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## Problems in Levinas

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### ABSTRACT

Emmanuel Levinas is one of the most elaborately discussed moral philosophers of recent decades, and his philosophy has many adherents. I believe, however, that the scholarly literature on his work is overly expository and insufficiently critical. In this article I try to take some steps toward filling this gap in Levinas scholarship. My aim is not to present another exegetical account of Levinas's philosophy but rather to point at under-discussed problems in it. I will suggest here that some central claims in Levinas's philosophy are highly problematic, indeed, too problematic to accept.

### KEYWORDS

accusation; ethics; guilt; Levinas; morality; otherness; responsibility

### 1. Otherness

A central concept in Levinas's philosophy is that of the other or otherness. There are, of course, other things, and other people. This is trivial. But when Levinas asserts that we should accept the otherness of other people, he means that we should accept that there are, and always will be, some aspects to them that we will never understand and that will always remain impenetrable. Such aspects are irreducible to what we already know, and could never be completely subsumed within our categories. Note that Levinas is not only or principally discussing encounters between members of disparate cultures who cannot subsume certain aspects of another culture within their own. Otherness, as he uses the term, is inherent also in people of our own culture, and even in close friends and family members whom we know well and with whom we share a common background. In some of his writings, Levinas refers to otherness also as "enigma," "saying" (in contradistinction to "the said"), and "face."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the otherness of others allows for, as well as summons, moral consciousness, which Levinas often discusses as responsibility toward others.<sup>2</sup> Levinas argues that otherness imposes an ethical command on us to be responsible for, and to cater to, everything needed for others' ability to live a true human life. For Levinas, this responsibility is related also to guilt and to being accused (which will be elaborated on below). He takes this responsibility to others to be an inescapable condition of our lives, no matter what we do. Indeed, for Levinas, it is prior even to our freedom or essence.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the claims presented thus far seem right. There probably are some aspects of people (and, perhaps, also of things, although this does not interest Levinas) that we in principle cannot know, either because we understand things only after they have been

processed through the structures of our consciousness, or because we are finite, whereas the number of aspects is infinite, or for some other reason. What nonetheless remains unclear is why the *otherness* of others would summon anything. And if it does summon something, it is unclear why it would summon responsibility rather than, say, indifference, or an obligation to harm whomever we can, or any other attitude or behavior.

The criticism here is not only that Levinas does not explain the link between otherness and responsibility but also that he cannot explain, or even know, that such a link exists. If otherness is irreducible to what we know and could never be subsumed within our categories, so that we can know nothing about otherness in itself, we can know about it, well, *nothing*; we (and Levinas) cannot know that it summons any specific behavior or attitude. Similarly, if Levinas tells us that this “something” he speaks of, which he calls “otherness,” is inconceivable, it is unclear how he knows that it is fundamental and that it precedes freedom and essence. Even more generally, it is unclear how we can say anything about it.

It might be suggested that the link between otherness and responsibility has to do with modesty: knowing that we do not and cannot know otherness should, perhaps, make us more aware of our limitations, and thus less tyrannical in our relation toward others; knowing that we do not know everything may make us less keen to try to direct the actions of others or curtail their autonomy. Perhaps otherness can also be connected to a stronger awareness that others are *others*, that is, that they have their *own* views, wishes, and preferences, and that we should respect their differences from us, and try to develop more pluralistic and tolerant attitudes toward them. However, these suggestions are problematic, for they rely on correct or incorrect empirical generalizations about human nature (e.g., the questionable empirical generalization that people who are aware of their limitations are more tolerant). But Levinas’s discussion does *not* rest on empirical claims. I hesitate to write here that the link between otherness and responsibility is conceptual or essential rather than empirical since, as noted, Levinas presents otherness as something that precedes even essence or concepts. But whatever the link between otherness and responsibility may be, it certainly cannot be empirical. Moreover, even if one could accept the suggestions or generalizations above, they would only show how otherness relates to tolerance, pluralism, and respect for others’ autonomy, but *not* how otherness relates to responsibility for others’ misfortunes or to guilt.

