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## War, Peace and Love by Emmanuel Lévinas

### The possibility of peace – phenomenology of warfare violence

Emmanuel Lévinas is now widely recognized as one of the most important Continental philosophers of the twentieth century. His abiding concern was the primacy of the ethical relation to the other person and his central thesis was that ethics is first philosophy. His work has had a profound impact on a number of fields outside philosophy, such as theology, Jewish studies, literature and cultural theory, psychotherapy, sociology, political theory, international relations theory and critical legal theory. Emmanuel Lévinas is known as the author of many books, including “Totality and Infinity”, (1961) and “Otherwise than being or beyond essence” (1981). In the first book a thinker is presenting still the same subject, his words refer to the dialogic style that respects both sides of the relationship, and freedom, on which it will have no the place later. The next book takes up the idea of human subjectivity *sensu stricto*. Philosopher presents them in close connection with everyday, yet extraordinary event of responsibility for another human being, to the substitution, or else made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. His thinking is an interpretive, phenomenological description of the rise and repetition of the face-to-face encounter, or the intersubjective relation at its precognitive core, being called by another and responding to that other. If precognitive experience, that is, human sensibility, can be characterized conceptually, then it must be described in what is most characteristic to it: a continuum

of sensibility and affectivity, in other words, sentience and emotion in their interconnection. Levinas's assertion of the transcendence of the face should be understood as the most telling point of departure among the thinkers of instrumental reason of today.

No serious reader can be spared by the shock generated by the provocative declaration of Levinas at the very beginning of his book *Totalité et Infini*, in which he stigmatizes the realm of being as the state of war: war is produced as the pure experience of pure being, nothing henceforth is exterior. War does not manifest exteriority and the other as other; it destroys the identity of the same. The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This statement, however, is implementing a simplification in the world of mental situation. Levinas' reading of the history of Western philosophy is wrong, Jacques Derrida argues, reality is never as black as depicted by him.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, the subsequent development of human history shows amply that Kant's project of eternal peace remains a pious hope. Levinas, who himself has witnessed both world wars of the 20th Century and was a prisoner of war in a German concentration camp during five long years in the Second World War, has certainly the right to express his disappointment and the authority to cast his doubt on the feasibility of a project of peace basing on the concept of enlightenment by the mere means of knowledge. "That history of a peace, a freedom and well-being promised on the basis of a light that a universal knowledge projected on the world and human society... that history is not recognizable in its millennia of fratricidal struggles, political or bloody, of imperialism, scorn and exploitation of the human being, down to our century of world wars, the genocides of the Holocaust and terrorism; unemployment and continual desperate poverty of the Third World; ruthless doctrines and cruelty of fascism and national socialism, right down to the supreme paradox of the defense of man and his rights being perverted into Stalinism,"<sup>3</sup> So, Levinas also wrote: "Western philosophy has most often been an ontology: a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being... To know ontologically is to surprise in a confronted existent that by which it is not this existent, this very stranger, but that by

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et Infini, Essai sur l'extériorité*, The Hague 1961, pp. IX-X.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Violence et métaphysique, essai sur la pensée d'Emmanuel Levinas*, in: *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris 1967, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> E. Levinas, *Paix et proximité*, in: E. Levinas, *Les Cahiers de la nuit surveillée* No. 3, Éditions Verdier, Paris 1984), p. 340; eng. transl. as *Peace and proximity*, in: *Alterity and Transcendence*, eng. transl. Michael B. Smith, New York 1999, p. 132.

which it is somehow betrayed, surrenders, is given in the horizon in which it loses itself and appears, lays itself open to grasp, becomes a concept.”<sup>4</sup> By means of the concept, philosophy keeps jealously her freedom to search for truth. Keeping her freedom means keeping her own identity, in spite of the impenetrable strangers which bar her road to sovereign Truth. “Perceived in this way, philosophy would be engaged in reducing to the same all that is opposed to it as other. It would be moving toward auto-nomy, a stage in which nothing irreducible would limit thought any longer, in which, consequently, thought, not-limited, would be free. Philosophy would thus be tantamount to the conquest of being by man over the course of history.”<sup>5</sup> Thus for Lévinas, Western philosophy is a thinking of totalization:<sup>6</sup> it has the characteristics of absorbing all elements of alterity in the immanence of the same. It continues to exercise the violence upon all Other as Other in the conquest of Being. When the Other can only be grasped as an object of knowledge, she is only a generic existence, she loses forever her unicity and irreducible alterity. She is always the same, and she can never be the different Other. Philosophy of totalization is totalitarian philosophy.

Emmanuel Lévinas is attentive to the two versions of phenomenological ontology represented by Hegel and Heidegger. To Lévinas, both Hegelian and Heideggerian ontologies are philosophies of totalization.<sup>7</sup> Lévinas summarizes the dark heritage of Hegelian ontology in the follow terms: “Since Hegel, we are accustomed to thinking that philosophy exceeds the framework of anthropology. The ontological event accomplished by philosophy consists in suppressing or transmuting the alterity of all that is Other, in universalizing the immanence of the Same (*le Même*) or of Freedom, in effacing the boundaries, and in expelling the violence of Being (*Être*).”<sup>8</sup> Reducing the Other to the Same,

<sup>4</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> E. Lévinas, *La philosophie et l'idée de l'Infini*, in: *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, 3rd ed., Paris 1974, p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. Lévinas' article *Totalité et totalisation*, originally a contribution to the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, Paris 1968, now in: *Altérité et Transcendance* (Saint-Clément 1995); eng. transl. as *Totality and Totalization*, in: *Alterity and Transcendence*, pp. 39-51.

<sup>7</sup> E. Lévinas, *Transcendance et hauteur*, in: *Liberté et commandement*, Saint-Clément 1994; *Le Livre de poche*, Biblio Essais No. 4240, Paris 1999, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> E. Lévinas refers to Rosenzweig's *Stern der Erlösung* in the *Preface to Totalité et Infini* (p. XVI; *Totality and Infinity*, p. 28) and other interviews, e.g. in *Philosophie, justice, amour*, in: *Entre nous. Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre*, Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle, Paris 1991. Lévinas has contributed a philosophical essay to Rosenzweig in the *Preface* (pp. 7-16) to a study written in French by Stéphane Mosès, *Système et revelation. La philosophie de Franz Rosenzweig*, Paris 1982. S. Mosès has also published a small volume on Lévinas: *Au-delà de la guerre. Trois études sur Lévinas*, Paris-Tel Aviv 2004.

