

**The Problem of Forgiveness:
Jankélévitch, Deleuze, and Spinoza**

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ABSTRACT: The problem of forgiveness may rightly be regarded as a perennial philosophical problem. Introducing his 1973 essay "Forgiveness," Aurel Kolnai writes that, logically, forgiveness seems to be either "unjustified or pointless." The logical and ethical problem of forgiveness acquired distinctive urgency in the 1960s when statutes of limitations on Nazi war crimes were set to expire. In the resulting debates, the ethicist Vladimir Jankélévitch occupies a central place. In his book *Forgiveness and elsewhere*, Jankélévitch singles out Spinoza as a philosopher with a particularly inadequate account of forgiveness. This essay contextualizes Jankélévitch's argument and argues that Spinoza's conception of evil and forgiveness is essential for understanding why Jankélévitch himself cannot consistently account for his refusal to advocate forgiving the German people after the Holocaust. Drawing on Sylvain Zac's account of forgiveness in Spinoza, as well as Deleuze's account of the problem of evil as it arises in Spinoza's correspondence with Blyenburgh, this essay argues that Spinoza offers an account of forgiveness that makes sense of what is ethically required in the face of what Carse and Tirrell call "world-shattering" wrongs such as the Holocaust.

KEYWORDS: Forgiveness, Spinoza, Deleuze, Jankélévitch, Holocaust

The problem of forgiveness may rightly be regarded as a perennial philosophical problem. But of what sort? Introducing his 1973 contribution to the discussion, entitled simply "Forgiveness" – an essay that remains the standard reference for contemporary discussions of the problem, especially in the Anglo-American philosophical community, Aurel Kolnai writes that while the ethical nature of the problem is indisputable, he intends his argument "to be chiefly logical in nature: the central question I wish to discuss is ... whether, and if so in what manner, [forgiveness] is logically possible at all."¹ The problem, as Kolnai develops it in the first two sections of his essay, is that forgiveness seems to be either "unjustified or pointless."² It is unjustified if the one to be forgiven persists – either actively or without adequate

acknowledgment – in their behavior; it is pointless if the objectionable behavior has been appropriately rectified. To avoid this dilemma, Kolnai argues that forgiveness wishes for a *metanoia* – a “change of heart” – in the one forgiven.³ It is important that the forgiver “wishes for” rather than “intends” such a *metanoia* – the distinction saves the virtue of forgiveness from utilitarianism – “because forgiving is an exquisite act of charity or benevolence in a meaningful context, that is in a situation which in some way specially concerns the agent, i.e., the forgiver. ... [Forgiveness] expresses that attitude of trust in the world which ... may be looked upon ... perhaps as the epitome and culmination of morality.”⁴ As a wish or a hope for a *metanoia* in the forgiven, forgiveness is assured of logical possibility; as an affirmation of a shared and mutually meaningful world, it makes claim to be the supreme achievement of ethics.

Forgiveness in Postwar Europe

In the decade preceding Kolnai’s paper, the question of forgiveness had acquired a new urgency, particularly in Europe. The first half of the 1960s marked the passage of two decades since the cessation of hostilities at the end of the Second World War. In both Germany and France, this anniversary also marked the moment when the statute of limitations for murders committed during the war, according to the specifications of each country’s penal code, were due to expire. In this context, the question of forgiveness was no idle theoretical debate. In 1963, Fritz Bauer, the Attorney General of the German state of Hesse, brought twenty men to trial, “intending to put the entire “Auschwitz complex” before the court, both the “small men” who had carried out the “Final Solution” and those who had created the measures, policies, and laws that had given the Holocaust an air of legality.”⁵ For Bauer, the trial would force Germany to confront its recent past, a confrontation in which many Germans preferred not to engage according to various polls conducted during the lengthy trial.⁶ Because of restrictions on so-called *ex post facto* charges – crimes against humanity only became legally specified in Germany in 1954 – the defendants in the Frankfurt Trial were charged according to German penal law whose peculiar limitations and blind spots complicated both the legal prosecution as well as Bauer’s larger aim.⁷ Verdicts ranged from acquittal (for three defendants) to life plus eight years in the case of Stefan Baretzki, a member of the SS.⁸

