

The philosopher's fear of alterity

Levinas, Europe and humanities 'without Sacred History'

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Europe, that's the Bible and the Greeks. It has come closer to the Bible and to its true fate. Everything else in the world must be included in this. I don't have any nostalgia for the exotic. For me Europe is central.

Emmanuel Levinas, 1986¹

Those who have sought resources in Levinas for a project of anti-racism have been confounded by some of his comments about non-Western cultures: 'the exotic'. In addition, many of his advocates have been confused by the metaphysical apparatus assembled in support of the valorization of the 'face' (*le visage*): these features tend to be understood biographically or as functionless remnants of religious beliefs and personal prejudices.

This article attempts to demonstrate that the two problems – metaphysical apparatus and unpalatable comments – are fundamentally connected through Levinas's conception of transcendence. The failure to foreground paleonymy in his writing means that the systematic reconfiguration of terms such as 'face', which transforms its everyday sense, goes unaddressed. The 'face' is not a physical countenance; it is an interpretation, beyond philosophy and phenomenology, tied to a particular historico-cultural formation: the 'culture issued from monotheism'. This has the consequence that the special *idea* of the face of the Other (*Autrui*), as encounter with the idea of the Infinite, in drawing from one particular culture, is not open to all other cultures; it is not a universal possibility. My strong claim will be that the problematic of the face is at root mobilized in a valorization of the Judaeo-Christian legacy against those who come from outside 'the West'.

There is a misapprehension when 'alterity' in Levinas's work is understood simply as difference.

For him, it marks a positive plenitude that breaks with Being. In this regard, intra-ontic difference would be encompassed by knowledge and hence merely part of 'the Same'. Infinite responsibility remains a metaphysical gesture. In the essays contemporaneous with *Totality and Infinity*, alterity references *height*, the *better*, 'trans-ascendence' and as such depends on determining the value of the individual in the possibility of effectuating the infinite beyond the finite.² It should be stressed at the outset that the present essay does not circumscribe *Otherwise than Being*, a work that operates with a different temporality and largely eschews the vocabulary of 'metaphysics' and 'exteriority' found in the first book.³

Here, I reconstruct the context for *Totality and Infinity* by bringing together Levinas's writings on anthropology and Judaism with the more familiar 'philosophical' text, so as to illuminate the axis of 'Sacred History' in its exemplariness.⁴ Only by reading these texts together can the importance for Levinas of a philosophically reconfigured religious inheritance be located as it interrelates with and qualifies his phenomenology, such that the differentiation of 'philosophy' and 'eschatology' may be comprehended.

Humanity with and without Sacred History

In 'Jewish Thought Today' (1961), Levinas lists three conditions marking the novelty of the contemporary world-historical situation. Alongside the defeat of anti-Semitism and the foundation of the State of Israel, he includes 'The arrival on the historical scene of those underdeveloped Afro-Asiatic masses who are strangers to the Sacred History that forms the heart of the Judaic-Christian world.'⁵ Besides the belated entry into history of Africa and Asia, a tenet of Levinas's

philosophy of history that connects him through Franz Rosenzweig to Hegel,⁶ we should attend to the claim that ‘Sacred History’ differentiates the West as a monotheistic formation.

The specificity of this formation means that even Marxism must be understood as a Judaeo-Christian legacy, which under Mao is ‘lost in the vastness of these foreign civilizations and impenetrable pasts’. The universality of its principles are blocked by a cultural and historical inheritance sufficiently foreign for Levinas elsewhere to describe it as ‘lunar or Martian’; notoriously, a ‘yellow peril’ which, as a ‘spiritual’ peril,⁷ threatens the ‘new-found authenticity of Israel’ (*JTT* 165).

Given the centrality of the critique of Western philosophy in terms of its violent conceptuality and will to totality, Caygill writes on this ‘fear of Asia’: ‘Levinas might have been expected ... to confront Europe and its dangerous metaphysics with new sources of universality and freedom drawn from the East. That he does not even contemplate this step is one of the many mysteries of this tormented text’ (*L&P* 183). Such an expectation would ally Levinas with the thoughts offered by Merleau-Ponty in ‘Everywhere and Nowhere’, where the ‘Orient’ could serve as a ‘sounding-board’ through which ‘we learn to estimate what we have shut ourselves off from by becoming Western’.⁸ But the darker problem is that Levinas has given us enough material in his writings on anthropology (and Merleau-Ponty) to come to see that these prejudices, repeated in a later article pointedly entitled ‘Beyond Dialogue’,⁹ have supporting theories. We are obliged to ask what a cultural formation is for Levinas, such that the ‘gaze of Asia’, a ‘religious collectivity that is ... built around different structures’, can help Jews and Christians ‘rediscover their kinship’ (*JTT* 165).