suppressing all boundaries within the realm of being to create a vast space of homogeneity: the final form of Hegelian ontology as System of Science and Absolute knowledge is justification of generalized violence by the elegant costume of speculative dialectics. The history of humanity, throughout religions, civilizations, states, wars and revolutions, is nothing but this penetration, or this revelation, of reason within Being, long before the philosopher's thought has become aware of it in formulating the System.<sup>9</sup> In the all-embracing Hegelian system, every single event loses its specificity, every human individual is alienated from the singularity of its fate. On this system, in its function to realize the freedom and autonomy of the Spirit, the State is a greater individuality than the single person. Thus for the sake of the State, the life and property of individual persons should be sacrificed. So, war is a necessary means to this end. Lévinas does not have more tender words towards the ontological philosophy expressed in "Sein und Zeit" by Martin Heidegger, which he qualifies as "philosophy of power" and "philosophy of injustice".<sup>10</sup> The author of *Totalité et Infini* thinks that when Heideggerian ontology subordinates all relation with beings (Seiendes as individuals) under the relation with Being (*Sein*), "it affirms the primacy of freedom over ethics".<sup>11</sup> It is in fact a tyranny, Levinas writes, just as the system in Hegelian ontology.<sup>12</sup> Thus freedom is not that of the individual; on the contrary, freedom emerges only as the result of obedience to Being. Thus the ontological thematization and conceptualization in "Sein und Zeit" is "not peace with the other but suppression or possession of the other."<sup>13</sup> The Heideggerian Dasein always relates to other as shown in its structure of "being-with" (*Mitsein*). But this is true only in the everyday inauthentic state. The situation of the authentic Dasein is solitude. In Dasein's totalizing potentiality of being, the Other disappears. The authentic Dasein can relate to is nothing other than its/her ownness. Not only the authentic Dasein cannot consider the death of other Dasein, for Heidegger it simply makes no sense to talk about the death of the other Dasein. It is clear that in the eyes of Lévinas Heidegger opts for the former – the Same which is always his own authenticity – and declines in advance, like a disclaimer, any responsibility towards the Other. Thus Heideggerian ontology ends up

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<sup>9</sup> E. Lévinas, *Hegel et les Juifs*, in: *Difficile liberté. Essais sur le judaïsme*, 2nd ed., Paris 1976; eng. transl. as *Hegel and the Jews*, in: *Difficult Freedom. Essays on Judaism*, eng. transl. S. Hand, London 1990, p. 235.

<sup>10</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 16.

“affirming a tradition in which the same dominates the other, in which freedom... precedes justice.” Worst, “it thus continues to exalt the will to power, whose legitimacy the other alone can unsettle, troubling good conscience.”<sup>14</sup>

Humanity needs and merits peace! Such is Lévinas’ pathetic cry. How is peace possible? Exit from totality, transcendence towards the Other! How to rejoin the Other after two thousand years of domination of philosophies of identity? Lévinas urges us to inverse the tendency: listen to the call of peace prior to the call of truth. In the practice of philosophy, that means wisdom at the service of love instead of love at the service of wisdom.<sup>15</sup> To Lévinas, it all depends on how we understand dialogue and discussion. In opposition to the ‘interiority’ of sly passions and the secret perfidy of subjective opinions, Reason would be the true inner life. Reason is one. It has no one left with whom to communicate; nothing is outside of it. And consequently, Reason is like the silence of inner discourse, Lévinas said. The concept of dialogue in question is an old one, one basing on the Enlightenment model of unitary Reason. It is a predominantly cognitivist or intellectualist model of sovereign Reason. It ignores the fact that each subject entering into dialogue is an absolutely unfathomable subjectivity. It is ignorant of what Husserl has shown in the 5th Cartesian Meditations: that we can never have intuitive presentation of the psychic life of the Other, because the latter is always at the exterior of our own sphere of immanence. We can only imagine our entering into the soul of the Other by appresentation, which is presentation in an analogical sense. We never know how two phantoms embrace each other when they greet one another. We are never sure whether we can touch the heart of the person we hug or kiss, if this very act of hugging or kissing is just a convention of reciprocal politeness. The ethics of discussion tries to obtain peace among interlocutors by suppressing the difference and the alterity of the speaking subjects. Consensus is obtained by virtue of the unification of the voices of the multiple. We must ask ourselves whether the dynamism and exaltation of peace by truth derives uniquely from the suppression of alterity and not just as much from the very possibility of the Encounter with the other as other..., for which a common truth is the pretext.”<sup>16</sup> To say, we must go back to the field where war actually takes place and observe how the stopping of hostility is brought about. Only through this specific backward questioning is it possible to understand how peace is possible. In Lévinas’ terms, this is the question of how the domain of

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<sup>14</sup> E. Lévinas, *La philosophie et l'idée de l'Infini*, p. 171; *Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity*, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> E. Lévinas, *Paix et proximité*, p. 342; *Peace and proximity*, pp.136-137.

<sup>16</sup> E. Lévinas, *Le dialogue...*, op. cit., p. 217.

totality can be broken such that human beings no longer exist simply as generic being but also as individuals with flesh and bone, and thus can relate to the Other as Other. If in a war, a human being is just like a pure object under mechanical control, we cannot see how it is possible to create a crack within this domain of totality. What is paradoxical about warfare is that in actual fact, war is far from simply an immanent domain of totality, precisely because the individuals who take part in the war refuse to be simply an object of mathematical calculation or mechanical manipulation. And this is because it is a question of life and death. On the battlefield, no one is sure that he will be on the side of victory. In order to save their own life, soldiers in an army facing defeat will choose to surrender or even to defect. In this case, they refuse to be part of the original community. In choosing defection, they even transgress the law. By these acts, they exit from the totality! This is the first possibility of transcendence. All this is described by Lévinas in terms: "War therefore is to be distinguished from the logical opposition of the one and the other by which both are defined within a totality open to a panoramic view, to which they would owe their very opposition. In war beings refuse to belong to a totality, refuse community, Lévinas is writing, they refuse law; no frontier stops one being by another, nor defines them. They affirm themselves as transcending the totality, each identifying itself not by its place in the whole, but by its self."<sup>17</sup>

Since in war no one is sure of victory in advance, tactics and strategies are important. Thus war is never a pure being of totality. There is fissure inherent in it, from where rupture and exit is possible. That is why transcendence is possible. In war the adversaries seek out one another.<sup>18</sup> The further problem is here: what kind of relation do two antagonistic soldiers entertain with one another? They are two individuals seeking out one another in order to kill the other. They are engaged in a relation of mortal confrontation. So it is their very mortality which relates them together. As a soldier, my mortality is related to the Other. This is the first point of difference of Lévinas's understanding of death in contrast to Heidegger: in "Sein und Zeit", my death has nothing to do with other Dasein, and the death of other Dasein does not concern me. The soldier is animated by the will to kill. But at the same time he risks being killed. If he succeeds in killing the first enemy he sees, he is not sure whether he will not be killed in subsequent confrontations. Thus if a soldier is still in life, it is simply the postponement of his death. So the being of a soldier is "a being postponing his death".<sup>19</sup> As a soldier, as far as I am still in life and able to kill,

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<sup>17</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 198.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 200.