In the midst of the Frankfurt Trial, the French Parliament took up and passed a law that made crimes against humanity – as defined by the United Nations in one of its earliest sessions –

imprescriptible, not subject to any statute of limitations.⁹ This was far from an easy or undisputed decision. As the Frankfurt Trial had shown, many Germans but also French, preferred to relegate the horrors of the war to the past for personal as well as for national reasons. Indeed, it is apparently in response to the West German government's proposal to place a twenty year statute of limitations on all war crimes, including crimes against humanity – a proposal that was never enacted – that Vladimir Jankélévitch railed when he sarcastically wondered whether “twenty years is enough ... for the unforgiveable to become miraculously forgivable: by law and by the passage of one day to the next the unforgettable is forgotten. A crime that had been unforgiveable until May 1965 thus suddenly ceases to be so in June – as if by magic.”¹⁰

A well-known moral philosopher, Jankélévitch's interest in forgiveness seems to have arisen in response to the wider debates in Europe concerning the Holocaust, criminal guilt, ethical responsibility, and the imprescriptible. While Jonathan Judaken highlights a 1962 course, devoted entirely to forgiveness, as Jankélévitch's entry into the widening debates, Kevin Hart points out that the notes for Jankélévitch's 1962-63 lectures on moral philosophy in Brussels contain no mention of forgiveness.¹¹ It was Jankélévitch who was selected to open a forum on forgiveness at the 1963 meeting of the *Colloquium of French-Speaking Jewish Intellectuals*. His contribution, “Introduction to the Theme of Forgiveness,” staked out many of the paths that his thought would follow not only in his public engagement with questions of national policy but also in his 1967 book, *Forgiveness*.¹² The permutations and ramifications of this path are beyond the scope of the present essay – and are adequately treated elsewhere.¹³ What has not received sufficient attention, and which will serve as the focus of the remainder of this essay, is the importance of the question of forgiveness for the French interest in Spinoza that blossomed in the 1960s.

The paper that followed Jankélévitch's at the colloquium in 1963 was Sylvain Zac's “Forgiveness and Sin in Spinoza” and it may have been in response to Zac's essay that Jankélévitch chose to deal with Spinoza at length in his 1967 book, *Forgiveness*, where he rejects the idea that understanding could substitute for or obviate the need for forgiveness.¹⁴ For Jankélévitch, forgiveness is a moral question, it involves the relationship of one human being to another and this relationship is irreducible. For Zac, on the other hand, Spinoza's philosophy offers an account of forgiveness that is ethico-political and social. Jankélévitch notes that in the discussion following the papers by Jankélévitch and Zac, Robert Misrahi flatly stated: “I fear,

indeed, that Spinoza cannot be used [in the debate] for the excellent reason that – and I am certain, even if this hypothesis is absurd – that Spinoza would think otherwise after such an event, that there would not have been the same philosophy of Spinoza after the catastrophe, after Nazism.”¹⁵ For Jankélévitch and Misrahi, then, it is not just that Spinoza would give an erroneous account of the horrors of Nazism, it is that Nazism eliminates the very possibility of such an explanation. The project of the *Ethics* is annulled.

This denunciation, coupled with the publicity of the surrounding debates, make surprising the philosophical interest in Spinoza attested to by the publication of several major works on his philosophy: Zac’s *Spinoza’s Ethics* (1959), *The Idea of Life in Spinoza’s Philosophy* (1963) and *Spinoza and the Interpretation of Writing* (1965), the first part of Guerout’s study of Spinoza, *God: Ethics I* (1968) and Deleuze’s *Spinoza and the Problem of Expression* (1968). Two years later, Deleuze published the shorter *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* which, although it draws from Deleuze’s earlier book, focuses its attention on the ethical importance of Spinoza’s philosophy. Deleuze’s argument challenges precisely the type of reading proposed by Jankélévitch and hyperbolized by Misrahi. Contrary to their reduction of Spinozistic ethics to the calculating labor of rationality, one of the chief purposes of Deleuze’s little book is to emphasize that Spinoza’s materialism, however radically it departs from the familiar coordinates of normative ethics, is nonetheless important for ethical problems and questions. Indeed, in the second chapter, “On the Difference Between the *Ethics* and a Morality,” Deleuze clearly signals his intention to insist on the relevance and importance of Spinoza precisely for ethical discussions of the atrocities of Nazism.

