## Aff

#### Instead of transcending beyond the world to access universal truth, subjects exist in a particular place at a particular time. Because we are limited by our bodily lense through which we interpret reality, being encounters existence at a particular ethical location—This takes out questions of metaethics and transcendental thought since they are irrelevant to our phenomenological experience.

Michael Fagenblat, Senior Lecturer at the Open University of Israel, Il y a du quotidien: Levinas and Heidegger on the self, pub in Philosophy and Social Criticism, 2002, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0191453702028005666> ///AHS PB

Heidegger develops his account of the ground of being, Sein, by an analysis of the constitutive role of ‘beings-ready-to-hand’, Zuhandenheit. 6 He argues that the meaning of being in general is given and circulated first and foremost through a pre-theoretical acquaintance with objects of use. The phenomenology of ‘useful things’ (Zeug) shows that the meaning of a thing ‘in itself’ is derived from our pre-theoretical involvement with things within an interpretative context. This phenomenological hermeneutic shows that meaning is an external relation between things rather than something inhering in an object or a subject, or an isolatable correspondence between them. This description amounts to a non-cognitivist coherence account of meaning (though not of truth) which is based on ways of being – of comporting, speaking, interpreting, signaling, evaluating, and so forth – rather than states of mind. By reducing the origin of meaning to the phenomenological priority of interpretative activity over intention, Heidegger grounds meaning in the coherence of concrete life rather than in the psychological or transcendental subject.7 The interpretative activity that takes place in the everyday world assumes the role that the subject, now externalized as a pragmatic social agent (Dasein), once occupied as ground of meaning. Heidegger’s reliance on Zuhandenheit as a way of disclosing the precognitive understanding of being leads him to the thesis, central to Being and Time, that the world is a place where ‘work emerges’.8 It is this contention that underlies the charge of ‘instrumentalism’ that has been laid against him.9 Levinas was among the first to condemn this ‘world of exploitation’, even as his reading of Heidegger all but introduced fundamental ontology to France.10 Even so, the important philosophical point that Heidegger introduces is not so much his characterization of the world as a workplace but his account of intelligibility as prior to meaning-bestowing intentions, theoretical vantages or supposedly contextless facts.11 This said, it is important to recall that Heidegger never denies the significance of inner life, just as he never denies the validity of objective knowledge – rather, he views both ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ as derivative of the ontology of the world, and thus as finite.12 Analyses of private or individualistic psychological regions, just like the stance of the scientist and the logician, inevitably presuppose an horizontal background of practices, and this background includes social, historical, linguistic and institutional norms and contents.13 In Being and Time Heidegger calls this background ‘whole’ or ‘totality’, ‘the everyday world’. The everyday world is the interpretative ground of meaning that circumscribes the basic horizon of intelligibility to which every local interpretative act ultimately refers.14 In other words, the everyday historical world, or everydayness, is the ultimate condition for the possibility of meaning in general. Elsewhere Heidegger explicitly calls this everyday condition the ‘original transcendental context’, that enables each and every event of meaning.15

#### By existing in this way, the subject defines the world in relation to it. As the world has no independent existence beyond our understanding of it, every phenomon has its independent essence erased to the point that it exists solely as a one-dimensional object that we have mapped meaning upon. For example, a rock on a stick gains meaning as a hammer through our use of it and has no existence outside of our knowledge of it.

#### However, the other interrupts our attempts to impose meaning on the world by being constitutively unknowable. Because they evade any attempt at definition, and instead acts as an infinite force we cannot comprehend, the other is always vulnerable before us and waiting for a response, which creates an infinite obligation towards them.

Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Dutch Philosopher, To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, 1993, ///AHS PB