I enjoy freedom. But I am still in life only because I am postponing my death. It is the Other who sustains my freedom by granting me the reprieve of not yet killed, so my freedom depends on the Other. Here what the phenomenon of warfare violence shows is a paradoxical concept of freedom: my freedom depends on the Other. There is neither absolute nor unilateral freedom, freedom and dependence are like the two sides of the same coin. In granting me freedom, the Other also grants me the possibility of transcendence. "A transcendence of the Other with regard to me which, being finite, does not have the same signification as my transcendence with regard to him, Lévinas said. The risk that war involves measures the distance that separates bodies within their hand-to-hand struggle (*les corps dans leur corps-à-corps*). The Other, in the hands of forces that weaken him, exposed to powers, remains unforeseeable, that is, transcendent."<sup>20</sup> The phenomenon of warfare violence shows that my mortality, my freedom and my transcendence, which enable me to exit totality, all depend on the Other. That is why I owe my temporary survival to my enemy. This is the debt I owe him. My responsibility then consists in repaying this debt. That is why this relation of the first order is an ethical relation: because I owe to the Other my possibility of freedom and transcendence, my relation with him is asymmetrical.<sup>21</sup>

Freedom and transcendence break totality, they open up the space of peace. My anguish comes from seeing the face of the Other. Since the Other as transcendence is at the origin of my freedom and transcendence, and since my relation to the Other is a relation of debt, on seeing the vulnerability of the face of the Other, I have to respond to my debt I owe him. I cannot help from saying to myself: "Thou shalt not kill!" The force of the Other is already and henceforth moral."<sup>22</sup> In Lévinas's phenomenology of warfare violence, there is possibility of exteriority and transcendence; individuals can enjoy freedom, even if this freedom is never total. Yet it is a game of fifty-fifty in which no one is sure of winning in advance. Precisely because war is a form of undecided violence which renders possible freedom, transcendence and relation between individuals. It is even a question of life and death between human individuals. However, the above sketch remains incomplete in terms of the search for peace. Because the stop of hostility between the belligerent parties does not mean total peace, not to say perpetual peace. What the phenomenon of warfare violence succeeds in showing is: the transcendence of the Other is a key to peace. This have to be completed by a phenomenology of love, for love is the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, pp. 200-201.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 201.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

movement of transcendence towards the Other as Other. Love is simply the desire of the Other. In “Totalité et Infini”, the phenomenology of war is continued by the phenomenology of Eros and fecundity. Love is blind, for there is no concept. There is not a fix structure of subject and object. In a love affair, the lovers are engaged in a game which advances towards infinity. Love as Eros is rather the affair between two persons, which is extremely complex and paradoxical. Lévinas gives patient and detailed descriptions of the phenomenon of erotic nudity which involves the moments of modesty (*pudeur*), profanation, caress and voluptuous pleasure or voluptuosity (*volupté*). In the case of voluptuosity, it is a game of hidden desire, of going beyond the personal while the personal never completely submerges. It is an experience of quasi death. Lévinas has vivid descriptions of the metaphysical character of erotic love: “It disrupts the relation of the I with itself and with the non-I. An amorphous non-I sweeps away the I into an absolute future where it escapes itself and loses its position as a subject. Its ‘intention’ no longer goes forth unto the light, unto the meaningful. Wholly passion, it is compassion for the passivity, the suffering, the evanescence of the tender. It dies with this death and suffers with this suffering.”<sup>23</sup> In short, a subject in love loses her sovereignty as a subject. She loses her freedom and becomes passive. The descriptions of erotic love show that love is neither friendship, as it is not something among several persons or within a community but rather an affair of extreme intimacy between two persons. Nor is love the possession of the soul of the Other, because the two consciousnesses are not united to form a single consciousness. Since the union passes by voluptuous pleasure, so love is not an intellectual and reflective relation but as such immediate and passive. In a love affair, I expect the one I love to love me, so this is a reciprocal relation. But the loving relation is not merely reciprocal, because I am moving towards an Other, to the profound depth of an alterity. In short, love is a movement of transcendence, a relation with the Other who is entirely at the exteriority. “Love does not transcend unequivocally-it is complacent, it is pleasure and egoism between the two. But in this complacency it equally moves away from itself; it abides in a vertigo above a depth of alterity that no signification clarifies any longer.”<sup>24</sup> Yet as movement of transcendence, love is not satisfied with the present, it projects towards the future. This is shown by the phenomenon of fecundity: giving birth to a new generation. Giving birth to a child brings about a new relation with the Other, a relation of absolute future, of infinite time. “This future is neither the Aristotelian germ (less than being, a lesser being)

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 237.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 244.



nor the Heideggerian possibility which constitutes being itself, but transforms the relation with the future into a power of the subject.”<sup>25</sup> It is because a child, my child, is at the same time “my own and not-mine, a possibility of myself but also a possibility of the other, of the Beloved – my future does not enter into the logical essence of the possible.”<sup>26</sup> As parents, we get older, but we do not need to abandon ourselves. On the contrary, with the new generation, fecundity is the continuation of history. The coming of a child, I am able to transcend the world by renewing my substance by someone who is at the same time the Same and the Other. Lévinas summarizes his conception of peace in the following terms: “Peace therefore cannot be identified with the end of combats that cease for want of combatants, by the defeat of some and the victory of the others, that is, with cemeteries of future universal empires. Peace must be my peace, in a relation that starts from an I and goes to the other, in desire and goodness, where the I both maintains itself and exists without egoism. It is conceived starting from an I assured of the convergence of morality and reality, that is, of an infinite time which through fecundity is its time.”<sup>27</sup> In short, through love, Eros and fecundity, the movement of transcendence towards alterity projects onto an infinite time, then peace is possible.

### **The moral awakening and acceptance of your own responsibility**

The pope Benedict XVI warns against ‘rule of reason’. In the German parliament (Bundestag) the pope has said that the final standard (measure) and the reason for the work of a politician should not be successful and certainly not material gain. The policy must be efforts to bring about justice and thus create the prerequisite for peace. As people of conscience we do over our fate continuously, for the good of our world. So, for instance, listen to Chopin. Take long walks. Ask yourself what you did now. Do that every night. Before you go to sleep, ask yourself if the world is better because of you. After all, it’s your world. You are the world. So, take responsibility for your actions. Someone once said, “Excuses won’t lift your butt?” Listen to that. Believe that with all your heart. “Plus ratio quam vis.” Confess something about yourself to a friend-something awful, something you’d never want anyone to know. You’ll feel better. You’ll still see that you’re worthy of love. And since your friend is you, you are really just telling yourself. Have an interest in everything. Thirst

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 244.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 283.