First, some context: Levinas’s formative training in Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology occurs in a period where the philosophical concept of the nation is at the forefront of academic concerns.¹⁰ Second, Levinas, again through Rosenzweig, has strong connections to Hermann Cohen, for whom the notion of ‘peoples’ (*Völker*) as spiritual entities is central, the Jewish people being exemplary for humanity as a whole. Derrida noted the importance of Fichte for Cohen, in that the former ‘discovered that the social Self is a national Self’ and hence allowed thought to go beyond Kant through the formation of a *Geisteswissenschaft* – a ‘human science’ that would study the particularities of different *Volkgeister*.¹¹ That is, the transcendental is no longer understood as universal

– there are different experiential structures for different societies, cultures and peoples.¹²

Third, Husserl, who appears to be Levinas’s dominant interlocutor in this context, had, in his late writings, differentiated ‘humanities’ in the plural – *Menschheiten* as distinct from *Menschentum* – according to their historicities or ‘historicalities’ (*Geschichtlichkeiten*).

Historical mankind does not always divide itself up in the same way in accordance with [the category of historicity]. We feel this precisely in our own Europe. There is something unique here [in Europe] that is recognized in us by all other human groups, too, something that, quite apart from all considerations of utility, becomes a motive for them to Europeanize themselves even in their unbroken will to spiritual self-preservation; whereas we, *if we understand ourselves properly*, would never Indianize ourselves, for example. I mean that we feel (and in spite of all obscurity this feeling is probably legitimate) that *an entelechy is inborn in our European civilization which holds sway throughout all changing shapes of Europe and accords to them the sense of a development toward an ideal shape of life and being as an eternal pole*. ... The spiritual *telos* of European humanity, in which the particular *telos* of particular nations and of individual men is contained, *lies in the infinite, is an infinite idea toward which, in concealment, the whole spiritual becoming aims, so to speak*.¹³

I flag here the two key aspects of this particular European historicity that will persist in Levinas: the idea of the infinite, in metaphysical Desire, and the idea projected into the infinite future, the prophetic time of sacred history produced through ‘fecundity’ (*TI* 301, 306). This doubling of the infinite is taken to distinguish the West from Asian cultural formations. That said, it is important to appreciate why Levinas repudiates the notion of entelechy. For Levinas, there is no ‘History’ governed by a *telos*. Humanity is not the site of such a production in spite of itself (*TI* 72–3) (‘an inward maturation of reason *common to all*’ [*TI* 219]). Consequently, there is no linear scale on which historical societies are located in a hierarchy and no value that attaches to humanity per se. Here, Levinas’s essay on Lucien Lévy-Bruhl illuminates the notions of participation and separation found in *Totality and Infinity*.¹⁴

With respect to cultural formations, for Levinas, Lévy-Bruhl’s achievement is to undermine the universal claims for transcendental subjectivity – that the investigation into ‘our’ conditions of possibility of experience are the conditions of possibility for any experience whatsoever. ‘Lévy-Bruhl questions precisely the supposed necessity of those categories

for the possibility of experience. He describes an experience which mocks causality, substance, the reciprocal determination – such as space and time – of these conditions for ‘all possible objects’.¹⁵ The categories of Aristotle and Kant do not apply to those ‘participating’;¹⁶ they belong to cultural formations that have accreted above that primitive form – the ‘given’ depends upon a prior ‘wresting’ that sensation performs on inchoate being. Such an engagement with concrete environments and landscapes is anterior to and *orients* representation, which appears *after* in the formation of egoism *qua* separation.¹⁷

In this way, Levinas takes Lévy-Bruhl to have ‘ruined representation’ as the central philosophical category and to have overturned the notion of exteriority as neutral being.¹⁸ It follows, then, that there is no linear history to humanity, no historical totality, because there is a plurality of ‘modes of existing’, discrete ‘mentalities’, which differ radically in their fundamental encounter with the world and do not reduce to each other.