Another comes to the fore as other if and only if his or her “appearance” breaks, pierces, destroys the horizon of my egocentric monism, that is, when the other’s invasion of my world destroys the empire in which all phenomena are, from the outset, a priori, condemned to function as moments of my universe. The other’s face (i.e., any other’s facing me) or the other’s speech (i.e., any other’s speaking to me) interrupts and disturbs the order of my, ego’s world; it makes a hole in it by disarraying my arrangements without ever permitting me to restore the previous order. For even if I kill the other or chase the other away in order to be safe from the intrusion, nothing will ever be the same as before. When Levinas meditates on the significance of the face, he does not describe the complex figure that could be portrayed by a picture or painting; rather, he tries to make us “experience” or “realize” what we see, feel, “know” when another, by looking at me, “touches” me: autrui me vise; the other’s visage looks at me, “regards” me. Similarly the word “language,” often used in this context, evokes the speech addressed to me by some living man or woman and not the linguistic structures or anonymous meanings that can be studied objectively or practiced by a style-con- scious author. Autrui me parle” primordially, it is not important what is said; even if the words are nonsensical, there is still their being addressed. Neither is it relevant who speaks to me; any other is the revelation of the Other, and peculiar features deserving special attention would only lead me away from the “absolute otherness” that is at stake. IN order to concentrate on the other’s otherness, Levinas often stresses the nakedness of the other’s face: if I am touched, if I am conscious of being concerned, it is not becau se of the other’s beauty, talents, performances, roles, or functions but only by the other’s (human) otherness. As disrupting the horizon of my egological—and thus, ontological—ways of handling and seeing the world, the others resist a description that would present them as a particular sort of phenomenon among other phenomena within a universal order of beings. Since they “show” and “present” precisely those realities that do not fit into the universal openness of consciousness, they cannot be seized by the usual categories and models of phenomenology. the other transcends the limits of (self-)consciousness and its horizon; the look and the voice that surprise me are “too much” for my capacity of assimilation. In this sense, the other comes toward me as a total stranger and from a dimension that surpasses me. The otherness of the other reveals a dimension of “height” (hauteur): he/she comes “from on high.” Husserl’s theory of intentionality, based on an adequate and symmetric correlation between noésis and noéma, no longer fits. A forgotten element of Descartes’s analysis of consciousness, however, offers a formal structure much closer to the relation meant by Levinas. According to Descartes’ third Metaphysical Meditation, all human consciousness contains not only and not primarily the idea of itself but also and precedingly the irreducible “idea of the infinite,” that is, an immediate and a priori given relation of the conscious subject to a reality that can neither be constituted nor embraced by this subject. This means that the cogito from the outset is structured by a bipolarity other than the bipolarity of the noetico-noematic relation of phenomenology, in which an idea and its ideatum fit one another adequately. Descartes still knew (as all great metaphysicians before him) that consciousness “thinks more than [or beyond] that which it can think.” The infinite is different from any noéma or cogitatum, for it essentially surpasses our capacity for conception and embracing. Although Descartes identifies “the infinite” with “God” (i.e., the God of the traditional, late scholastic philosophy), we can consider the formal structure he discovers to be the structure of my relation to the other in the form of another human being. When I am confronted with another, I experience myself as an instance that tries to appropriate the world by labor, language, and experience, whereas this other instance does not permit me to monopolize the world because the Other’s greatness does not fit into any enclosure—not even that of theoretical comprehension. This resistance to all integration is not founded on the other’s will; before any possibility of choice and before all psychological considerations, the mere fact of another’s existence is a “surplus” that cannot be reduced to becoming a part or moment of the Same. The Other cannot be captured or grasped and is therefore, in the most literal sense of the word, incomprehensible. In all his works, Levinas has endeavored to show that the (human) other radically differs from all other beings in the world. The other’s coming to the fore cannot be seen as a variation of the general way of appearance by which all other beings are phenomenal. This is the reason why Levinas reserves the word “phenomenon” for realities that fit into the totality of beings ruled by egological understanding. Since the other cannot become a moment of such a totality, it is not a phenomenon but rather an “enigma.” However, if an enigma cannot be defined in phenomenological terms, we must ask: can it be defined at all? If “visibility,” in a broad and metaphorical sense, is a feature of every being that can become a phenomenon, one may even call the enigmatic other “invisible.”47 The other imposes its exceptional and enigmatic otherness on me by way of a command and a prohibition: you are not allowed to kill me; you must accord me a place under the sun and everything that is necessary to live a truly human life! Your facing me or your speaking to me—whatever form your addressing me might take—forbids me to suppress, enslave, or damage you; on the contrary, it obligates me to dedicate myself to your well-being. It is not your will or want or wish that makes me yours truly, but your emerging, your being there, as such. Independently of your or my desires, your presence reveals to me that I am “for you,” responsible for your life. We meet here an exceptional, extraordinary, and absolute fact: a fact that is and exists simultaneously and necessarily as a fact and as a command or norm. By seeing another looking at me, or by hearing someone’s voice, I “know” myself to be obliged. The scission between factuality (is) and normativity (ought)—a scission many philosophers since Hume have believed in—has not yet had the time to emerge here. The immediate experience of another’s emergence contains the root of all possible ethics as well as the source from which all insights of theoretical philosophy must start. The other’s existence as such reveals to me the basis and primary sense of my obligations.

#### And when we limit the other to a set of understandable categories the subject relates to them as just another object, denying our infinite obligation towards them. This process of totalization is a prerequisite to action under any other ethical framework, as otherwise we fail to relate to the other as a real part of the world and instead view them as a one dimensional object, which prevents any genuine ethical relationship.

#### Thus the Standard is preventing the totalization of the other. Prefer it:

#### [1] Prefer intent based ethics to consequences: 1) If the other is infinite its impossible to reduce them to an aggregately property 2) Consequences can never call a general rule right or wrong because the ends decide in every specific instance 3) Util never warrants why we have an obligation to consider the pain and pleasure of other agents. 4) Induction is infinitely regressive, since every induction is based on a previous induction. This independently warrants the framework since we can never predict the other.

#### [2] My standard is a pre-req - ethics is founded upon a relationship between individuals which totalization denies. Prescribing action presupposes an infinite obligation to the other or else the action would lack moral significance.

