the premise that Western political theory from its beginnings is not merely theologically, but spatially ordered, and that these two elements do not exclude one another, Navarrete continues to uncover what he calls Schmitt's and Rosenzweig's "geo(theo)politics" (*geo-teo-política*). The book establishes that the apposition of land and sea is the principle on which both Rosenzweig in *Globus* (1917) and Schmitt in *Land and Sea* (1942) approach the problem of theater of universal history.

Given that the unfolding of world history is based on the mentioned antagonism, Schmitt thinks that the approach of various European and world powers to the spatial element of the political, suits their distinctive theological grounding. Catholic countries have a land essence, while Protestantism and Judaism are characterized by oceanic essence. *Los tiempos del poder* puts forward the thinking that this division is also implicit or "subterranean" in Rosenzweig, in particular if the content of *Globus* is connected to the content of *The Star of Redemption*.

According to Schmitt, Protestants do not possess awareness of their groundedness in place; rather, their relation to the land is primarily exploitationist and based on technological domination. In contrast to Catholics, their position is determined by utopian displacement (*Ent-ortung*) and orientation towards the sea and sky. This project of planetary displacement and dislocation will ultimately turn into a utopian project of world unification based on technological progress. Navarrete claims that Schmitt further ties the logic of unlocation of peoples and Judaism. While Rosenzweig would mark the constitutive "a-nomic" character of the Jewish people as meta-political and meta-historical, Schmitt would rather call it – negatively, of course – as "depoliticizing."

Remaining with the spatial aspect of the political, we should add that just like

Schmitt's, Rosenzweig's writings thematize a theory of great spaces. During his time as soldier and volunteer at the Balkan front in World War I, Rosenzweig defended Friedrich Naumann's 1915 idea of *Mittleuropa*. Naumann's suggestion was the constitution of a supranational state of broad reach that would include Balkan peoples through their "Europeanization" and democratization of the southeastern portion of the Continent. However, while in Belgrade in 1918, Rosenzweig came to realize the futility of this idea. Disappointed with the project's failure, and with his growing interest in the Jewish intellectual tradition, he came to formulate his own anti-historicist theology and affirm a Jewish meta-historical and meta-political theory.

Rosenzweig's turn toward "meta-political theology" manifests in the establishment of the difference between the two dimensions of human existence (as an individual and as "self") and in the introduction of a relational notion of temporality (its historical and messianic modality). The self is pure facticity, turned unto itself, and which as such does not belong directly to the sphere of politics. In other words, the human as self is not an individual among other individuals within a political community, a "political animal;" rather, it is determined as a meta-political entity primarily turned toward God. While ordinary time belongs to history, time in relation to the self is meta-historical, that is, messianic – the only kind in which anticipation of redemption can play out. Notably, the one temporal modality does not exclude the other, but rather relate to one another in agonistic fashion. Messianic time, proleptic as ever (*prolepsis*), incalculable and in the eternity of the moment outside of historical time, is a form of resistance to absolute immanentization of the eschaton in history that leads to violence and messianic politics.

While Schmitt proposes the retention of the end of the world (and thus complete global catastrophe) within the field of politics, that is to say, within the framework of homogenous time, Rosenzweig, starting from a relational concept of time,

advocates an end to history from a meta-political point of view. Navarrete shows that Rosenzweig is certainly Schmitt's enemy. In *Globus*, the end of history is identified with the unity of the world, abolishing of borders, like the image of the sea.

Rosenzweig's "meta-political theology" can be understood as a critique of Schmitt's absolutization of politics from *The Concept of the Political* (1932) and his general inability to direct his gaze towards the political reality beyond the distinction friend/enemy. However, such a meta-political position is not a-political. It does not transform itself into mysticism as an absence of any connection with the real world. Rather, it simply indicates that the struggle against the enemy does not have to be led in the space of the political and ultimately, through war. Rosenzweig's strategy comprises a reorientation of the political, building on the category of love. It is an attempt to treat human community beyond the relation of friendship/enemy or at least an attempt at a different

understanding of that relation. According to Rosenzweig, in order to save the world, love must also be directed at the enemy. Loving one's enemy as one's neighbor, in accordance with divine (heteronomous) imperative of love, the messianic community of humanity could non-violently struggle against him/her.

If real dialogue between Carl Schmitt and Franz Rosenzweig, which could have actually taken place in the third decade of the 20th century, has been replaced with the empty space of silence, subsequent tragic events in Europe have only made that silence echo more agonizingly. *Los tiempos del poder* by Roberto Navarrete Alonso represents not only the first and successful systematic attempt to draw parallels and differences between Rosenzweig's and Schmitt's theoretical positions on the issue of political theology, but also a significant contribution to still current philosophico-political problems posed by two contemporaries in the face of a shared decisive historical epoch.