# Levinas NC

### Framework

#### The subject is created through its encounters in the world, not self-reflection. Containing meaning solely in terms of thought leads to the I reducing its experience into only what it perceives, or the same. When the subject relies solely on self-reflection it constitutes reality in its sameness, denying the existence of anything outside itself. Thus ethics must begin with the encounter of the other, who can never be encapsulated in our thought.

Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and infinity, 1961 ///AHS PB

The I that thinks the sum of the angles of a triangle is, to be sure, also determined by this object; it is precisely the one that thinks of this sum, and not the one that thinks of atomic weight. Whether it remembers or has forgotten, it is determined by the fact of having passed through the thought of the sum of the angles. This is what will be visible to the historian for whom the I representing to itself is already something represented. At the very moment of representation the I is not marked by the past but utilizes it as a represented and objective element. Illusion? Ignorance of its own involvements? Representation is the force of such an illusion and of such forgettings. Representation is a pure present. The positing of a pure present without even tangential ties with time is the marvel of representation. It is a void of time, interpreted as eternity. To be sure the I who conducts his thoughts becomes ( or more exactly ages) in time, in which his successive thoughts, across which he thinks in the present, are spread forth. But this becoming in time does not appear on the plane of representation: representation involves no passivity. The same in relating itself to the other refuses what is exterior to its own instant, to its own identity, only to find again in this instant, which owes itself to nothing, which is pure gratuity, everything that had been refused-as "meaning given," as noema. I ts first movement is negative : it consists in finding and exhausting in itself the meaning of an exteriority, precisely convertible into noemata. Such is the movement of the Husserlian 21l"OX~, which, strictly speaking, is characteristic of representation. I ts very possibility defines representation. The fact that in representation the same defines the other without being determined by the other justifies the Kantian conception according to which the unity of transcendental appreception remains an empty form in the midst of its synthetic work. But we are far from thinking that one starts with representation as a non-conditioned condition! Representation is bound to a very different "intentionality," which we are endeavoring to approach throughout this analysis. And its marvelous work of constitution is especially possible in reflection. It is the "uprooted" representation that we have analyzed. The way representation is bound to a "wholly other" intentionality is different from the way the object is bound to the subject or the subject to history. The total freedom of the same in representation has a positive condition in the other that is not something represented, but is the Other. For the moment let us note that the structure of representation as a non-reciprocal determination of the other by the same is precisely for the same to be present and for the other to be present to the same. We call it "the same" because in representation the I precisely loses its opposition to its object; the opposition fades, bringing out the identity of the I despite the multiplicity of its objects, that is, precisely the unalterable character of the I. To remain the same is to represent to oneself. The "I think" is the pulsation of rational thought. The identity of the same unaltered and unalterable in its relations with the other is in fact the I of representation. The subject that thinks by representation is a subject that hearkens to its own thought: one has to think of thought as in an element analogous to sound and not to light. Its own spontaneity is a surprise for the subject, as though despite its full mastery qua I the I surprised what was taking place. This inspiration [genialite] is the very structure of representation: a return in the present thought to the thought's past, an assuming of this past in the present, a going beyond this past and this present-as in the Platonic reminiscence, in which the subject hoists himself up to the eternal. The particular I is one with the same, coincides with the "daemon" that speaks to it in thought, and is universal thought. The I of representation is the natural passage from the particular to the universal. Universal thought is a thought in the first person. This is why the constitution that for idealism remakes the universe starting from the subject is not the freedom of an I that would survive this constitution free and above the laws it will have constituted. The I that constitutes dissolves into the work it comprehends, and enters into the eternal. The idealist creation is representation. But this is true only of the I proper to representation-detached from the conditions of its latent birth. And enjoyment, likewise detached from concrete conditions, presents a totally different structure, as we shall show shortly. For the moment let us note the essential correlation of intelligibility and representation. To be intelligible is to be represented and hence to be a priori. To reduce a reality to its content thought is to reduce it to the same. The thinking thought is the locus where a total identity and a reality that ought to negate it are reconciled, without contradiction. The most ponderous reality envisaged as an object of a thought is engendered in the gratuitous spontaneity of a thought that thinks it. Every anteriority of the given is reducible to the instantaneity of thought and, simultaneous with it, arises in the present. It thereby takes on meaning. To represent is not only to render present "anew"; it is to reduce to the present an actual perception which flows on. To represent is not to reduce a past fact to an actual image but to reduce to the instantaneousness of thought everything that seems independent of it; it is in this that representation is constitutive. The value of the transcendental method and its share of eternal truth lies in the universal possibility of reducing the represented to its meaning, the existent to the noema, the most astonishing possibility of reducing to a noema the very being of the existent.