Emmanuel Levinas, Lithuanian-French Philosopher, Totality and infinity, 1961 ///AHS PB

This foundation of pluralism does not congeal in isolation the terms that constitute the plurality. While maintaining them against the total ity that would absorb them, it leaves them in commerce or in war. At no moment are they posited as causes of themselves which would be to remove from them all receptivity and all activity, shut them up each in its own interiority, and isolate them like the Epicurean gods living in the interstices of being, or like the gods immobilized in the between-time of art, left for all eternity on the edge of the interval, at the threshold of a future that is never produced, statues looking at one another with empty eyes, idols which, contrary to Gyges, are exposed and do not see. Our analyses of separation have opened another perspective. The primordial form of this multiplicity is not, however, produced as war, nor as commerce. War and commerce presupose the face and the transcendence of the being appearing in the face. War can not be derived from the empirical fact of the multiplicity of beings that limit one another, under the pretext that where the presence of the one inevitably limits the other, violence is identical with this limitation. Limitation is not of itself violence. Limitation is conceivable only within a totality where the parts mutually define one another. Definition, far from doing violence to the identity of the terms united into a totality, ensures this identity. The limit separates and unites in a whole. The reality fragmented into concepts that mutually limit one another forms a totality by virtue of that very fragmentation. As a play of antagonistic forces the world forms a whole, and is deducible or should be deducible, in a completed scientific thought, from one unique formula. What one is tempted to call antagonism of forces or of concepts presupposes a subjective perspective, and a pluralism of wills. The point at which this perspective converges does not form a part of the totality. Violence in nature thus refers to an existence precisely not limited by an other, an existence that maintains itself outside of the totality. But the exclusion of violence by beings susceptible of being integrated into a totality is not equivalent to peace. Totality absorbs the multiplicity of beings, which peace implies. Only beings capable of war can rise to peace. War like peace presupposes beings structured otherwise than as parts of a totality. 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, 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. War presupposes the transcendence of the antagonist; it is waged against man. It is surrounded with honors and pays the last honors; it aims at a presence that comes always from elsewhere, a being that appears in a face. It is neither the hunt nor struggle with an element. The possibility, retained by the adversary, of thwarting the best laid calculations expresses the separation, the breach of totality, across which the adversaries approach one another. The warrier runs a risk; no logistics guarantees victory. The calculations that make possible the determination of the outcome of a play of forces within a totality do not decide war. It lies at the limit of a supreme confidence in oneself and a supreme risk. It is a relation between beings exterior to totality, which hence are not in touch with one another. But would the violence that is impossible among beings ready to constitute a totality that is, to reconstitute it-then be possible among separated beings? How could separated beings maintain any relation, even violence? It is that the refusal of totality in war does not refuse relationship-since in war the adversaries seek out one another. Relationship between separated being would indeed be absurd were the terms posited as substances, each causa sui, since, as pure activities, capable of receiving no action, the terms could undergo no violence. But the relation of violence does not remain at the level of the wholly formal conjuncture of relationship. It implies a specific structure of the terms in relation. Violence bears upon only a being both graspable and escaping every hold. Without this living contradiction in the being that undergoes violence the deployment of violent force would reduce itself to a labor.

#### [3] Systems of supposedly “ontological” oppression only come to be, when societies totalize the other on the basis of social categories. The only solution to this is reemphasize a radical system of infinite responsibility to those considered subhuman.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Professor LCS and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University, ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING, published 2007, ///AHS PB