for knowledge. Remember that it's all about you. When you learn about other thing, you are actually learning about yourself. Get to know you better. Now, your behaviour is worthy of praise. You face me, I am the one who, while enjoying my life in the world, am summoned to make place for you. By addressing me, you are the first who shows me the meaning of a human face. You open the dimension of ethics by the command that targets me when you look at me or speak to me. Independently of all your wishes and motivations, by simply being yourself, but against the ego-centered intentions of my enjoyment, you offer me a meaning for my life, which, thereby, is revealed as being more and different than a possibility of enjoying everything that comes my way. The meaning you impose on me lies in my devotion to you, my responsibility for you, not only for your future, but also for your past and presence with all the right and wrong they contain. I can become a saint by carrying your burdens with you. By serving you, I will at the same time accomplish, as far as I can, my own destiny... But the Other is described in our work. I appear to myself otherwise than others appear to me: I do not look at myself and I do not speak to myself as if I were two persons at the same time, but, in a certain, further to be determined sense, I too am an Other for myself. If it is at all possible to experience myself as somehow commanding, summoning, or obligating me, this experience of my own otherness must be described in a simultaneously different and analogically similar way. Other is me! For you (the Other) also are needy, my responsibility for you includes your enjoyable use of worldly goods for making you good and happy. Your enjoyment of the earth and its elements is a purpose, and thus a part, of my dedication to you; even if I must sacrifice my pleasures to your well-being, such devotion belongs to the accomplishment of both your and my own destiny... The Other, Autrui, is you who, by facing me, awaken me to my incessant responsibility for you. This responsibility does not stop at feeding, clothing, healing, and protecting you against dangers. Your humanization demands education and civilization. It also includes my responsibility for your moral growth, which includes your moral awakening and your acceptance of your own responsibility. Within the limits that your singular destiny and your freedom impose on me, I am responsible for your responsibility. I awaken and encourage you, and cooperate with your taking responsibility for other Others: him, her, them, and... me! Your being responsible for me confirms what I said above it links you and me by a double bond, which is stronger than any unilateral devotion. Mutual and generous ('asymmetric') responsibility, implied in the meeting of your and my own «heights», is essential for the universal responsibility that regards not only you, but all those others who may become and are already waiting for being linked to you or me: he, she, they and all of them.

When Emmanuel Lévinas insists on my responsibility for the entire humanity, this seeming exaggeration is a consequence of the fact that every human individual has a face and that the unicity of each potential you is as absolute as that of you who face me here and now. The problem that emerges from the multiplicity of yous that obligate me, is that it seems to annul the infinity of your command and my total dedication: how could I be as completely and endlessly responsible for all possible or virtual yous as I am for you who here and now regard me? Will my being-for-you then not be scattered into minimal and irrelevant portions of service to innumerable yous? It is certainly important to prevent your unicity and my own from drowning in the anonymous mass of a totalizing realm. Each individual's destiny is so radically different from each other's that no You or I can ever be reduced to a mere component of some higher, all-encompassing union or communal unity. Insofar as You or I are merely parts of a supra-individual or infra-singular reality, we are no longer You and I, but instances of one and the same universal that only allows for variations. In the strong sense of You-as-high, you correlate with me, your servant, who find myself dedicated to you despite myself (*malgré-moi*). I discover my self as ethically situated and determined by your existence.<sup>28</sup> But there are other figures of the Other in thinkers' work, and, since each figure of the Other induces a corresponding figure of Me, there are as many configurations of «the I». Within the horizons of the egocentric economy, my dwelling in the world would be cold and certain barren without intimacy with a feminine other, who creates the homely climate of a house. Phenomenology of dwelling shows that being at home (*chez soi*) in the world demands more than material protection. It also includes a human and humane companionship. When written by a man, such a phenomenology will easily evoke the feminine tenderness of someone who, as such, veils and mitigates the rigor of persistent demands and commands by showing the welcoming warmth of ongoing hospitality. Thinker emphasized that the «feminine» component of «homeliness» can also be represented by men.

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Love opens a dimension that is neither merely needy, nor already ethical. It shapes a person, happens, it becomes a miracle of creation, but there is like new a beginning of something great only in the relay of generations. Here I am not yet confronted with my ethical destiny. Being at home in the world and belonging to a history of love and procreation condition my self-appropriation and the realization of my destiny, but they do not yet show the ultimate

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<sup>28</sup> Dear reader may have already noticed one distinction here, between the subject – as a subject, showing the anthropological nature of man and subject – as a self describing its site more psychological, author's emphasis.

meaning of human lives. The life always limited but real, degree fulfilled or to live, like Moses, for a history that goes on after one's death. The «infinite» of a mortal life that is relived in others, history as messianic endeavor and expectation, is that the final hope that emerges from obedience to the unchosen but embraced election that consumes our lives? Is this the final meaning of «the I», of Me who find myself subjected to each and all of those who come my way? I suppose even the greatest uncertainty about the meaning of history cannot destroy my substitution for the Other(s). I like You. I myself. Desire, Needs, You, He/She/They, the beloved Companion, the Father, and the Son, all of these reveal correlated figurations of Me. I am a multitude of figures, while maintaining one unique happiness. How can these figurations of my self compose one singular individuality? The main tension, or rather, the real struggle, that seems to split me in two different orientations is caused by the opposition between the Desire of the Absolute that draws me out of myself, on the one hand, and the needs that imprison me in a hedonic «interiority», on the other. Both orientations are constitutive of my existence, but they seem to exclude a synthesis. What I must learn and perform is a true or a conversion from my being steeped in narcissism to complete devotion. I must give my bread to the hungry, my energy to those who need help, my thoughts to the child that needs education. I must spend my life and work for the survival of the wounded, the liberation of the persecuted, and the salvation of the abused. But giving my life for others implies that I die and my needs with it. Are we summoned to sacrifice ourselves and to become saints like the Servant of the Lord? Must I hate my own life in order to be devoted? Insofar as human existence participates in being-as-intéressement, it is essentially egoistic. A thinker evokes a primordial level or dimension of being that precedes the interested endeavour of life. The «be-ing» of «there was» or «there is» must be characterized as the opposite of any giving or granting, as another thinker would have it when he evokes being's generosity through the German formula 'es gibt'. Thinker describes our being steeped in the unlimited and indefinable kind of being evoked by a burden from which we cannot escape, a meaningless charge that weighs on me and resists my liberation. It makes me guilty and accusable before I have had any chance to position myself with regard to the existence of the world, humanity, or myself. Its impersonal and wholly indeterminate obscurity is what weighs me down and makes me guilty by association. For it is only by awakening to faces that light and goodness are revealed to me, so that my existence may discover a meaning and a destiny. Being itself is driven by a tendency that prefigures the voluntary preference for my own interest over yours. But the Good itself, as «uncontaminated by being», is generous. If my self-interested effort, my enjoyment,

as participation in the all-encompassing intéressement of being, constituted my happiness, I would never be able to be completely dedicated to the Other, completely «yours». Not only would I then never be able to perform the infinite task of serving you, but I must then continually «expiate» the self-preference that I cannot stop performing. If I cannot put an end to my self-enjoyment, because I am imprisoned in my egoism, I am and remain necessarily guilty and stand rightly «accused» of not taking my being-for-you seriously enough. My guilt is aggravated if my obligations do not only signify my responsibility for your well-being, but also, more radically, my incessant substitution for you. As such, I am guilty of your guilt and responsible for your responsibility, liable for your misdeeds and the entirety of your life, like «the servant of the Lord».