Jankélévitch and Zac on Forgiveness

For there to be “true forgiveness,” Jankélévitch insists, the act of forgiving must have “three distinctive features:” it must be an “event,” it must be “a personal relation with an Other,” and it must be “a gratuitous gift.” It is the personal relation character of forgiveness that chiefly appears to bar Spinozistic materialism from offering an account of forgiveness since, in Spinoza, the reconciliation of the aggrieved and the offender is achieved via the explicit recognition of a truth that mediates between them. No will aims knowingly at the bad; therefore, the one who causes harm is acting unknowingly and their offense becomes understood – forgiven in what Jankélévitch takes to be the Spinozistic sense – when that which ought to guide their will – and

that which *they themselves* intend to guide their will – is understood. Spinozistic forgiveness therefore has the character of a “total excuse,” to use Jankélévitch’s provocative phrase. It is a reconceptualization of the previously understood order of things against which backdrop the offender’s actions appear now both as an error of the will and also as, in principle, separable from the offender’s person, from their essence. In this way, Spinozistic forgiveness also fails to be a gratuitous gift: its relation is not between two parties but between all parties. It is an “omnilateral” relation, by which not just these particular parties but all possible parties are reconciled by – and for the sake of – reason. “In sum, rancor was a misunderstanding founded on a miscomprehension.”¹⁶

Spinozistic justice, then, has two aspects according to Jankélévitch: on the one hand, it is the calculating and cold understanding that “renders forgiveness useless” by already knowing the cause that explains what initially appeared as a wrong. But, on the other hand, it is also “soothing” insofar as the consideration of the “rights of the offender” prompts the one who understands to transform their own negative passions into positive ones: “intellection reduces anger as aspirin reduces a fever.” This medicinal characterization of Spinozistic forgiveness will play an important role in Deleuze’s discussion of Spinoza’s “immoralism” and may also be an explicit nod to Sylvain Zac’s paper.

At the end of his essay, speaking of the “regenerative” effect of understanding – of what the *Ethics* will call “glory” – Zac writes, “[t]o respond to hatred with hatred is to seek a compensation which, in our mind, ought to reestablish the equilibrium of our being that has been troubled by the wrong done to us. But in reality vengeance weakens us still further. The hatred of the other weakens me, since it represents a threat to the integrity of my being, even if the hateful one does not manifest his hatred in the open with an act; but if I respond to him with reciprocity, my weakness is further intensified.” Spinozistic understanding, then, does not dissolve the alterity of the wrongdoer nor does it annul the wrong. When we forgive, Zac continues, “we always know that the other is the cause of my sadness, not insofar as he is considered in himself, insofar as God is expressed in his nature, but only insofar as he is himself exposed to the assault of exterior causes.”¹⁷ Where Jankélévitch argues that Spinozistic understanding is enough to soothe the person harmed and to facilitate their joy, Zac argues that there is a moment of resistance in forgiveness.

Spinoza does not speak of forgiveness in the *Ethics* but he does address something like forgiveness briefly in chapter 7 of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (cited by Zac) which is concerned with how to properly interpret apparently conflicting passages of Scripture. Spinoza takes as his example Jesus' teaching that injury should be tolerated and the good should defer completely to the wicked ("turning the other cheek") while in the Old Testament Moses had clearly demanded not toleration or forgiveness, but justice ("an eye for an eye"). Like the prophet Jeremiah, Spinoza claims, Jesus is teaching people in a corrupt state whose ruin and destruction he thought to be imminent. In such a state there is no forum in which pleas for justice can obtain a hearing or, if there is, there is little chance of true justice being enacted. Therefore, in order to avoid unjust retribution, Jesus teaches that injury should be met with forgiveness. However, "in a good commonwealth, where justice is preserved, everyone is bound, if he wants to be thought just, to exact a penalty for injuries in the presence of a judge (see Leviticus 5:1) – not for the sake of vengeance (see Leviticus 19:17-18), but with the intention of defending justice and the laws of one's native land, and so that the evil should not profit by doing evil."¹⁸ In a good commonwealth individuals have a *duty* to demand punishment, and they must do so by availing themselves of the institutions of that commonwealth. As Keith Green argues, citing *E4p35c1* and *PT§2.19*, Spinoza's understanding of justice is constructionist: "nothing can be unjust outside the context of an actual context of civil authority and law, where it is a purely conventional concomitant of the transfer of right to a sovereign power, who thereby exercised the power to make and enforce civil law, and to punish wrongdoers. ... It is only by means of the power of a real, human sovereign, situated in a history and place, that notions such as "sin," "wrongfulness," or "obligation" can even be conceived."¹⁹ In Deleuze's terms, Spinoza is concerned with institutions, not judgments.²⁰