What is the meaning of damne´? The damne´ is the subject that emerges in a world marked by the coloniality of Being. The damne´, as Fanon put it, has nonontological resistance in the eyes of the dominant group. The damne´ is either invisible or excessively visible. The damne´ exists in the mode of not-being there, which hints at the nearness of death, at the company of death. The damne´ is a concrete being but it is also a transcendental concept. Emile Benveniste has shown that the term damne´ is etymologically related to the concept of donner, which means, to give. The damne´ is literally the subject who cannot give because what he or she has has been taken from him or her.63 This means that the damne´ is a subject from whom the capacity to have and to give have been taken away from her and him. The coloniality of Being is thus fundamentally an ontological dynamic that aims to obliterate in its literal sense of doing away completely so as to leave no trace gift-giving and generous reception as a fundamental character of being-in-the-world. Emmanuel Le´vinas argues that gift-giving and reception are fundamental traits of the self. Giving is first and foremost for Le´vinas a metaphysical act that makes possible the communication between a self and an Other as transontological as well as the sharing of a common world. Without giving to an Other there would be no self just as without receiving from the Other there would be no reason. In short, without a trans-ontological moment there would be no self, no reason, and no Being. The trans-ontological is the foundation of the ontological. For Le´vinas, the ontological, the realm of being, comes to exist out of the introduction of justice into the trans-ontological relation, which introduces measure and synchronicity in the order of the fundamentally diachronic.64 The ontological comes to be at the expense of the transontological. The ontological thus carries with it the marks of both positive achievement and betrayal of the trans-ontological relation, a relation of radical givenness and reception. According to Le´vinas, ontology is a philosophy of power. It is a discourse that, when taken as foundation or ultimate end, it gives priority to an anonymous Being over and beyond the self-Other relation it gives priority to the ontological rather than to the trans-ontological, and to authenticity rather than to radical responsibility. When ontology is conceived as fundamental, the self-Other relation becomes a secondary dimension of the subject. It is also seen as a source of the potential forgetfulness of Being and thus as a departure from authenticity. Le´vinas argues precisely the contrary: it is the forgetting of the self-Other relation that characterizes the return of ontology as fundamental, which can lead, not to lacking authenticity, but to a renunciation of responsibility and justice. That is so because being is always already a betrayal of sorts of the trans-ontological relation (of gift and reception between self and Other), and it tends to forgetting. That is, being presents itself as the foundation of reality when it is not. This happens because once being is born, it tends to preserve itself and to present itself as autonomous foundation. But, preservation and autonomy can be achieved at the expense of the transontological. Being thus aims to eliminate the traces of the trans-ontological. This is done, both, by philosophical accounts that attempt to reduce the self-Other relation to knowledge or being, and by ways of thinking, concrete policies, and historical projects that reduce the significance of givenness, generosity, hospitality, and justice. Clearly enough, Le´vinas saw Nazism and the Jewish Holocaust as radical betrayals of the trans-ontological dimension of human reality, and thus, of the very meaning of the human as such. Thus, Nazism represented not only a threat to European nations and many minorities within Europe, but also a crucial moment in the history of being. The presence of anti-Semitism, Aryanism, and other forms of racial prejudices in Nazism, make clear that race and racism occupy an special place in that history. Race and caste, along with gender and sexuality, are perhaps the four forms of human differentiation that have served most frequently as means to transgress the primacy of the self-Other relation and to obliterate the traces of the trans-ontological in the concrete world. In modernity, racial differentiation alters the way in which the other forms of human differentiation work in modernity, as the entire globe is divided according to races, which alter the existing caste, gender, and sexual relations. To be sure, race is not totally independent of gender or sexuality, as feminization and eroticism are always part of it. I have argued that the emergence of race and its entanglement with gender and sexuality can be explained in part by their relation to war ethics and their naturalization in the colonial world. Le´vinas did not go into these matters. He focused on the analysis of the trans-ontological dimension of human reality and in the rescue and philosophical reconstruction of the Jewish conceptual and ethical legacy, which for him provided an alternative to the Euro-Greek tendency to privilege knowledge and being. He nonetheless provided important considerations for understanding the meaning and significance of the damne´ and the coloniality of being. The appearance of the damne´ is not only of social significance but of ontological significance as well. It indicates the emergence of a world structured on the basis of the lack of recognition of the greater part of humanity as givers, which legitimizes dynamics of possession, rather than generous exchange. This is in great part achieved through the idea of race, which suggests not only inferiority but also dispensability. From here that not only poverty, but also the nearness of death in misery, lack of recognition, lynching, and imprisonment among so many other ways characterize the situation of the damne´. It is this situation that we refer to here as coloniality. And the ways by virtue of which the world comes to be shaped by the excess of being and its obliteration of the trans-ontological we call the coloniality of being. Coloniality of being refers to a process whereby the forgetfulness of ethics as a