Cultural totalities are national, ethnic and religious and marked by fundamental ideational differences. Such an understanding can be found throughout Levinas’s writings. It underlies his ‘Reflections on Hitlerism’ where the German is distinguished from the Judaeo-Christian:

It is to a society in such a condition that the Germanic ideal of man seems to promise sincerity and authenticity. Man no longer finds himself confronted by a world of ideas in which he can choose his own truth on the basis of a sovereign decision made by his free reason. He is already linked to a certain number of these ideas, just as he is linked by his birth to all those who are of his blood. He can no longer play with the idea, for coming from his concrete being, anchored in his flesh and blood, the idea remains serious.¹⁹

These comments on the ‘German’ are transmuted later into the ‘pagan’ or ‘barbarian’. In ‘Place and Utopia’, Levinas details the three main spiritual formations.²⁰

1. Pagan: seeks the satisfaction of the self before the other. Rooted in Being and Fate, it is egoist and unconcerned if it usurps another’s place in the sun.
2. Christian: marked by the utopian rejection of this world in favour of the life to come.
3. Jewish: concerns itself with ‘ethical action’ which ‘does not flee from the conditions from which one’s work draws its meaning’ – that is, this world.

Regarding the last, Levinas appears close to Rosenzweig’s contention that the Jewish people attests to a

collective meta-historical experience – a different way of experiencing time.²¹ Indeed, Levinas’s own essay on Rosenzweig contains the startling claim that ‘Judaism is alive and true to the degree that it stays close to God, while Christianity is alive and true ... to the extent that it marches into the world and penetrates it.’²² As outrider to ‘ethical action’, the ‘Christianization’ of the world repeats Husserl’s ‘Europeanization’ and prepares the opposition of freedom to fate, while the ‘pagan’ appears to gloss all cultures that fall outside this monotheistic front. Crucially, these differences do not simply relate to historical *content*: ‘Sacred History’ determines a different temporality and historicity.

‘Teaching’: the revaluation of religious sources

‘Jewish Thought Today’ indicates the basis for treating Judaism as exemplary. It underscores the ‘novelty’ of the Western reconsideration of the Talmud: it is ‘no longer treated archaeologically or historically but as a form of teaching’ (*JTT* 161). As a cultural repository, its value escapes from ‘outmoded theology or simple folklore’.²³ ‘Teaching’ here connects to the Neo-Kantian discussion of *Lehre* – variously translated as ‘doctrine’, ‘teaching’, ‘study’ and so on, but signifying a body of experience handed down. This unique source is reconfigured for its pertinence to current and future conditions. Cohen’s *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism* is exemplary here,²⁴ while the pervasive themes can also be seen in Walter Benjamin’s earliest writings.²⁵

Much weight is accorded to Levinas’s claim to be teaching Hebrew to Greek philosophizing, but it is in this notion of ‘teaching’ that such translation can be seen as a two-way process. To use a different register: Levinas argues that certain concepts taken from Judaism now achieve a new legibility in the disenchanted, desacralized modern world: this secularization is a necessary condition for the ethical response to the other.²⁶ As Robert Gibbs puts it, ‘The desacralization of the world is what allows that full translation of the relations to God to become realized in our relations with other people.’²⁷ The reconfiguration of religious teaching only occurs after a necessary ‘atheism’ where all ‘myths’ are purged: ‘Everything that cannot be reduced to an interhuman relation represents not the superior form but the forever primitive form of religion’ (*TI* 77, 79). Levinas has no belief in a personal God, posits no afterlife, and constantly translates the content of

the biblical text and commentaries into philosophical language.

The ethical begins beyond atheism when religious teaching is distilled to philosophical, not to say Kantian, ideas. What remains of ‘monotheism’ is the idea of the infinite (double genitive). As he writes in ‘Meaning and Sense’, the 1964 essay that positions his world-view in contrast to Merleau-Ponty and structuralist anthropology: ‘The revealed God of our Judeo-Christian spirituality maintains all the infinity of his absence, which is in the personal “order” itself.’²⁸

These ideas are not straightforwardly part of philosophy; in *Totality and Infinity* they form what Levinas terms ‘eschatology’. Philosophically reduced ‘teaching’ takes these religious contents as legitimate starting points for orientation.²⁹ Where philosophy *qua* phenomenology runs up against the limit of being, the break-up of totality, eschatology serves as a supplement.