#### Thus in order to avoid a model of subjectivity where everything is reduced to the same, we must realize that Identity is first created through relations with the other.

**Levinas 2**

A relation whose terms do not form a totality can hence be produced within the general economy of being only as proceeding from the I to the other, as a face to face, as delineating a distance in depth-that of conversation, of goodness, of Desire-irreducible to the distance the synthetic activity of the understanding establishes between the diverse terms, other with respect to one another, that lend themselves to its synoptic operation. The I is not a contingent formation by which the same and the other, as logical determinations of being, can in addition be [not] reflected within a thought. It is in order that alterity be produced in being that a "thought" is needed and that an I is needed. The irreversibility of the relation can be produced only if the relation is effected by one of the terms as the very movement of transcendence, as the traversing of this distance, and not as a recording of, or the psychological invention of this movement. "Thought" and "interiority" are the very break-up of being and the production ( not the reflection) of transcendence. We know this relation only in the measure that we effect it; this is what is distinctive about it. Alterity is possible only starting from me. Conversation, from the very fact that it maintains the distance between me and the Other, the radical separation asserted in transcendence which prevents the reconstitution of totality, cannot renounce the egoism of its existence; but the very fact of being in a conversation consists in recognizing in the Other a right over this egoism, and hence in justifying oneself. Apology, in which the I at the same time asserts itself and inclines before the transcendent, belongs to the essence of conversation. The goodness in which ( as we will see further) conversation issues and from which it draws signification will not undo this apologetic moment. The breach of totality is not an operation of thought, obtained by a simple distinguishing of terms that evoke one another or at least line up opposite one another. The void that breaks the totality can be maintained against an inevitably totalizing and synoptic thought only if thought finds itself faced with an other refractory to categories. Rather than constituting a total with this other as with an object, thought consists in speaking. We propose to call "religion" the [a] bond that is established between the same and the other without constituting a totality.

#### Thus, the other is infinitely unknowable which makes it impossible to incorporate them into other moral theories. When we try the other as perfectly knowable, we reduce them to a one-dimensional figure in our thought that cannot be interacted with. Rejecting this process known as totalization is a side constraint under any ethical theory, insofar as morality presupposes being able to engage with real people.

#### Thus the standard is Preventing the Arbitrary Totalization of The Other. Prefer

#### [1] Induction fallacy: Every observation about the world is based on a previous observation causing infinite regress. Only my framework solves because confining the other to past behavior is impossible.

#### [2] The existence of language and the performative use of discourse in this round presupposes the authority of our moral relations with the other.