transcendental moment that founds subjectivity turns into the production of a world in which exceptions to ethical relationships become the norm. That being has a colonial aspect means that in addition to posit itself as autonomous and be driven by preservation, it tries to obliterate the traces of the trans-ontological by actually giving birth to a world in which lordship and supremacy rather than generous interaction define social dynamics in society. The damne´ is the product of these tendencies. Colonization and racialization are the concrete and conceptual ways by virtue of which the damne´ emerges as an idea and mode of being. Colonization and racialization are expressions of the dark side of being, that is, they represent radical betrayals of the trans-ontological. Colonization and racialization are not only political and social events or structures. They also have metaphysical and ontological significance. War is the opposite of the an-archical relation of absolute responsbility for the Other that gives birth to human subjectivity. The obliteration of the transontological takes the tendency of producing a world in which war becomes the norm, rather than the exception. That is the basic meaning of the coloniality of being: the radical betrayal of the trans-ontological by the formation of a world in which the non-ethics of war become naturalized through the idea of race. The damne´ is the outcome of this process. Her agency needs to be defined by a consistent opposition to the paradigm of war and the promotion of a world oriented by the ideals of human generosity and receptivity. This is the precise meaning of decolonization: restoration of the logic of the gift. Fanon suggests as much in the conclusion of Black Skin, White Masks: Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the You? 65 Fanon’s message is clear: decolonization should aspire at the very minimum to restore or create a reality where racialized subjects could give and receive freely in societies founded on the principle of receptive generosity.66 Receptive generosity involves a break away from racial dynamics as well as from conceptions of gender and sexuality that inhibit generous interaction among subjects. In this sense, a consistent response to coloniality involves both decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’ as projects, both of which are necessary for the YOU to emerge. Only in this way the trans-ontological can shine through the ontological, and love, ethics, and justice can take the role that the non-ethics of war have occupied in modern life. Decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’, different from authenticity, are not based on the anticipation of death, but on the aperture of one’s self to the racialized other to the point of substitution. 67 Substitution occurs when one’s identity is teleologically suspended and when one offers one’s life to the task of achieving decolonial justice: that is, a justice oriented by the trans-ontological dimension of the human. Decolonial justice opposes the preferential option for imperial Man by the preferential option for the damne´ or condemned of the earth. Such justice is inspired by a form of love which is also decolonial. ‘Decolonial love’ a concept coined and developed by the Chicana theorist Chela Sandoval gives priority to the trans-ontological over the claims of ontology.68 Decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’ are the active products of decolonial love and justice. They aim to restore the logics of the gift through a decolonial politics of receptive generosity.69 In order to be consistent, the discourse of decolonization and ‘des-generaccio´n’ would have to be understood according to the very logics that they open. They cannot take the form of a new imperial universal. Decolonization itself, the whole discourse around it, is a gift itself, an invitation to engage in dialogue. For decolonization, concepts need to be conceived as invitations to dialogue and not as impositions. They are expressions of the availability of the subject to engage in dialogue and the desire for exchange. Decolonization in this respect aspires to break with monologic modernity. It aims to foment transmodernity, a concept which also becomes an invitation that has to be understood in relation to the decolonial paradox of giving and receiving.70 Transmodernity is an invitation to think modernity/coloniality critically from different epistemic positions and according to the manifold experiences of subjects who suffer different dimensions of the coloniality of Being. Transmodernity involves radical dialogical ethics to initiate a dialogue between humans and those considered subhumans and the formulation of a decolonial and critical cosmopolitanism.71 Decolonization is an idea that is probably as old as colonization itself. But it only becomes a project in the twentieth century. That is what Du Bois suggested when he stated that the problem of the twentieth-century is the problem of the color-line. The idea was not that the color-line was unique to the twentieth century, but that critical and violent confrontations with it were unavoidable then. With decolonization I do not have in mind simply the end of formal colonial relations, as it happened throughout the Americas in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. I am instead referring to a confrontation with the racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies that were put in place or strengthened by European modernity as it colonized and enslaved populations through the planet. In short, with decolonization I am thinking of oppositions to the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being it may be more consistent to refer to it as ‘decoloniality’, as Chela Sandoval and Catherine Walsh suggest.72 Such opposition existed before the twentieth century, but only reached interconnected global articulations then. If Du Bois announced the project of systematic opposition to the color-line, it was perhaps intellectuals after the Second World War who most consistently expressed the ambitions of decolonization as project. We owe some of the most important early formulations to authors such as Aime´ Ce´saire and Frantz Fanon. They are key thinkers of what could very well be considered a decolonial turn in theory and critique.