Levinas does mention that when we name others and understand them according to our categories, we deny their independence, possess them, partially negate them, and that this is violence.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this could be presented as an argument for the link between otherness, on the one hand, and responsibility and guilt, on the other. But this argument, too, is problematic. First, the link between naming and understanding, on the one hand, and denying others’ independence, possessing them, and violence, on the other hand, is weak. Naming and understanding *may*, of course, accompany denial of independence, etc., but they do not have to do so. People frequently name and understand when they, for example, play, dine, host, discuss issues, or work together without in any way possessing others or denying their autonomy. On the contrary, naming and understanding phenomena such as discrimination, injustice, torture, or hunger may well be the first steps toward correcting and fighting these phenomena. Levinas is, of course, correct in

saying that naming and understanding involve some kind of limitation: when I understand or name a person in one way, I do not understand or name her or him in another way. But such a limitation is quite different from possessing others or generating violence, and need not bring either about. This holds also for analogous claims Levinas makes, such as his assertion that comprehending others leads to prolonging, presupposing and concluding wars.<sup>5</sup>

Even if we assume, however, that this last criticism is wrong, and grant that naming and understanding do bring about violence, etc., this still does not show that inconceivability brings about morality, responsibility, or guilt. The latter does not follow from the former; it is quite possible that understanding brings about violence, and inconceivability also brings about violence; or that understanding brings about violence, and inconceivability does not bring about anything whatsoever. There are, of course, also many other possibilities.

## 2. Responsibility, Guilt, and Self-Abnegation

Let us put aside, however, the question of the link between otherness and responsibility, and concentrate on what Levinas says about responsibility itself. Even if his claims about the relation of otherness to responsibility are problematic, what he says about responsibility may be helpful.

Levinas argues that each of us is responsible for all people and for whatever they do or suffer even if we did not bring it about in any way and had nothing at all to do with it.<sup>6</sup> My responsibility toward others is not related to something I may have done.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Levinas requires from each of us “the most radical possible engagement, namely, total altruism,”<sup>8</sup> as though “the whole edifice of creation rested on my shoulders.”<sup>9</sup> Not only I, of course, am responsible; everyone is. Thus, other people are also responsible for me. But that, according to Levinas, does not free me from my responsibility toward them. Indeed, one of the things for which I am responsible in other people is their own responsibility.<sup>10</sup> This responsibility, all the time, for all people, is not a partial responsibility, but a complete one,<sup>11</sup> and Levinas also refers to it as infinite.<sup>12</sup> There is something paradoxical about this responsibility, for it is augmented the more I respond to it, and the more I obey the call to be responsible, the more my obligation increases.<sup>13</sup>

I am also accused of, and am guilty of, what others do and suffer.<sup>14</sup> I am accused also of things that I did not decide on and did not commit, or had no impact on or power over; I am expected to bear the fault of others.<sup>15</sup> Whatever I do, I am always open to accusations, and nothing, no alibi, can save or clear me.<sup>16</sup> Like responsibility, guilt and accusation are also of a paradoxical nature. The more holy I become (if I do), the more, rather than less, guilty I am; “the increase of distance [is] proportionate to the approach.”<sup>17</sup>

Levinas’s claims about total responsibility and guilt may seem to many as insufficiently attentive to our self-interests. But Levinas does, indeed, wish us to be devoted to others before we are devoted to ourselves.<sup>18</sup> According to him, the other takes precedence over me; I am under allegiance to the other.<sup>19</sup> Levinas recommends obedience, even submission, in this situation, which he relates to what he calls the *height*,<sup>20</sup> and he speaks of a “servant’s humility” or even servitude that has no conditions, which seems close to slavery.<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere, he refers also to substituting oneself for the other, and being

hostage to him or her.<sup>22</sup> Some other terms used by Levinas indicate an even more radical state of self-abnegation: he says that one should be responsible for others to the point of dying,<sup>23</sup> and that, as responsible, “I never finished with emptying myself of myself.”<sup>24</sup> Discovering oneself to be responsible goes hand in hand with “the traumatic effect of persecution.”<sup>25</sup> He also describes the process or situation of being responsible as “going to the hither side of identity, gnawing away at this very identity,” that is, as a situation in which I, to a significant extent, *destroy* my regular understanding or sense of myself.<sup>26</sup> In another place, Levinas describes the situation he calls for as “vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding, passivity more passive than all patience ... trauma of accusation suffered by a hostage to the point of persecution, putting into question the identity of the hostage who substitutes himself for the others ... defecting or defeat of the Ego’s identity. ... expiation.”<sup>27</sup> Some of these requirements may be only metaphorical. But Levinas does want us to give up much of what we usually take to be our ‘self’ and our interests in order to reach the state he is calling for.