If justice is historical and conventional then some additional sense can be made of Misrahi's remark that Spinoza should not be invoked in discussions of the moral catastrophe of Nazism; that Spinoza's philosophy is no longer ethically conceivable. This amounts to the assertion that Nazism's crimes are wicked according to a valuation that is not confined to some actual historical context or actual sovereign power. The crimes of Nazism, as Jankélévitch will also insist, are crimes against humanity and therefore imprescriptible. In the apt phrase of Carse and Tirrell, who apply the term to the Rwandan genocide, Nazism is an example of a "world shattering wrong."²¹ It is because they are world shattering that the crimes of Nazism are

imprescriptible and inexpiable: without a world, without the conditions for shared meaning, there can be no communication between wrongdoers and their victims. Forgiveness cannot make sense.

Deleuze on Spinoza and Forgiveness

In Deleuze's short book on Spinoza, in the "Index of the Main Concepts of the *Ethics*," the entry for "Freedom" begins by declaring that "the whole effort of the *Ethics* is aimed at breaking the traditional link between freedom and will." And it is precisely an *effort*: "human beings are not born free, but become free or free themselves" when "they come into possession of their power of acting."²² The attainment of freedom arises from the formation of adequate ideas – of the thinker, of other modes, and of the thinker's essential relation to God – which is what motivates Jankélévitch's reduction of Spinozistic ethics to an intellectual question. For Deleuze, however, the challenge and the interest of the practical aspects of Spinoza's philosophy are found precisely in the way that this linkage of freedom and essence – rather than freedom and will – reworks practical questions without dissolving or expelling them. Moreover, in his correspondence with Blyenburgh Spinoza demonstrates his clear interest in the very problem that Jankélévitch and Misrahi claim banishes Spinoza from all practical consideration: the problem of evil.

The problem of evil as it arises both in Spinoza's correspondence with Blyenburgh and in Jankélévitch's critique of Spinoza is framed as the possibility of distinguishing between good and wicked actions if, as Spinoza argues regarding God and Nature, evil is *nothing*. This issue is addressed directly in Letter 23, which poses the question of differentiating Nero's matricide, which is rightly judged to be wicked, from that of Orestes, which is judged to be righteous. Deleuze appeals to *E4p59s* where Spinoza explains that one and the same physical action – the act of striking a blow with an arm – can be associated with two different types of images: one type is that of images of things that are conceived confusedly and another is that of images of things that are conceived clearly and distinctly. What differentiates identical actions is the relation that each action has to an image whose relational identity is either compounded or decomposed by the action. In the case of Nero's matricide, the action is associated solely with the image of Agrippina and it destroys the relations that compose her. In the case of Orestes' murder of Clytemnestra, the act is associated with the image of Orestes' father, Agamemnon, who was murdered by Clytemnestra, and compounds or furthers the relations that constitute his

essential identity. “In short,” Deleuze concludes, “there is certainly a distinction between vice and virtue” even if this distinction arises solely at the level of “the reality of two relations, the image of the act in its own relation and the image of the thing in its relation.”²³

Deleuze introduces an important term in this discussion: image. In the “Index of the Main Concepts of the Ethics,” the entry for “image” simply refers the reader to two other entries: “idea” and “common notion,” both of which are much more familiar to readers of Spinoza. According to the entry for “idea,” images are (necessarily) inadequate ideas, “the traces of an external body on our body.”²⁴ The order and connection of these ideas is psychological, not ontological: they are “connected with one another according to an order that is first of all that of memory or habit.”²⁵ What makes such ideas inadequate is that they belong to an order of “fortuitous encounters” and so are separated both from their own material cause and from the formal cause of the mind that conceives or imagines them.²⁶ From out of the fortuitous encounters of experience, thinking produces common notions (such as extension, motion, twofold relation, etc.) which are representations of a composition between two or more bodies, and a unity of this composition.²⁷ Importantly, only joyous affects yield common notions because joy is precisely an index of the commonality between bodies (the imaginer and the imagined).