#### [4] Communication can only occur between multiple agents, which demands a coherent relationship with the other.

Emmanuel Levinas, Lithuanian-French Philosopher, Totality and infinity, 1961 ///AHS PB

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 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.

#### [5] Only infinite obligations can motivate action past the possibility of failure.

Peter Baker, Prof at Towson University, Deconstruction and the Question of Violence: Fictions Legitimes versus Pulp Fiction, symplokē, Vol. 4, No. 1/2, special issue: Rhetoric and the Human Sciences (1996), pp. 21- 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40550382> ///AHS PB

The impossibility of justice is a way of talking about the necessity for transformative interpretations in the "here and now" in which presence is denied. This leads to the three aporias of responsibility that Derrida outlines in "Force of Law" (cf. Cornell, The Philosophy of the Limit 133ff.). The first is what he calls épokhè, or the suspension of the rule. That is to say, in part, a decision-making machine is not imaginable. Any system of justice requires a judge who both invokes and suspends the law as unbending rule.17 Or, as Derrida says, "Each case is other, each decision is different and requires an absolutely unique interpretation, which no existing, coded rule can or ought to guarantee absolutely" (1992, 23). This is obviously not the same as saying that the judge makes it up as she goes along, which would be a denial of the increased sense of responsibility called for in the transformative interpretation of deconstruction. It is rather a statement of aporia, a restatement of the Pascalian paradox: "It follows from this paradox that there is never a moment that we can say in the present that a decision is just, ... or that someone is a just man even less, 7 am just'" (1992, 23). We might relate this to the Greek apothegm concerning happiness: call no man happy until his life is at an end. Seen deconstructively, this paradox is a restatement of the theme that there is no justice outside of context, no metalanguage that serves as a guarantee of lightness of judgment, no divine oversight grounding judgment in a realm of eternal and immutable truth. Derrida's second aporia is a restatement of the first in terms of the "undecidable." Derrida denies that undecidability is an endless regress or oscillation between two equally valid constructions of meaning. Rather it is a means of accounting for the aspect of the impossible, the increase in the sense of responsibility called for by deconstructive interpretation. In terms of the judge's decision, Derrida says: "A decision that didn't go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process. It might be legal; it would not be just" (1992, 24). And, of course, there are many decisions made all the time, by judges and others, that viewed within the context of the legal system are perfectly coherent and rule-bound - and just as clearly unjust. But even this judgment cannot be made with certainty on the spot. Justice is what is deconstructible, not what has an inherent self-present justification. In fact, as a wide range of legal scholars now increasingly recognize, the whole legal framework founded on self-presence of the self to the self, known in one of its aspects as intentionality, is largely responsible for the crisis of legitimation in the legal field with respect to rape law, the insanity defense, and many other areas.18 As Derrida notes (in the form of a classical aporia): The whole subjectal axiomatic of responsibility, of conscience, of intentionality, of property that governs today's dominant juridical discourse and the category of decision right down to its appeals to medical expertise is so theoretically weak and crude that I need not emphasize it here. And the effects of these limitations are massive and concrete enough that I don't have to give examples. [The obscure dogmatism that characterizes the discourses about the responsibility of the defendant, his or her mental state, the passionate character, premeditated or not, of the crimes, the unbelievable depositions of witnesses or 'experts' on this subject should suffice to attest, in truth to prove, that no critical or criterialogical rigor, no knowledge can be attained on this subject]. (1992, 25; 1994, 55; bracketed passage added to French edition) As in a classical aporia, Derrida does then go on to say what he says he will not, giving several instances in which the legal system is clearly hampered by the guiding model of intentionality inherited from traditional humanism, in a tone which betrays an unusual (for him) level of sarcastic invective. Derrida's third aporia rhymes with his recent thinking on apocalypse and other themes: what he calls urgency. The urgent need for justice paradoxically "obstructs the horizon of knowledge" (1992, 26). As he says: "But justice, however unpresentable it may be, doesn't wait. It is that which must not wait. To be direct, simple and brief, let us say this: a just decision is always required immediately, 'right away"\* (1992, 26). Obviously, a whole range of present concerns can be made to resonate (and this would always be the case, productively, in any future moment) in this statement, whether it be the urgency of racial justice in Los Angeles, the face-off with apocalyptic religious extremists in Waco, or the seemingly unconscionable delays in the international response to the civil war in Bosnia. The urgency embodied in the current slogan "No Justice, No Peace" recalls an earlier generation of Americans dissatisfied with their government who chanted "Peace Now." As radical, or empowering, as these slogans may be, they also have a tendency to take on apocalyptic or messianic tones that threaten rational decision. Or as Derrida says, citing Kierkegaard: "The instant of decision is a madness, says Kierkegaard. This is particularly true of the instant of the just decision that must rend time and defy dialectics'\* (1992, 26). But, paradoxically, this is not just a danger, but also a promise. In the language that Derrida borrows (and transforms) from the speechact theorists, the call for justice is never simply a constative, or statement of fact, but also and always a performative.

#### [6] Ethical theories must respect the others ability to create their own truth since ethical theories can not really on the external framework of an other other for validation

**Joyce 02[[1]](#footnote-1):**

This distinction between what is accepted from within an institution, and “stepping out” of that institution and appraising it from an exterior perspective, is close to Carnap’s distinction between internal and external questions. 15 Certain“linguistic frameworks” (as Carnap calls them) bringwith themnewterms andways of talking: accepting the language of “things” licenses making assertions like “The shirt is in the cupboard”;accepting mathematics allows one to say “There is a prime number greater than one hundred”; accepting the language of propositions permits saying “Chicago is large is a true proposition,” etc. Internal to the framework in question, confirming or disconfirming the truth of these propositions is a trivial matter. But traditionallyphilosophers have interested themselves inthe external question –the issue of the adequacy of the framework itself**:** “Do objects exist?”, “Does the world exist?”, “Are there numbers?”, “Are the propositions?”, etc. Carnap’s argument is that theexternalquestion**,** as it has been typically construed,does not make sense. From a perspective that accepts mathematics, the answer to the question “Do numbers exist?” is justtrivially“Yes.”From a perspective which has not accepted mathematics, Carnap thinks, the only sensible way of construing the question is not as a theoretical question, but as a practical one: “Shall I accept the framework of mathematics?”, and this pragmatic question is to be answered by consideration of the efficiency, the fruitfulness, the usefulness,etc., of the adoption. But the (traditional)philosopher’s questions – “But is mathematics true?”, “Are there really numbers?” – are pseudo-questions**.** By turning traditional philosophical questions into practical questions of the form “Shall I adopt...?”, Carnap is offering a noncognitive analysis of metaphysics. Since I am claiming that we can critically inspect morality from an external perspective – that we can ask whether there are any non-institutional reasons accompanying moral injunctions – and that such questioning would not amount to a “Shall we adopt...?” query, Carnap’s position represents a threat. What arguments does Carnap offer to his conclusion? He starts with the example of the “thing language,” which involves reference to objects that exist in time and space.Tostep out of the thing language andask “But does the world exist?” is a mistake, Carnap thinks, because the very notion of “existence” is a term which belongs to the thing language, and can be understood only within that framework, “hence this concept cannot be meaningfully applied to the system itself.” 16 Moving on to the external question “Do numbers exist?” Carnap cannot use the same argument – he cannot say that “existence” is internal to the number language and thus cannot be applied to the system as a whole. Instead he says that philosophers who ask the question do not mean material existence, but have no clear understanding of what other kind of existence might be involved, thus such questions have no cognitive content. It appears that this is the form of argument which he is willing to generalize to all further cases: persons who disputewhether propositions exist, whether properties exist**,** etc., do not know what they are arguing over, thus theyare not arguing over the truth of a proposition, but over the practical value of their respective positions**.** Carnap adds that this is so because there is nothing that both parties would possibly count as evidence that would sway the debate one way or the other.