Without substituting eschatology for philosophy, without philosophically ‘demonstrating’ eschatological ‘truths,’ we can proceed from the experience of totality back to a situation where totality breaks up, a situation that conditions the totality itself. Such a situation is the gleam of exteriority or of transcendence in the face of the other [*le visage d’autrui*]. (TI 24)

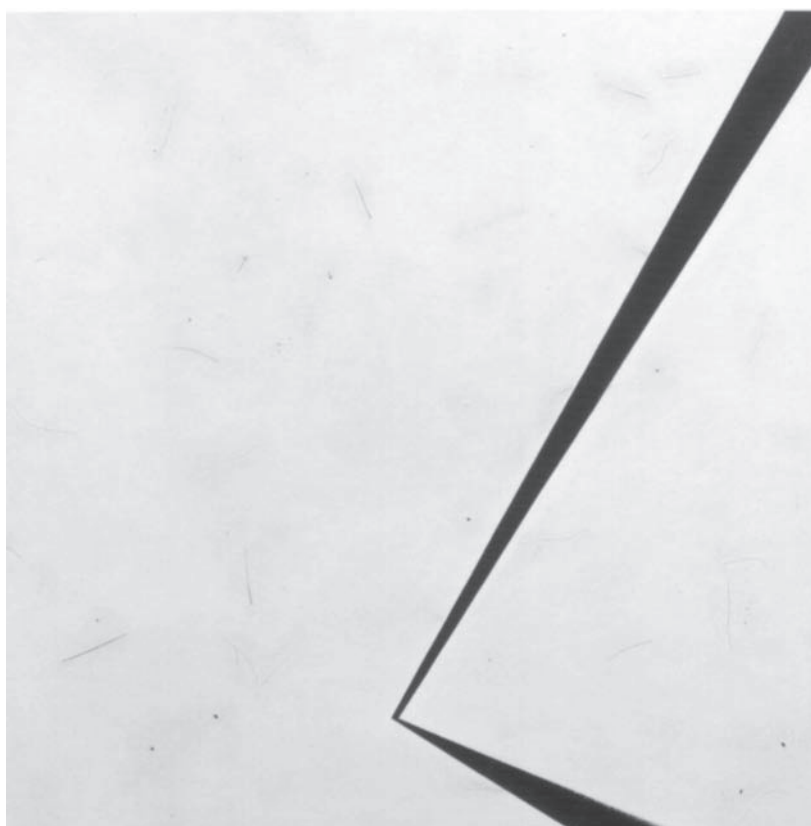
Both Stella Sandford and Caygill have noted that the encounter with the Other as an idea of the infinite is irreducible to a phenomenological analysis³⁰ – Levinas’s ‘exteriority’ cannot be posited from a phenomenological position. The ‘gleam’ of exteriority is already an eschatological *interpretation*, or in Levinas’s terms a ‘vision’ aiming beyond the break-up of totality.

The first ‘vision’ of eschatology (hereby distinguished from the revealed opinions of positive religions) reaches [*atteint*] the very possibility of eschatology, that is, the breach of the totality, the possibility of a *signification without context*. The experience of morality does not proceed from this vision – it *consummates* [*consomme*] this vision; ethics is an optics. (TI 23, translation modified)

For Levinas, eschatology is neither revealed nor deduced from within philosophy. Its validity as a set of orienting ideas comes from its inheritance, from its

centrality to the monotheistic cultural formation. To ‘envisage’ the face as the encounter with the idea of the Infinite, as the commencement of *Illeity*,³¹ exceeds phenomenological or philosophical description: Illeity as idea redeems a distinct mode of phenomenality – the enigmatic, absent trace in the face. To understand why eschatology is an interpretation, one can compare the account of the encounter with the Other (*Autrui*) in *Totality and Infinity* with that of Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*.³²

In Part Three, “Being-for-Others”, Sartre radically separates the experience of the Other as subject (*autrui-sujet*) from the identification of a particular *object* as another subject (*autrui-objet*). While seeming



to deflate the traditional problem of other minds, he rescues the case for a direct experience of the other as subject (*autrui-sujet*): the experience of being-seen, in particular, the experience of shame (*BN* 256 ff.). As a result, the look, or gaze (*le regard*), is preserved phenomenologically as a particular, ambivalent experience of that which is in the midst of this world and beyond this world at the same time – this is transcendence (*BN* 270).³³

Where Sartre is forced to present the other-as-subject as out of reach (‘what is certain is that I am looked-at: what is only probable is that the look is bound to this or that intra-mundane presence’ [*BN* 277]), Levinas, in eschatology, interprets this out-of-reach as an absence or withdrawal indicating the beyond.