Expanding this point, Deleuze argues that for Spinoza there are three “strata” of Nature and natural things: a singular and eternal essence; the capacity to be affected; and the “extensive parts, which define our existence in duration and which pertain to our essence insofar as they realize this or that relation of ours.... There is “badness” only at the level of this last stratum of nature.” Evil is “a relation between relations.... evil is never in a state or in an essence, but in a comparison of states,” and it is marked by what Spinoza calls “sadness.”²⁸ Returning to the example of the matricides, and leaving aside the effect of the action of the murderer, Nero is bad and his action is evil because the aim of his action is the decomposition of the image of his mother which, when achieved, diminishes both the capacity of the relevant existents to act (since Agrippina is destroyed) and to be affected (since the relation constituting Agrippina is dissolved). Conversely, Orestes and his action are good because the aim of his action is to render justice for his murdered father and, when Clytemnestra is murdered, the essence that is Agamemnon is augmented in its relations both by being affirmed in the memory of Orestes and by being affirmed to others through Orestes’ act. In the cases of both Orestes and Nero the

actions, at the level of nature, inevitably form a compound because “there is no adequate idea of bodies that disagree.” But the actions also each “involve a variation in the power of acting,” and this variation, which divides happiness from sadness, goodness from wickedness, is real even as it leaves unaltered the essences of the existents involved.

The question is then whether forgiveness can, in the absence of justice, be an action that resists wrongdoing without thereby becoming complicit with it.

Forgiveness and the End of the World

Carse and Tirrell have described the particular kind of decomposition that follows acts of evil such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide as “world-shattering.” Like the harms that require forgiveness for Spinoza and Jankélévitch, world-shattering wrongs precipitate those who dwell in the now-shattered world into a situation without “moral orientation.” By its very nature, a world-shattering wrong cannot be the object of any justice since the state itself was complicit in them. In the face of evils that are assaults “against the human being as human being,” Jankélévitch argues that “only one resource remains: to remember.” Nature forgets – “each Spring the trees bloom in Auschwitz as they do everywhere” – but the thoughtful human experience of the inexpiable, the experience of the shattering of the world, demands a deliberate remembering that gives meaning to life.²⁹ For Jankélévitch, such a remembering is “the renewed and intensely lived feeling of the inexpiable thing,” and this horror “protests against a moral amnesty that is nothing but shameful amnesia; it maintains the sacred flame of disquiet and faith to invisible things.”³⁰ Such a protestation blocks any world-building and insists upon justice precisely where it is impossible. It is an ethical melancholia.

Deleuze’s insistence on the importance of Spinoza as an ethical (but immoral) thinker – and, against Misrahi, his importance as an ethical thinker after the horrors of the twentieth century – acquires its value from the conjoining of mourning and possibility. Jankélévitch’s mournful recollection of the Holocaust, his insistence on its horror, rightly emphasizes the radicality of its destructiveness. At the same time, Jankélévitch himself testifies to the persistence of community amidst the ruins of a devastated Europe when he caustically notes that “certain remarkably unembittered French citizens found it completely natural six months after the war to renew fruitful business and recreational contacts with the former torturers of their homeland.”³¹ What is “natural” here is not a forgetfulness that foretells a return to “business as

usual,” but rather an incipient forgiveness constituted by the necessarily communal work of living on, of surviving, and of giving form to a new world. It is an emergent forgiveness, the slow and non-linear work of particular historical individuals that yields new worlds whose genealogies bear witness to their shattered predecessors.³²

The question of forgiveness asks whether the wrongdoer can be “regenerated” by and within the community whose fragility is the result of their wickedness. At the same time, endless vengeance beckons, unconstrained by justice. Only forgiveness, Zac argues, can become a “power of resistance,” a force of joy that, in seeking to build a world and to restore the world-building capacities of victims, may also empower the wicked to escape the distorting tyrannies of their affections. There is evil for Spinoza, and no understanding eradicates it. It is a world-shattering force that sweeps away the very possibility of justice and, when it does, it is only the stubborn force of forgiveness that allows a new world to emerge.

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¹ Aurel Kolnai, “Forgiveness,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 74 (1973-74): 91.

² *Ibid.*, 99.

³ *Ibid.*, 102ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 104-05.

⁵ Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice: The Auschwitz Trial* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 2.

⁶ Dennis B. Klein, “Resentment and Recognition: Toward a New Conception of Humanity in Améry’s *At the Mind’s Limits*,” in *On Jean Améry: Philosophy of Catastrophe*, ed. Magdalena Zolkos (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 100.