## Offense

#### Thus I affirm that states ought to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, as a way of fulfilling responsibility to the other.

#### First, nuclear weapons reduce war from a direct confrontation with the other to the impersonal release of energy. This moves violence to a geopolitical realm, where others are treated purely as numbers in calculating risk, and the human relationship of conflict is dictated by the physics of natural world.

Howard Caygill, Professor of Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University, Levinas And The Political, First published 2002, ////AHS PB

Levinas’s most explicit reflections on the significance of the Cold War were published in Esprit and continue the line of inquiry opened in the ‘Reflections on Hitlerism’ published in the same journal in 1934. The 1956 essay on ‘The Spirit of Geneva’ uses the meeting of the superpowers in Geneva as an occasion to reflect on the philosophical underpinning of the Cold War geo-political.21 The continuity with the ‘Reflections on Hitlerism’ is evident in the critique of paganism that characterises both essays, but in 1956 paganism is linked to the technology of nuclear warfare. The definition of paganism in terms of subjection to expansionary natural forces proposed in the ‘Reflections on Hitlerism’ is re-adopted in the ‘Spirit of Geneva’, except that now Levinas substitutes physical, nuclear forces of atomic weaponry for the biological forces that defined race and race war in the earlier essay. The inhuman biological race war that characterised the National Socialist political has now become the inhuman nuclear war between the superpowers. The powers released by nuclear technology no longer possess any human significance beyond their potential to destroy human life. The apparent struggle between the capitalist and socialist systems for world domination is regarded by Levinas as a war of shadows that exemplifies an historical predicament in which ‘human conflict has lost all meaning without the struggle having come to an end’ (IH, 161). The development of atomic technology is understood by Levinas to mark the end of human history: ‘the release of atomic energy has precisely taken the control of the real away from human will. This is exactly what is meant by the arrest of history’ (IH, 161). Not only does human struggle no longer possess any meaning or direction, but its lack of orientation signifies a fundamental transformation of the political. It is a transformation that, at this stage in his thought, Levinas takes to mark the end of a certain human history and he beginning of an inhuman history. Levinas extends the line of thought opened in the ‘Reflections on Hitlerism’ by regarding the inhuman in terms of a regression to the animal. Later, in the audacious essay of 1961 ‘Heidegger, Gagarin and Us’, the inhuman character of technology is understood in terms of the divine inhuman, or the promise of a universality that closes a human history based on territory and place while opening the possibility of a new human history organised around the nudity of the face of the other. In 1956 Levinas describes the link between the arrest of history and the transformation of the political by means of the concept of the ‘third’. While the ‘third’ usually signifies for Levinas the political as opposed to the ‘second’ or other of ethics, the ‘third’ serving as shorthand for the impersonal institutions of legal and political judgement, here it denotes precisely the inhuman. Levinas writes of the summit negotiations that ‘The third partner here is not the third man. It does not assume human form, they are forces without faces. Strange return of the natural powers…’ (IH, 161). The ‘forces without faces’ will return again in the 1960 Esprit article ‘Principles and Faces’; in both cases they signify the same forces of fatality that drove the racial struggle described in the Hitlerism essay. In 1934, human struggle was overshadowed by a struggle between the inhuman biological forces of race; here human struggle is overshadowed by the inhuman scale of the destructive forces released by nuclear energy. By locating the moment of the political in the inhuman, Levinas is forced to redefine the political. At this point in his work he proposes a contrast between a ‘human’ and a ‘cosmo’ political, regarding the latter as a technologically advanced return to prehistory. Under the reign of the human political, when the ‘third’ was the ‘third man’, the inhuman was already present but not all-encompassing: From the inhuman, so prodigious in those centuries, still came the human. The human relations that made up the social order and the forces that guided that order, exceeded in power, efficacy and in being those of the forces of nature. The elements borrow from us through society and the state onto which they add their own meaning. (IH, 162) In this phase of history the encounter of the human and the inhuman was governed by the third of the human social order. In it the humanised ‘world’ was the condition for meaningful human action, even for deadly conflict; the human remained the horizon of history, and even in conflict there persisted, however occluded, the sentiment of responsibility for the other human. In this phase of history, the human horizon of events offered ‘an invitation to work for a better world, to believe the world transformable and human’ (IH, 163). In the ‘Spirit of Geneva’ Levinas comes close to acknowledging that the moment for such a politics has now passed. In the epoch of inhuman history, For the first time social problems and the struggles between humans do not reveal the ultimate meaning of the real. This end of the world would lack its last judgement. The elements exceed the states that until now contained them. Reason no longer appears in political wisdom, but in the historically unconditioned truths announcing cosmic dangers. For politics is substituted a cosmo-politics that is a physics. (IH, 164) The reduction of human politics to an inhuman physics or cosmopolitics is accompanied by an abdication ‘on both sides of the iron curtain’ of responsibility in favour of achieving a balance of uncontrollable forces. Both National Socialist bio-politics and Cold War cosmo-politics surrender a political situated within a human horizon for a calculus of implacable inhuman forces before which humans are deprived of their wisdom, agency and ultimately their responsibility.