Levinas’s account of responsibility and guilt has both descriptive and normative aspects. Descriptively he does not suggest, of course, that all of us actually feel or believe all of the time that we are responsible and guilty. Yet he posits that we are under obligation, or subject to a call, for responsibility and guilt, and that this is based on claims about the way we are, whether we know and want it or not, for “to be I signifies not being able to escape responsibility.”<sup>28</sup> To have this responsibility and to be guilty are part of our (pre-)essence, part of what we are, although it is neither agreeable nor pleasant.<sup>29</sup> Yet it is good,<sup>30</sup> and this is the normative aspect of Levinas’s account: although I, as many other people, do not heed or “wake up” to what he takes to be this important part or aspect in me, I should do so.<sup>31</sup>

I believe that Levinas’s claims concerning responsibility are problematic. As descriptive claims, they seem incorrect. Many do not identify in themselves guilt, responsibility, self-abnegation, etc., of the types Levinas describes. Perhaps Levinas could reply that they all repress or are in denial of the guilt, etc. But the same could be said also of any other characteristic one claims to be inherent to people but not recognized by them, such as anger, hatred, stinginess, or indifference.

Of course, even if what Levinas asserts is descriptively incorrect, it may be *normatively* desirable to bring it about. Yet I believe that, from a normative perspective as well, Levinas’s suggestions are problematic and that there are good reasons not to accept them. Before presenting these reasons, I should note a certain line of criticism that I will *not* raise here. Some readers may disagree with the basic intuition that drives much of Levinas’s thought, namely, that we should care about and, as far as we can, assist all people who are suffering and are needy, even those whom we have never hurt in any way and who are not members of our families or community. Many think that they owe nothing, or very little, even to members of their families or community, a fortiori to those whom they have never met or seen. However, I will ask of readers holding this opinion to grant, at least for the sake of the present discussion, that we should help to a considerable extent all needy people, perhaps see all humanity as one big family or community. There would not be much point to continuing to read this essay if this intuition is not granted, for Levinas’s thought, which rests on this notion, would be promptly deemed wrong-headed. I will, however, argue that Levinas’s philosophy is problematic *even* if this notion is accepted.

First, I find Levinas's notion of guilt odd. According to Levinas, I am accused, and guilty, all of the time. This is so *not* because I have failed to live up to my responsibility or to fulfill my duties toward others. Rather, I am guilty even if I have done absolutely everything I can, or that anyone can, to eliminate suffering, even if I have sacrificed everything possible, or even brought myself to a situation worse than that of the others toward whom I am taken to be responsible. As Levinas sees it, whatever I do, I am always guilty. This is dictated by, or is part of, my link with otherness: as an aspect of my being, I am guilty no matter what I do or fail to do.

Thus, accepting Levinas's proposition dooms one to a life laden with endless guilt that one can never get rid of. I do not think that we should support such a proposition. It would seem to place a detrimental psychological burden on individuals. This is not a good life to live. Whereas many mental health professionals try to diminish people's feelings of guilt about what is not their fault, Levinas reinforces these feelings. Moreover, his account suggests that we should not only accept *feelings* of guilt, but must recognize that we *are* in fact guilty.

Furthermore, it is problematic to take people as guilty for what is not in their control. The notion of guilt is closely related to that of choice and ability. I am guilty of what I can do or can refrain from doing (hence we exempt the insane from guilt for harms they may have committed, for we believe that they could not have acted otherwise). One is not "just guilty." To be guilty, one has to fail at something one could, and should, have done.

Another difficulty relates to the paradox that Levinas, for some reason, injects into his discussion. I do not see the helpfulness of, or the reasoning behind, the claim that the closer we are to the end, the further we are from it. It seems more plausible that the more we progress, the closer we get to our end. The same is true for our guilt, when we have any: our guilt should diminish, not increase, the more ethically we behave.

Another problematic feature of Levinas's discussion is his call for self-abnegation. The language of servitude and submission to others, the positive attitude toward self-suffering, and the elaborate discussions on doing no less than "emptying myself," "gnawing away" at my identity, "the traumatic effect of persecution," and "wounding, passivity more passive than all patience," as well as the proposition that I should be responsible for others to the point of dying, all seem unhealthy and unnecessary. Note that Levinas is not merely calling upon us to be less selfish, or less hedonistic and egotistic, or more considerate of others. He calls for a more radical state, that of self-abnegation, and he advocates it even if it does not serve any good purpose. He promotes self-sacrifice for the sake of self-sacrifice. I think that this aspect of Levinas's philosophy, too, is implausible and does not lead to living a good life. Moreover, it imposes a considerable burden on people to no good end. For many, life is difficult and painful enough as it is, and there is no reason to add unnecessary new complexities to existing problems.