⁷ Wittmann, *Beyond Justice*, 17ff.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 285-86.

⁹ For a technical but extensive analysis of the legal and political fortunes of the concept of crimes against humanity in twentieth century France, see Vivian Grosswald Curran, “Politicizing the Crime against Humanity: The French Example,” *Notre Dame Law Review* 78, 3 (2003): 677-710.

¹⁰ Vladimir Jankélévitch, “Pardonner?” in *L’imprescriptible* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1986), 17. This essay, initially published in 1971, is a revised version of Jankélévitch’s letter published in *Le Monde* in 1965.

¹¹ See Jonathan Judaken, “Vladimir Jankélévitch at the *Colloques des intellectuels juifs de langue française*,” and Kevin Hart, “Guilty Forgiveness,” in *Vladimir Jankélévitch and the Question of Forgiveness*, ed. Alan Udoff (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 15, 65. Regardless of whether this dating indicates an omission in the Brussels lectures or a development subsequent to them, it is clear that Jankélévitch’s interest in the problem of forgiveness arose in the early 1960s in no small part because of the publicity of the Frankfurt Trial as well as the issue of the expiration of the criminal statutes of limitations in Germany and France. In his article, Judaken notes that Emmanuel Levinas’ opening remarks to the 1963 colloquium explicitly indicate the question of whether to forgive Germany as the motivation for its theme (Judaken, 14).

¹² Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*, trans. Andrew Kelley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹³ In addition to Andrew Kelley’s “Translator’s Introduction” to the English edition of *Forgiveness*, and the volume edited by Udoff (both cited above), see also Aaron T. Looney, *Vladimir Jankélévitch: The Time of Forgiveness* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015). Derrida’s engagement with Jankélévitch in his “On Forgiveness,” Part Two of *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001) has also spawned a great deal of secondary literature. Three particularly good essays are Richard J. Bernstein, “Derrida: The Aporia of Forgiveness?” *Constellations* 13, 3 (2006): 394-406; Edith Wyschogrod, “Repentance and Forgiveness: The Undoing of Time,” *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 60 (2006): 157-68; and Samir Haddad, “Arendt, Derrida, and the Inheritance of Forgiveness,” *Philosophy Today* 51, 4 (2007): 416-26.

¹⁴ Sylvain Zac, “Le Péché et le pardon d’après Spinoza,” in *La conscience juive face à l’Histoire: Le Pardon* (Proceedings of the Congrès juif mondial), ed. Eliane Amado Lévy-Valensì and Jean Halperin (Paris: PUF, 1965): 215-27. For Jankélévitch’s discussion of Spinoza in *Forgiveness*, see esp. 67-70.

¹⁵ Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*, 67.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁷ Zac, “Le Péché et le pardon,” 226.

¹⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *The Theological-Political Treatise*, in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, Vol. 2, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 177-78.

¹⁹ Keith Green, “Forgiveness, Pardon, and Punishment in Spinoza’s Ethical Theory” and “True Religion,” unpublished.

²⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights, 1988), 24.

²¹ Alisa L. Carse and Lynne Tirrell, “Forgiving Grave Wrongs,” in *Forgiveness in Perspective*, ed. Christopher Allers and Marieke Smit (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2010), 43-65.

²² Deleuze, 69-71.

²³ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁹ Jankélévitch, “Pardonner?” 62.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

³² As an anonymous reviewer correctly pointed out, there are at least two possible readings of the forces at work in the complicated and vexed resumption of dealings between French and German citizens after the war. One is that described by, among others, Judith Miller in her *One by One by One* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990) and by Henry Rousso in his *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory Since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). According to this account, beginning immediately with DeGaulle’s almost single-minded focus and emphasis on the war as a strictly military conflict, French society has been predominantly characterized by a kind of “active forgetting” of its own complicity in the atrocities of the Holocaust. Another reading, however, exemplified by Johnnes Heuman’s recent *The Holocaust and French Historical Culture, 1945-1965* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) shows that there was a contemporaneous and equally insistent drive toward “active remembering” of the French complicity in the Holocaust beginning immediately after the war.

Without claiming to adjudicate this debate, the present essay does argue that Jankélévitch's passionate abhorrence of any forgetfulness on the part of French society or citizens blinds him to the contemporaneous and recuperative work of remembrance described by Carse and Tirrell. In living on, the communal work of recent enemies entails a reckoning with the past – one that can be regenerative.

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