### **My life is meaningful**

I am responsible for you, so I cannot and should not take away your liberty, does not mean that my life can replace the entirety of your life, because this would erase your freedom and your own responsibility. Nor can I burden you with the entirety of my words, deeds, and thoughts. My life is then not empty but meaningful. as I live for you, I realize what I am supposed to realize as being always already dedicated to you, even if the ensuing emptying exhausts me. If I die because I let you eat my bread, I cannot indulge in materiality of life and neglect the interestedness of my needs; but does the realization of an utterly dedicated – and thus meaningful – life exclude all kinds of joy, contentment, delight, or jubilation? No! Even suffering can be undergone without destroying the experience of a certain joy that accompanies devotion. It is often necessary to accept pain, suffering, and death for you. A different point of view on your and my survival can arise from scarcity. But always «I am happy about your success.» «I enjoy our conversation and your enjoying it». «I intensely desire that your best desires be fulfilled, even if it costs me a lot». «I am happy because you are happy and I would not be happy if you were not». However, if it is possible to show that my service and responsibility for your true interest does not exclude but includes the realization of my own life's true interest, then my being-for-you does not destroy, but, on the contrary, fosters the main task of my life and the fulfillment of my destiny. This would not exempt me from sacrificing certain kinds of interest, not even from suffering and dying in your place, but it would integrate these sacrifices into the decisive meaning of my own life as much as yours. Now a thinker says: I am respectable. If I with you am responsible not

only for your corporeal well-being, but also for the orientation and quality of your entire life, this presupposes in me the necessary conditions for such a huge task: benevolence, freedom of action, some wisdom about human destiny, a certain degree of prudence, acquaintance with a good tradition, and so on. In the love of neighbor, *conatus* seems to disappear, for to love a neighbor is “always put in question ... power.”<sup>29</sup> But this love which goes to the substitution, sacrifice, he does not hire the Other *par excellence*? Is there not here as a movement of the immanentisation of transcendence itself? Yet Lévinas speaks a “word of God” which “must precede the revelation in positive religions.”<sup>30</sup> Confusion, again: what is it, this word of God? “Commandment incredible”, or “proclamation of a right”? Revelation, or affirmation of a natural privilege? I’m certainly still second, but it is no longer present on the mode of sonship, but on that of the “after-you”! Between the word of God and the creature (me): a man! Any move to this by the third party, by the intermediary. The law, in place of the father, my brother installs. But to accept responsibility for your life would be irresponsible if I cannot bear responsibility for myself. But how, through which experiences, do I discover my responsibility for my own life? How do I awaken to the respectability of my own, non-chosen but amazing and amazingly worthy existence? How do I become aware of the «height» of that in me, which orders me «to take good care of myself»? To follow my conscience presupposes that I discover what calls me through it. The substantial or «hypostatic» core of my life precedes my acceptance of the responsibility to which my given self trusts the unfolding of my possibilities. The conscientious realization of my own self is a service that I desire to perform in order to honor the conscience that targets me. On the elementary level of life, my happiness is confirmed and unfolded by an enjoyable transformation of the earth into my home, but the deepest, originary interest or Desire in me is the most disinterested, unselfish, and un-egoistic of all interests. Lévinas said: if we are not motivated by this «Desire of the Absolute,» neither my own, nor any other self could inspire any interest in the Good beyond being. Then I think being the result of any kind of cognition, the self’s responsibility to the other who faces is immediate, originary, and irreducible.

Now, You looked at me, his (your) face pained. “Let’s wait outside,” I said. And luck was with us. Probably yet not an interesting life but only the tribulation is gaining on the cosmos. For this reason at last time it would be a great tribulation close to us. We need to invest new forum of collaboration behind a market and bureaucracy also. It is very important to use the sanctions for the

<sup>29</sup> E. Lévinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 135.

irresolute people now It is a need of the reason now, of the political and economical actions for them, an using of your era of power. Once more the process of a responsibility for a power of a state and the church in a new millennium has begun. The church is on the boat of Peter always. But I am never able to see the other as she or he really is. The third impel you to think. So, it is necessary, one should, one ought to fight for every inch of Self's land, in my self-imposed exile for this a just cause. I'm only responsible for my own attitude; and I have a duty to other people not to lay a downer on them. That's my own choice, I picked that duty up, nobody laid it on me, I chose it for myself – that is that I don't want to lay something on somebody else. We have a choice to pick out "duties." But I'm "responsible" for me. You can't drink a glass of water for me. You can't eat a sandwich for me. You could cook a beautiful steak and put it in front of me, but you can't eat it for me, is that correct? And you can't go to the bathroom for me. So I'm "responsible" for all that. I'm responsible for how I feel. You can't think for me. You can't act for me – you can't do any of those things. Now, we pick up duties for other people. That's a free choice. I did it or I did not. I can also lay the "duties" down. Again, it's a free choice, ok? And I don't choose to keep some "duty" for eternity, that's my own choice. And I was responsible for accepting the duty, nobody laid it on me. I did that on my own. "Duty" and "responsibility" are two different things. Duty is what you would have for whoever you want to do it, your mother, your friends, or both, a job, Life whatever you wanted to. But you can pick it up and lay it down. Responsible is what you are for yourself whether you like it or not. There is an ethics in which responsibility is seen to precede freedom has been based on an exercise of any violence. A tribulation of the world may be overcome by a dressing of my own's wound. So, I am called by your face and you are called by mine, I suppose by our lit up and young eyes more and more. I am concerned about my own destiny because I experience it from within as an awesomely lovable burden, whereas I experience your destiny as the call that liberates me from being imprisoned in endless self-reflection. My caring for you also takes care of my own true self because it promotes me as if I were another Other. For this reason I must honor and love the Self in me as much as You, because You and I meet in the trace of the Good, which has made us responsible keepers of one another.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cfr. Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak and Emmanuel Levinas, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, Purdue University Series in the History of Philosophy, 2005; Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, *Beyond: The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas (SPEP)*, 1997; Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion*, 1995.

The other is the same as self ... So, like masters of the height (or depth), speaking in his uniqueness. The other man in this relationship is beyond any knowledge He remains absolutely in its otherness The other has to bear as an equal among equals The thinkers described the ontological determination of this I, they also described that on the interpersonal level as a “way from the others to myself.” “The Other is also the face and appearance, the defendant and self. Even if you’ve seen the end in Auschwitz, the death of ethics, that is no reason, ethics regarded as dead. I still believe in ethics. The crisis of ethics is no reason not to conduct yourself in accordance with ethical. A thinker writes: What we are talking about, namely education, civilization, culture, scientific and aesthetic there is a garment spirit of the nation. Why its so different colors we see in this or that time, the other in the east, the other in the north, the west and the south? Naturally, since each people, strange in the old ages, another had a different imagination and poetic inspiration, even the memory of another past time, another reason in philosophy, at the end of another method, or procedures to improve the science and skills. Know but yourself is to have the ground beneath himself, and shot inside, Maurycy Mochnacki, a writer of Poland said. Then “the people have always lived on hope alone.” So, “not quite here, but yet at hand” A thinker said: The Lord did not created religion, but the world. Then since it is suffering, God by all possible means writes itself. The bible says: At the end of the world would be the great tribulation. Now for that reason we may ask: what is suffering? The most fundamental in me is coming uppermost, and the transient, the sensational, is dispersing. For it can’t adversely influence what is essential to me. That’s why my work is now more powerful and less arbitrary, as if seen by another person, and illuminated from outside. In the midst of the confusions of nature one person trusting eternally in another, and making himself and the other secure through faith. All that’s left now is purely poetic work, putting more life into individual places, as I’ve made so sure of the fundamental mood and dimension of expression that it won’t leave me groping around in uncertainty any more. So I used to be too subjective, and I was always tempted to find my inner self in the exterior and dissipate my imagination on other people and on life. The great theologian Hans Küng in an interview said: I estimate that what convincingly in Jesus inside were overcome, what occurred, survived was that he was imposing God’s will the specific direction in understanding the intention, in the mood, a sense of meaning, the sense of (full) pleasure (and inclinations), at such and such way of thinking, in this sense that the will of God is truly holy man, and (that) the man also important is as injunctions, but it remains true, and that the Sabbath, for example, is the human will, and that it is more important-that it depends more on the more-which includes a single