The relation Levinas describes seems to me unhelpful and unpleasant also for the others. Many would not want others to abnegate themselves, feel constant guilt, be in a state of wounded passivity, or show servility toward them. They would also not feel comfortable or satisfied when others are in this condition. The same is true for responsibility. I, for one, do not wish people to be completely responsible for everything I do, and many, I suspect, would not wish it either. Responsibility can also be intrusive toward the

person who is the object of that responsibility. People may feel that once they have certain capabilities and powers, and make their own decisions, their responsibility is, well, their responsibility. If we are to treat others as autonomous agents, as adults, some of what they choose and do must fall outside the sphere of our responsibility toward them. We do not need to bear that burden, and many of those others will probably not want us to shoulder it.

### 3. Objections

Various objections may be offered to counter some of these criticisms. First, it may be pointed out that in various places Levinas makes claims that contradict his views represented here. For example, despite what he says about the infinite extent of the responsibility toward others, he also says that there is a need for “moderating or measuring the substitution of me for the other, and giving the self over to calculus.”<sup>32</sup> He does not explain how this latter claim coheres with almost all of his other assertions. Similarly, although he frequently associates responsibility with guilt, one can find him also saying that it is a guiltless responsibility.<sup>33</sup> Notwithstanding what has been noted above about self-abnegation, Levinas also says that there is much happiness in being summoned to responsibility (yet, curiously, the summoning “does not know its own happiness”).<sup>34</sup> And in spite of his views about the inconceivability of the other, he also writes in *On Thinking-of-the-Other* that the approach to the other “may eventually call for knowledge.”<sup>35</sup> However, these contradictions do not mitigate the criticisms presented above. It is hard to know what to do with assertions that conflict with so many of his other claims, but it is probably advisable simply to note them and continue to rely on the greater bulk of his theory, to which the criticisms raised above do pertain.

Another possible response is that Levinas’s propositions should be understood as supererogatory. Supererogatory standards are fulfilled by *exceeding* the limits of duty; those who seek merely to be moral do not have to perform what is *beyond* duty. It is sufficient that they just fulfill all their duties, and they are not considered immoral for not performing what is above and beyond those duties. But those who wish to attain moral *excellence* and be moral *saints*, must perform also what is beyond the call of duty. According to this suggestion, then, the criticisms presented above are misguided since what Levinas says is not meant to apply to all people, but, rather, only to moral saints. However, attributing a supererogatory status to Levinas’s propositions does not make them more plausible. The unnecessary self-abnegation, the superfluous and insurmountable nature of the guilt, or the paradox inherent in having my obligation increase the more I respond to it, do not become more plausible if they are meant only for moral saints.

It may also be replied that Levinas’s suggestions should be understood as regulative ideas: although it is, indeed, impossible to carry out his propositions, we should strive to do so and, perhaps, with time we will come closer to achieving them. However, if Levinas’s propositions are problematic, we should not strive to achieve them and should not seek to come closer to realizing them. True, they are less problematic when they are partially rather than fully realized; but problematic they remain. Even partial guilt over what we could not have done or prevented is problematic. Similarly, the self-abnegation that Levinas calls for is unnecessary and unhelpful even if we can never succeed at fully

achieving it. Thus, understanding the propositions as regulative ideas does not mitigate their problematic nature.

It could also be suggested that Levinas should be read as calling for only a certain moral *attitude*. He wants to disrupt our self-righteous and smug moral feelings toward others, or else suggest a more authentic, immediate, and caring outlook. But I do not think that this suggestion is of much help either. If Levinas were merely suggesting a more authentic and less smug moral attitude, the criticism above would indeed be irrelevant. However, he does discuss self-abnegation, pervasive guilt over anything that transpires, etc. For reasons already mentioned above, all of these are highly problematic.

Similarly, it could be proposed that Levinas should be interpreted as discussing only the general *conditions* of morality and, hence, that he should not be criticized for making suggestions unsuitable for morality itself. However, even if we grant that Levinas discusses merely the conditions of morality, then what is deemed moral will have to be limited to the confines of these conditions. But the conditions mandate a moral theory under which we are responsible and guilty all the time, whatever we do, under which we become more guilty and responsible the closer we get to our end, under which self-abnegation is expected, etc., all of which have been shown to be very problematic. Note also that many Kantian, utilitarian, value-ethics, moral rights, divine command, and other moral theories and discussions do not accept Levinas's suppositions. Postulating Levinas's suppositions as the conditions of morality would commit all these other theories to falling outside the bounds of acceptable morality.