**Levinas 3**

Can objectivity and the universality of thought be founded on discourse? Is not universal thought of itself prior to discourse? Does not a mind in speaking evoke what the other mind already thinks, both of them participating in common ideas? But the community of thought ought to have made language as a relation between beings impossible. Coherent discourse is one. A universal thought dispenses with communication. A reason cannot be other for a reason. How can a reason be an I or an other, since its very being consists in renouncing singularity? European thought has always combated, as skeptical, the idea of man as measure of all things, although this idea contributes the idea of atheist separation and one of the foundations of discourse. For it the sentient I could not found Reason; the I was defined by reason. Reason speaking in the first person is not addressed to the other, conducts a monologue. And, conversely, it would attain to veritable personality, would recover the sovereignty characteristic of the autonomous person, only by becoming universal. Separated thinkers become rational only in the measure that their personal and particular acts of thinking figure as moments of this unique and universal discourse. There would be reason in the thinking individual only in the measure that he would himself enter into his own discourse, that thought would, in the etymological sense of the term, comprehend the thinker-that it would include him. But to make of the thinker a moment of thought is to limit the revealing function of language to its coherence, conveying the coherence of concepts. In this coherence the unique I of the thinker volatilizes. The function of language would amount to suppressing "the other," who breaks this coherence and is hence essentially irrational. A curious result: language would consist in suppressing the other, in making the other agree with the same! But in its expressive function language precisely maintains the other-to whom it is addl"ess~d, ~horn it calls upon or invokes. To be sure, language does not consist in invoking him as a being represented and thought. But this is why language institutes a relation irreducible to the subject-object relation: the revelation of the other. In this revelation only can language as a system of signs be constituted. The other called upon is not something represented, is not [or] a given, is not a particular, through one side already open to generalization. Language, far from presupposing universality and generality, first makes them possible. Language presupposes interlocutors, a plurality. Their commerce is not a representation of the one by the other, nor a participation in universality, on the common plane of language. Their commerce, as we shall show shortly, is ethical.

### Offense

#### Now Negate:

#### [1] Situating our obligations in a particular locational context like “in a democracy” creates a totalizing notion of the outside and puts constraints upon our relationships with the other.

E. Jeffrey Popke, Poststructuralist ethics: subjectivity, responsibility and the space of community , Progress in Human Geography 27,3 (2003) pp. 298–316, <http://myweb.ecu.edu/popkee/Poststructuralist%20Ethics.pdf> ///AHS PB

In this sense, the other calls forth in us a form of ethical responsibility that would be unconditional, beyond any ‘political position’ and outside of any social or geographical context. As a feature of our subjective being, the other does not refer to any specific individual, but rather to the anonymous call of the other, what Levinas describes as a ‘face’ . Our ethical responsibility is thus not bound to a cultural context; the face signifies beyond any social meaning that might be implied by race, gender, ethnicity, etc. ‘The face,’ writes Levinas, is ‘signification without context. I mean that the Other, in rectitude of his face, is not a character within a context ... face is meaning all by itself’ (Levinas, 1985: 86). That the face is ‘signification without context’ does not mean that our ethical responsibility is merely hypothetical or abstract. For Levinas, our engagements with the other are always concrete – embodied and emplaced – but in a relationship that is prior to any significance that might be attached to it by philosophy, culture, politics or place (Howitt, 2002). This latter point has implications for any geographical consideration of ethics. For Levinas, the face is not a particular being in time and space, but approaches me as an immediate demand, a sensibility that Levinas calls ‘proximity’ . Proximity here does not refer to a sense of Cartesian distance, but rather to the immediacy of the responsibility demanded by the face. As Levinas puts it (1985: 96), ‘the other is not simply close to me in space, or close like a parent, but he approaches me essentially insofar as I feel myself – insofar as I am – responsible for him’. Thus, our responsibility cannot be dependent upon our spatial location, or upon the ‘community of fate’ into which we are born (Smith, 2000). In the presence of the face, ‘I am ... open to an accusation of which no alibi, spatial or temporal, could clear me’ (Levinas, 1989: 83). The ethical relationship, in this sense, is not diminished by the contingencies of geographical location. Our responsibility is unconditional, and holds equally to those who are ‘distant’ as those who are [and] near. For Levinas, this responsibility arises because there is a certain form of violence involved in the ‘taking place’ of being. As Levinas puts it (1989: 82): my being-in-the-world or my ‘place in the sun’, my being at home, have these not also been the usurpation of spaces belonging to the other man whom I have already oppressed or starved, or driven out into a third world; are these not acts of repulsing, excluding, exiling, stripping, killing?

#### [2] The AC is misunderstands the others infinity: A) The resolution relies on valuing one others right above another’s which is impossible and totalizing B) Since we can never fully understand the other they always have a right to privacy. Trying to pretend that we have an entitlement to fully know them is the definition of totalization.

#### [3] Compartimentalism: The Aff defines the other solely as being a member of a particular group like “the public” or “elected officials” which denies their infinite possibilities.