man does, as that what believes. Goes also to all the many (powerful) things that we know of Jesus, which we learned from him, which we initiated, we remember. We are able to do it, for which we are grateful to him. But in principle this was the so-called, that it is not the knowledge, skills, which leaves us that with us end, peel, and relaxes. Not We should keep it very well in practice: and also by the leadership of the Church should finally once in this way (it) be done. As for the statue of Jesus, it should also be every man for her himself a little care, it should disturb him. I do not want this in a few seconds further developed. To an actual, detailed explanation is not to say we have this conversation almost no pop-up time, time present and so there was no time. Theologian continued in the same interview: I is (something) recognized as legitimate, and it will do. But now trying to convince people. These are the things for which intercede, which I designate as, describe because of the 'global ethos' (*Weltethos*) Here the problem arises because the question of sentence, opinions, otherwise (very different) sound, etc. For this (to investigate these cases) is required not only political will but also an ethical will, to be able to talk about it. I am of the opinion that it is-what-I said here a very, very basic need some confidence. Well, precisely because (a) all there is deep respect, esteem (*Ehrfurcht*) with respect to life, you see not kill, "you should not kill".<sup>32</sup>

This paper, there is the outcome of several years research supported by a tiring and exhausting work. So, we have this idea that we are supposed to be responsible and have responsibility within us. And I question myself if I really know what responsible is. So far I've been taught that responsibility is when someone does something for you or gives you something or vice versa, and when you don't give them what they want or don't give ... then Responsibility is questioned. For me the responsibility is as while on the way of Love. I chose the responsibility. And what's more I'm serious connate with the ethical now. For I'm not in power I've begun to hold in great respect a individual contribute, state's contribute also to happiness of mankind and glory of a Lord God. I'm of the opinion that there is caring of today. Namely a calling to be in own profession. For example the people want to be representative themselves on the television and have satisfaction also. So I never cite other philosophers as yours. I bear for the person before me an infinite responsibility which is regularly betrayed for the sake of justice in responsibility for other people, too. The deeper question is how the court can be founded on this betrayal, and how institutions in general can work for the sake of justice through the use of violence. Looked at in this light, these ideals are not

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<sup>32</sup> Cfr. Hans Küng, *Why I Am Still a Christian*, 2006; H. Küng, *My Struggle for Freedom: Memoirs* (2003), New York-London.

merely renewed, but also radically deepened. Instead of being a declaration of individual freedom, they must now be read as a recognition of responsibility for every other human, a responsibility limited only by the finite nature of one's individual assets. So, without an account of the problem of subjectivity, it is impossible to construct any adequate and satisfactory theory of consciousness. On the other hand although the thinkers of contemporary argue that justice must be globalized ... But there is life of yours. A poet says: You dropped your whisperm: We are never going to die, you fool! The essence of our soul most pure will speak to you. No more the flesh but still providing ecstasy. We bards forever never do depart. But why's your picture withered now? Why does your face look pale and grey? There's sorrow in your tone. And slowly, oh so slowly all your words will fade. "We grieve about our art. It's nothing but a shadow. We've touched upon the essence but still we grope the dark. Go on ahead, you brave man! Search further, further still. Lead us down the hall where Stillness rules. That finally our voice may rest. And you may rest upon the Timeless. Voices of time once golden! May Stillness be your arts transcendence. Find out the longing of your youth. Make ignorance look pale. Do not betray the fresh desires of spring. That autumn yield abundant happiness. And fertile be the soil of winter. Somehow life needs otherness also. I come to you 'from above', he 'descends on me', like God spoke from the heights of mount Sinai to his people. My own self is always the exception (E. Levinas) I may try to picture the other as a self too, but I never succeed in doing so. The self of the other always remains enigmatic, escaping all objectification of consciousness. I am never able to see the other as she or he really is. This makes my small, relatively familiar 'I' the exception in a world of silent, hidden and mysterious selves. But it is the most fundamental difference between us and Lévinas is the axiom of mine that the otherness of the other is just an illusion. At a fundamental level I and the other are the same. We have the same divine 'substantia'. We all share the same Self with a capital. When I look the other in the eye and when the other looks at me, we recognize ourselves in our eyes. We love and respect each other, because we are basically the same. This is not a metaphor meaning 'we are all in it together' or 'we are put up with each other', no, this is very literally so: my deepest 'self' is no different from your deepest 'self'. Today we speak to ourselves happy new year. Now we look to the future and gather our hopes for that. As you know that the North Pole is not where it was two weeks ago and the length of our days is different from what it was in the past, not by much, but the whole planet changed. Looking back can be difficult, and it helps me to remember that, even though we speak of the celebrating of days and holidays, nothing is very ancient right now. We live in a very fresh new world.

And we have a long, long way to go. As a human family we have a long way to go to become fully responsible for each other.

### **The problem of the isolation of individuals from communities**

One of the major themes of Faulkner's "Light in August" is the isolation of individuals from communities and from one another.<sup>33</sup> In the first four chapters of the novel, Faulkner presents four major characters, each of whom is separated from society in some important way. Lena Grove, though she relies cheerfully on the kindness of strangers, is morally isolated because of her illicit pregnancy and socially isolated because of her constant traveling. The sullen Joe Christmas is isolated because of his seemingly mixed racial heritage, which causes him to emphasize the differences between himself and those around him. Byron Bunch is, like Lena, morally isolated, though by his own choice; he makes no friends except Gail Hightower and works almost all the time because he is so afraid of how he might spend his time otherwise. Hightower himself is isolated as an outcast, rejected by society in his case because he failed in his appointed task as guardian of public standards, delivering incoherent sermons while his wife carried on obvious sexual affairs... Characters' interior states, with all their inconsistencies and unspoken motivations, overlap with the generalized voices of the community to create a dynamic and realistic portrait of individuals constantly asserting and renegotiating their places in the larger social order... Though the characters search for a sense of stability, belonging, and consistency, their inherently fractured natures consistently conspire to thwart these desires... In plumbing the depths that exist beneath people's words – the vulnerabilities, fears, and evasions that often do not register in articulated speech Faulkner portrays inherently inconsistent and self-contradictory nature of identity. People, he argues, in all their complexity, cannot be reduced to a simple summation or generalized description. What exist instead are warring impulses and an often wide gulf between private and public worlds... In telling the backstory of Joe Christmas, Faulkner continues to explore the notion of a fluid, unstable, indeterminate identity. Christmas is literally a man without a name... His unknown parentage and ambiguous racial heritage condemn him to a life as a shadow figure. He is a man who walks on the edges of society, just as he restlessly and silently wanders the streets of Jefferson, passing unnoticed through the black and white neighborhoods alike, a stranger to both realms and accepted fully