Another reply may be that Levinas should be understood as discussing not the empirical, "real" moral world, but rather a transcendental phenomenological one, after the empirical world has been "bracketed." Thus, many of the criticisms voiced above, pertaining to empirical moral issues such as "real," empirical guilt; self-sacrifice; self-abnegation; responsibility; psychological burdens; unhappy life etc., are all irrelevant to what Levinas is actually suggesting. These criticisms are applicable in relation to a theory that aims at explaining and guiding us in the "real" moral world, but not to a theory such as Levinas's that refers to the phenomenological sphere.

However, this reading of Levinas conflicts with some of his own claims (e.g., that comprehending others leads to prolonging, presupposing and concluding wars),<sup>36</sup> as well as with the way many of his interpreters understand and use him; they refer to and employ his theory as though it were relevant to the "real" moral world and helpful in trying to cope with the "real" dilemmas it poses for us.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, in making Levinas's theory immune to the criticisms mentioned above, this interpretation also makes the theory irrelevant to the "real," empirical moral world. Levinas's theory would perhaps become feasible in some other, removed sphere, but the relation between that removed, phenomenological sphere and our empirical world would become unclear. It is not even obvious why we should very much care about whether Levinas's theory is or is not feasible in that removed sphere, if the relation of that sphere to ours—if there is such a relation—is so unclear.

The same would be true of another, somewhat similar reply, namely, that Levinas's theory does not seek at all to deal with the ethical dimensions of this world but, rather, to present a utopian, otherworldly situation or type of being, to which the criticism presented above cannot apply. Again, however, there is a dear price to pay for shielding



the theory from criticism by limiting it to an otherworldly sphere: if the theory does, indeed, work well only in another world or mode of being, then it is not relevant and applicable to ours, and it is not clear why it should interest us. Moreover, I do not see why the guilt, self-abnegation, etc. would be recommendable as utopian, or why it is advantageous even for another type of being. The same is true for a reply that would present Levinas's theory as a *religious* ethics. Religious ethics (e.g., Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist religious ethics) are not immune to questions and criticisms of the sort presented in this essay. Unless one takes what is religious to be unrelated to this world, pointing out that Levinas presents his ethics as religious does not solve the problems I have raised.

It may also be suggested that, while they are problematic theoretically, Levinas's claims have practical value, since they induce people to be more philanthropic. By calling for self-abnegation, postulating that we are responsible for everything in others (including their own responsibility), provoking feelings of guilt, claiming that, no matter what we do, we are always accused, and suggesting that the more we try the guiltier we are, Levinas induces people to work harder to assuage misery in the world. I agree that almost all people should contribute much more to alleviating human anguish. However, I do not think that Levinas's theory is likely to increase their motivation to do so. Most people are not inspired to make a greater effort when told that the harder they try, the farther they will be from achieving their goal. Moreover, most people have a decidedly negative attitude toward self-abnegation, which, for some reason, Levinas links to the call to help others. And most people become defensive and hostile, and tend to contribute less, when subjected to accusations about what they do, especially when their contribution is voluntary. The same is true for the other features of Levinas's theory: as a motivational text, Levinas's theory is highly counterproductive.

Another objection may suggest that the criticisms above are insufficiently sensitive to the context in which Levinas's ideas materialized, such as his experiences as a Jew who lost many of his relatives in the Holocaust; his experience as a prisoner of war in Germany; and his deep theoretical engagement with the Talmud and with the philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel. However, it is important to distinguish between an expository discussion of the context in which a philosophy materializes, on the one hand, and an evaluative discussion of the correctness and plausibility of that philosophy, on the other hand. For example, perhaps there are some biographical and historical explanations for Levinas's emphasis on self-abnegation. But this in itself does not make his theory of self-abnegation correct or plausible. Likewise, perhaps Levinas's claim that all people are inescapably guilty is influenced by some passages in the Talmud (although the claim sounds more Augustinian than Talmudic). But this does not make the claim that all people are inescapably guilty correct.