#### Second, our infinite responsibility for the other demands that we strive for authentic peace built upon our relationship with them. Nuclear peace, which is only guaranteed through the threat of force and mutual deterrence, is a form of paradoxical totalization where the other is managed and assimilated to prevent “external” violence against them.

Sean Lawrence, Department of English and Cultural Studies, The University of British Columbia, Kelowna, “I’m a Pacifist”: Peace in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas, Published: 28 January 2019, <https://res.mdpi.com/d_attachment/religions/religions-10-00084/article_deploy/religions-10-00084-v2.pdf> ///AHS PB

As Levinas’s references to how ontology achieves “the non-violence of the totality” would indicate, the tradition against which he opposes himself also entertains ideas of peace. “Philosophers,” Levinas notes, “deduce a final peace from the reason that plays out its stakes in ancient and present-day wars; they found morality on politics” (Levinas 1969, p. 22). Levinas himself, on the other hand, looks forward to a time “when the eschatology of messianic peace will have come to superpose itself upon the ontology of war” (Levinas 1969, p. 22). This is not to say that Levinas procrastinates peace to some sort of parousia, which, in any case, would be a Christian concept. On the contrary, the peace he does champion, as I shall show, has the immediacy of the face-to-face. He expands upon the opposition between “The peace of empires” which “rests on war” and this “messianic peace” (ibid.) in the 1984 essay “Peace and Proximity”. Here, however, Levinas draws his major distinction between European peace, derived from Greek ideas, and Jewish peace, derived from Biblical teaching. The former Levinas characterizes as “Peace on the basis of the Truth—on the basis of the truth of a knowledge where, instead of opposing itself, the diverse agrees with itself and unites; where the stranger is assimilated; where the other is reconciled with the identity of the identical in everyone” (Levinas 1996, p. 162). This peace, Levinas argues, falls into contradiction when its universalism becomes imperialism—indeed, rival imperialisms threatening in the Cold War to destroy the Earth itself. He notes in a Talmudic exegesis that “a Europe seeking itself, a universe established between men and nations and heavens and earth” is also “a Europe forever anxious without peace, frightened by its dreams and its weapons” (Levinas 1999, p. 97). The culture founded in this peace cannot recognize itself in its expressions, becoming increasingly contradictory “up to the supreme paradox where the defense of the human and its rights is perverted into Stalinism” (Levinas 1996, p. 163). Levinas not only places himself in opposition to a western philosophical tradition that privileges war, nor merely shows that such a philosophical tradition entertains notions of peace, but also declares that such an idea of peace is fundamentally flawed. Though he had not yet officially converted to Nazism, Heidegger was already, at the time of Davos, proclaiming violence as a principle of hermeneutics: “In order to wring from what the words say, what it is they want to say, every interpretation must necessarily use violence” (Gordon 2010, p. 131). On the other hand, Cassirer’s pacifism was not nearly pacifist enough. It is not merely that Cassirer lost the debate to Heidegger at Davos, or that Heidegger’s ontological phenomenology came to displace Cassirer’s Neo-Kantianism, but that even the pacifism of the western tradition, which Cassirer represented in his thought and person, perverts itself into militarism. Against both the militarist and the pacifist traditions which Levinas identifies in western thought, he proposes, especially towards the conclusion of Totality and Infinity, a positive peace. The face, he argues, “is preeminently nonviolence, for instead of offending my freedom it calls it to responsibility and founds it. As non-violence it nonetheless maintains the plurality of the same and the other. It is peace” (Levinas 1969, p. 203). Identifying peace with the face, it need hardly be said, identifies it with the phenomenon central to Levinas’s mature philosophy. “The opposition of the face,” he says elsewhere, “is a pacific opposition, but one where peace is not a suspended war or a violence simply contained” (Levinas 1987b, p. 19). The relationship is explained in a longer passage on the penultimate page of Totality and Infinity, which we may take to provide a conclusion to Levinas’s first magnus opus: The unity of plurality is peace, and not the coherence of the elements that constitute plurality. 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 or 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. (Levinas 1969, p. 306)

1. Joyce, Richard. Myth of Morality. Port Chester, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p 45-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)