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<sup>33</sup> William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Editor Noel Polk and Joseph Blotner, 1991.

by neither. At times mistaken for a foreigner, Christmas is variously tagged as being either white or black absolute distinctions that deny his essential nature as a biracial man, a person with roots in both worlds... Although Faulkner often shows us that competing interpretations and perspectives can reveal new truths, we see that they can also result in misunderstandings and pave the way for tragic events. When the five-year-old Christmas is caught behind a screen in the dietician's room, a black comedy of misinterpreted intentions and mistaken impressions ensues. Faulkner's authorial eye darts forward and backward in time, often presenting a scenario from one character's point of view and then revisiting the same incident from an alternate perspective... Nameless and mysterious figures the matron, the janitor, the dietician (revealed to be named Miss Atkins only at the episode's end) populate a classic setting of childhood deprivation and abuse: the orphanage. Ultimately, Faulkner's portrait of Joe's formative years serves to complicate the moral questions of his tale.

Throughout *Light in August*, Faulkner explores the importance of memory amid the various layers of consciousness and thought that contribute to an action, motivation, or story. This approach gives us a more dynamic and complex understanding of character, gesturing to the parts of an individual that words cannot access or elucidate. For all the thoughts, impulses, and articulation that help define a person, there is always an unspoken element, the haunting record of the past that can never be expunged. Amid this seeming confusion, memory emerges as a potent and supreme form of knowledge, or personal truth. For Joe Christmas, memory consists of a painful personal history, an autobiography told not in facts and events but in an ever-present and instinctively referenced record of humiliation, abuse, and shame. For Joe, memory is a burden that cannot be erased or escaped. With his own life and sense of self so emptied and devalued. Yet Faulkner does not seat his characters in a tidy world of moral absolutes, and we cannot label Joe's upbringing as the sole cause of his vagrancy and criminal activity. Joe himself also plays an active role in seeking his own demise and self-destruction... Her baby represents a hope and a boundless possibility that Joe was never able to fulfill... He slides further and further from his own existence, crossing over a threshold to embrace and embody his bestial associations. Hightower muses that, since being defrocked, he has slowly slipped out of conventional time and entered an existence of his own making. He believes that suffering is the lot of the wicked and good alike. He also believes that joy and pleasure are complicated gifts that most people do not know what to do with... Women form a curious, tangential presence in *Light in August*. The novel resides in a male-centered, male-dominated world, exploring masculine brutality and

the idea of the Byronic hero (named for the nineteenth-century English poet Lord Byron) – a brooding, restless, and flawed individual wounded by life’s cruelties and slights. Women exist on the edges of this world, scapegoats for the frustrations and unrealized potential of the men in their lives, and often the victims of physical brutality... Surprisingly, Hightower, despite his isolation, emerges as the philosophical center of the novel – a humanist presence who rejects the rigid moral codes that confine Jefferson’s residents. Hightower’s static, abstract journey to self-knowledge and self-acceptance contrasts with the strivings of the other main characters, who either fail to attain insight or fail to act on it. Hightower, Lena, and Christmas all attempt to salvage their pride, turn from the harsh realities of the past, and infuse their lives with a newfound purpose. They all are damaged individuals whose reputations and senses of self have been compromised, both by their own actions and by social forces beyond their control. Hightower eventually makes peace with his life of internal struggle, stoically embracing his impending death, armed with the understanding that suffering is an unavoidable component of existence... Faulkner equates life with a game of chess, with its various strategies and attacks and missteps, all obscuring the fact that these individuals are ultimately moving toward a predetermined and inalterable conclusion. In the interim, the characters maintain the sustaining illusion that they are the masters of their own fate, when in fact they are actually pawns being manipulated by forces larger than themselves and beyond their control... Hightower was raised in the presence of these phantoms of the past, his father, mother, grandfather, and the slave woman his grandfather had owned until the war. Hightower entered the seminary and later married, intent on being given a church in Jefferson. It is because a fellow is more afraid of the trouble he might have than he ever is of the trouble he’s already got... Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonder... I had to do it already in the past tense; I had to do it. She said so herself... Perhaps he realized that he could not escape. Anyway, he stayed... “I mind how I said to you once that there is a price for being good the same as for being bad; a cost to pay... Maybe it takes longer to pay for being good than for being bad.”

Can I be the prodigal son? I want to say something yet. “Once I was the only country. Oak there was so high and delicate violets. In it all became a dream.” And it is embraced me completely in German, said to me in German, now you can see better (unfortunately, almost did not evaluate how well it sounded, how wonderfully it sounded), this phrase: “I love you madly”, because this country the dream was ... I still have the love of our mother’s little storms, thunderstorms, scattered in the woods by the cataclysm of fallen

trees ... that's all. Already it getting used to normal ... But what is the future of history? History has not stopped with Christ... Paul says that Christ's suffering is missing something ... what? Of Our suffering! Because the suffering is no longer price, it is priceless, you cannot evaluate them, nor estimate. There is no improvement, it is only hope. We have none, to replace shortages of hope. Marta from the Gospel she must tackle the sense of its activity. There is a new parable of the child prodigal. Neighbor is the one who needs your help now. Good Samaritan from the Gospel, the man who had compassion (*hatte Mitleid*), was seized with pity (*il le vit et fut saisi de pitié*). Do this and you will live (*fais ainsi et tu auras la vie*). (We) are the presence of Christ among men, even if only through our offering, but as much by how we act ... (We) have not only some excellent estimates and projections, although these are still present. Until 1800, the world needed a million years to the emergence of human to one billion people. Acceleration of civilization is astonishing, this is only after two hundred years, the year two thousand, we were already 6 bln. By 2050 it is expected that the world will be 20 percent of Muslims suffering ... As each of us turns out to be priceless today already, hence it is the huge our hope. So is estimated to assess, for a better tomorrow we should take part in the vast resurrection of Christ, and not only in his death, it may be participation in the resurrection of Christ and not just his death. This finding may be that in the attention and listening peaceful and welcoming... Do you know what last summer has meant for me? Constant raptures over Emmanuel Lévinas and a whole series of spiritual delights which I've never experienced before. No student has ever studied so much on his course, and learned so much, as I have this last summer. Earlier I have spent many time in an emotion and an enthusiasm. Now I want to give these gifts to the people away. I want to bestow on them my deepest 'self' and pray that each man would find employment based on a natural and a rational joy. We may be in own profession. There is precisely today responsibility of mine.