All of this notwithstanding, it can be argued that, although his requirements are highly exaggerated, even counterproductive, Levinas should be credited for raising the notion of showing compassion to, or caring and engaging in altruistic work for all other human beings who are suffering, including those distant and foreign to us. However, Levinas cannot be credited for introducing this idea into human thought. The idea had already appeared in the thought of, among many others, Tolstoy, Albert Schweitzer, Simone Weil, Jane Addams, and Andres Nygern, as well as, of course, in the New Testament, Buddhism, and Moism.<sup>38</sup> Levinas, then, is not presenting a new

idea, but, rather, adopting and adapting an old one. And for the reasons suggested above, I do not think that his adaptation of this idea, within the harsh and problematic presuppositions of his theory, is helpful, either from the theoretical or the practical point of view.

## Notes

1. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 83; "Diachrony and Representation," 168; *Totality and Infinity*, 48–52; "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," 54–55; "Enigma and Phenomenon," 66–77; and *Otherwise Than Being*, 5–7, 37–38, 45–51.
2. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 83; "God and Philosophy," 144; *Totality and Infinity*, 43; *Otherwise Than Being*, 10–11; "Enigma and Phenomenon," 74, 76; "Signature," 293.
3. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 20; "Ethics as First Philosophy," 84; "Substitution," 104, 112; "God and Philosophy," 142.
4. Levinas, "Is Ontology Fundamental," 9.
5. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 17.
6. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 84; "Substitution," 101–2, 104.
7. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 83. Since Levinas frequently presents his claims in the first person singular, I will mostly follow his practice here.
8. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 18.
9. Levinas, "Meaning and Sense," 55.
10. Levinas, "God and Philosophy," 144; "Ideology and Idealism," 245.
11. Levinas, "Ideology and Idealism," 247. See also "Transcendence and Height," 18, and *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 144.
12. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 18; "Meaning and Sense," 55; "Diachrony and Representation," 168; "Dialogue on Thinking-of-the-Other," 203.
13. Levinas, "God and Philosophy," 144.
14. Levinas, "Substitution," 101–2.
15. Levinas, "God and Philosophy," 144; "Substitution," 101–2.
16. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 83.
17. Levinas, "God and Philosophy," 144. See also "Substitution," 102.
18. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 83.
19. Levinas, "Dialogue on Thinking-of-the-Other," 202.
20. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 20.
21. Levinas, "Meaning and Sense," 56; "God and Philosophy," 144.
22. Levinas, "Diachrony and Representation," 167; "God and Philosophy," 144.
23. Levinas, "Diachrony and Representation," 173.
24. Levinas, "God and Philosophy," 144.
25. Levinas, "Substitution," 102. See also 104.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Levinas, "Essence and Disinterestedness," 121.
28. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 17.
29. Levinas, "Philosophy, Justice and Love," 114. See also "Dialogue on Thinking-of-the-Other," 203; and "Transcendence and Height," 20, where Levinas says that in this situation there is no "interiority where the I could repose harmoniously upon itself."
30. Levinas, "Dialogue on Thinking-of-the-Other," 203.
31. Levinas, "Philosophy, Justice and Love," 114; "God and Philosophy," 144.
32. Levinas, "Otherwise than Being," 159.
33. Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," 83.
34. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 18.
35. Levinas, "Diachrony and Representation," 168.
36. Levinas, "Transcendence and Height," 17.

37. For a few out of many such discussions, see Butler, "Precarious Life," 151; Aasland, "On the Ethics Behind 'Business Ethics,'" 3–8; Barker, "Common-Pool Resources and Population Genomics," 133144; Clifton-Soderstrom, "Levinas and the Patient As Other," 447–60; Cohen, "Ethics and Cybernetics," 27–35; Gillett, "Bioethics and Cara Sui," 24–33; Gregor, "Eros That Never Arrives," 67–88; Herzog, "Is Liberalism 'All We Need'," 204–27; Jagodzinski, "Ethics of the 'Real,'" 81–96; Jordaan, "A White South African Liberal," 22–32; Nuyen, "Some Levinasian Reflections on Ethics," 9–18; Roberts, "Corporate Governance and the Ethics of Narcissus," 109–27; Todd, "Guilt, Suffering and Responsibility," 597–614; Tudor, *Compassion and Remorse*; Visker, "Whistling in the Dark," 168–78.
38. Tolstoy, "What's to Be Done," 391; Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics*, 244–68; Weil, *The Need for Roots*, 3–7; Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," 14; Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, 214–16, 722–37; Matthew 5:43–47; 22:37–40; John 13:34; 1 John 4:11–12. For Buddhism, see, for example, Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 124–26. For Moism, see Mo Tzu, "Universal Love," 39–49.

## Notes on contributor

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