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However, it seems that there is still a responsibility only for holiday. Thirty-three years ago I read about the "Adventures" of Lord Jim on the Indian Ocean. Joseph Conrad's novel describes the sinking of the "Patna". The passengers are swimming on the ship to Mecca. Surprised is that it was no panic there. Jim, whom Marlow time after time called romantic, he was character, and dreamed of a great things at sea, he faced suddenly face to face - before the expected disaster of "Patna" - with the absurd situation, that is very closed on any of his actions. Jim cannot save of the ship, or any of the passengers; he also cannot make a disaster of any sense while remaining on the Board. Staying there will be equal to escape because the one and the second possibility will constitute the proof of the helplessness, absolutely

silent and visible sign decoupling from reality, the hero is so far that he will be in some way to form one's situation. Jim finally exposed asking whether it is enough courage; not exposed to any question. The questions is not the same as there is no choice: there is only the sudden breaking of the illusion's veil, according to which man is master of his fate and itself. "I had jumped...? He checked himself, averted his gaze.... 'It seems,' he added." (Lord Jim, chapter 9). Not he himself so much has done that what some instinct in itself has chosen for him. Atonement, which the Conrad's hero imposes himself, aims to fix ruptured vesicle image of himself on "Patna", as an entity having control over themselves and trustworthy people. Joseph Conrad commentators interpret Jim's elections differently if not very optimistic that this is the story of a poor decision and its consequences, but also clear statement about the possibility of overcoming the latter. Assume that there is a possibility of redemption of the fault, while for Conrad more important than "accusing" (in itself, questionable) was the tragic situation of the hero, that the final choice of death from the Doramin' hand the only strengthened this, creating further hardship, not defeated or overcame. The final irony of the Narrator is pertinent: "Not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success! (Lord Jim, last chapter). However, it seems to us constantly, that "such an extraordinary success", is only an effect from the side, due to the lost trust, albeit it may not be any disappointed love of a woman.

## Conclusion

The philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas is best known within contemporary discourse for his renewal of the question of ethics. He asks us to think about experiences in our life which be lie the assumptions of "totality" – of the self as complete, as the origin of all knowledge and the justification for all morality. He then treats these aspects as instances which point towards a new way of thinking about what it means to be a human subject, which is not self-absorbed, but in which our responsibility to another comes before our self-interest. He began to think in the context and the wake of great trauma and violence. And his purpose is this: to explain it, and explain above all why the suffering of others matters to us. Only in a world of infinite responsibility would future oppression prove inconceivable. We can kill the other but in that very moment they escape their subjection once and for all and haunt our dreams forever... the duty of care just happens to you... Lévinas's work is concerned with the very opening of the question of ethical-the ground of

its possibility and impossibility-prior to the production and elaboration of all moral codes. Lévinas describes ethics as an interruption of the self's habitual complacency that occurs in the encounter with the face of the other. As he demonstrates in his main philosophical books, and in numerous important essays, consciousness is not reducible to a consciousness of being. Consciousness is radically put into question by the face. Rather than being the result of any kind of cognition, the self's responsibility to the other who faces is immediate, originary, and irreducible. We do not and never have existed "in and for oneself". "Before the neighbour I am summoned and do not just appear; from the first I am answering an assignation." Moreover, it is neither the state nor contract that constitutes us, but rather this unique and primary responsibility to an other. It is the foundation of our consciousness, our society – and our selves... Already the stony core of my substance is dislodged. But the responsibility to which I am exposed ... does not apprehend me as an interchangeable thing, for here no one can be substituted for me ... Subjectivity is not one for myself; it is, one more time, initially for the other. To say: "here I am". To do something for an other. To give. It obliges me as someone unreplaceable and unique, someone chosen... This responsibility is not merely social and expedient but personal and ethical. It is directed not towards the preservation of autonomy, but instead towards the recognition of suffering. The combination of these two features provides us with a new way of conceiving of the justification of a system of private actions in tort law... Responsibility establishes both a sense of self and a sense of relationship, and it is these in turn which create the very possibility of agreement, and law, and justice. But Lévinas is not satisfied also with love as Eros, he wants to extend love to the stranger, to the Other as neighbour and fellow human, which is love without concupiscence. For the child is still a being of the Same and the Other, while love of the neighbour and fellow human is to accept the absolute alterity of the Other. Every Other is an unfathomable subjectivity which represents infinity. Ultimately peace is possible only if we can love the stranger as neighbour and fellow human. a person's decision is always an inevitable result of their genetic makeup combined with environmental influences. So if a person decides to commit a crime, this can always be explained as a result of past influences. Any individual who had the same genetic makeup and the same environmental influences would have decided exactly the same thing. This is because a person's decision is always completely caused by what happened in the past. The above results have several implications for our understanding of moral responsibility. First, not morally responsible – level of agreement was assessed to the following questions: in such a world it is impossible for a person to be fully morally responsible for their actions.



Second, blameworthy – people should still be morally blamed for committing crimes; third, If these scientists are right, then it is impossible for people to make truly free choices-not free. As for responsibility, our results indicate that should neuroscience or philosophy lead the folk to come to think, correctly or mistakenly, that our minds are mechanistic and our choices are determined, our judgments about moral responsibility will remain largely intact. We should not be deterred from a scientific appreciation of the mind by fears of nihilism or social disintegration. So, we should give hospitality to the stranger, let them enjoy the rights we enjoy. We have to establish institutions to guarantee justice. For this purpose, we have to employ our knowledge and wisdom. But knowledge and wisdom at the service of love and not vice versa. So for Emmanuel Lévinas, love is prior to knowledge and wisdom. Though, you make love.

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## War, Peace and Love by Emmanuel Lévinas

### Abstract

In a world in which everything is reduced “to the play of signs detached from what is signified,” Levinas asks a deceptively simple question: Whence, then, comes the urge to question injustice? By seeing the demand for justice for the other—the homeless, the destitute—as a return to morality, Levinas escapes the suspect finality of any ideology. Levinas’s question is one starting point for *la Proximity*. “If it is true that we are, through technology, moving closer and closer to one another,” writes some editors of the Levinas’s books, then “the importance of proximity and our response to it cannot be overstated.” For the author to this article, to which he can contribute something of significant value, the question of whether we may, ethically, appropriate the object of study for our own causes has become vital. Levinas asks us to see ourselves, our own reading, “in proximity” to what is not ourselves, not our understanding of the world. “Driven Back to the Text” demonstrates that what is at issue here is the Holocaust, and how it drives Levinas back to the Bible, the Kabbalah and the Talmud to fight against Hegelianism, totalitarianism and modern progressivist liberalism. This very return suggests a certain hermeneutic one that both brings out of the texts what the readers society needs to hear as well as one found in the texts; that is, it is an ethical hermeneutic and is part of the texts ethics. Beginning with a clear introduction to Levinas, the article argues that if, as is accepted, contemporary continental philosophy is heavily influenced by Levinas, and if Levinas is heavily influenced by the bible, then contemporary continental philosophy is at least to some extent influenced by christianism.

**Keywords:** transcendence, meaningful, subjectivity, responsibility, love