The face is abstract. ... But the abstractness of the face is a visitation and a coming which *disturbs* immanence without settling into the horizons of the World. Its abstraction is not obtained by a logical process starting from the substance of beings and going from the individual to the general. On the contrary, it goes toward those beings but does not compromise itself with them, withdraws from them, ab-solves itself. Its wonder is due to the *elsewhere* from which it comes and into which it already withdraws... And Sartre will say that the Other (*Autrui*) is a pure hole in the world – a most noteworthy insight, but he stops his analysis too soon. The Other proceeds from the absolutely Absent, but his relationship with the absolutely Absent from which he comes *does not indicate, does not reveal, this Absent*; and yet the *Absent* has a meaning in the face. (*MS* 59–60)

Instead of existential nothingness, the ideas of eschatology overwrite this nothingness as the absence which spurs metaphysical ‘Desire’ for the infinite. That is, the face as *Autrui*, as better, ‘a relation to surplus’ (*TI* 22–3), is already an idea impinging on phenomenological results, but an idea to which monotheism entitles ‘us’.

Or, consider ‘Illeity’, which renders a God no longer onto-theological. Distinct from the third party (*le tiers*) who interrupts the intimacy of the face to face, Illeity designates the ‘third person, who in the face has already withdrawn from every revelation and every dissimulation ... it is the whole enormity, the whole inordinateness, the whole infinity of the absolutely Other, which eludes treatment by ontology’ (*MS* 61). Paradoxically, this absence prompts an envisioning of a positive transcendence, which, as idea, would be redeemed through ethical practice.

The idea of the face

Levinas suggests that I often pass indifferently before another person and do *not* feel the gaze (*MS* 52). For the trace of the face to appear, the ordinary experience must be ‘jostled’ by a presence that is not integrated into the world: a presence that can be effaced by ‘humble chores’ and ‘commonplace talk’ (*MS* 47):³⁴ ‘It is not the interlocutor our master whom we most often approach in our conversations, but an object or an infant, or a man of the multitude, as Plato says’ (*TI* 70).

Not all others are encountered as Other. It is the great failure of the English-language reception of Levinas to posit without justification a token–token correspondence between the other as object (*Autre*) and the face of the Other (*Autrui*). It fails for the reasons given by Sartre. Levinas’s characteristic idea

of first philosophy lying in the ethical relation generated by the face-to-face encounter with the Other has generally been understood in a familiar humanist, anti-bureaucratic sense: it is in a fundamental personal contact that I am struck by my commonality with the other. But this reading completely neglects Levinas’s putative transcendence.

The ‘face’ is not an individual countenance. The face is not a physiological characteristic distilled from phenomenological description through which I recognize members of a genus. The face confounds ontology and interrupts phenomenology (*MS* 61) in a manner ‘no transcendental method could corrupt or absorb’ (*MS* 56). The particular, liminal experience of teaching through a master, who brings me more than I contain, prompts the positing of exteriority in remoteness and height – those qualities drawn from monotheism become ideas.

Is the ideality of the ideal reducible to a superlative extension of qualities, or does it lead us to a region where beings have a face, that is, are present in their own message? Hermann Cohen (in this a Platonist) maintained that one can love only ideas; but the notion of an Idea is in the last analysis tantamount to the transmutation of the other [*Autre*] into the Other [*Autrui*]. (*TI* 71)

It should be stressed that there is no pre-existing realm of transcendence to which the subject is granted access in the encounter. The ‘beyond’ (the ‘region’ of the face) does not designate any *Hinterwelt* (this would be to collapse back into onto-theology [*MS* 60]). Instead, the desire for the infinite instigates ethics as the production of the beyond. The encounter with the master, who does not belong to my ‘plane’ (*TI* 101), is the spur to the production of transcendence beyond being.³⁵ As Stéphane Mosès insists, the ‘*geste spéculatif*’ of Levinas lies precisely in this conception of the infinite being produced from out of this liminal experience,³⁶ for which *Autrui* should be reserved.

In turn, *Autre*, in its ethical determination, refers to the idea of fraternity: a pluralism of separated, external beings. In the section of *Totality and Infinity* entitled ‘The Other and the others’ (*Autrui et les autres*), Levinas argues that the epiphany of the face opens humanity: the experience of the third party in the eyes of the other, which becomes the Il of Il-leity, produces a whole new experience of humanity. This human fraternity is invoked over and above biological species-being, but as it does so it exceeds phenomenological evidence (*TI* 213–14). The face comes from beyond the world of meaning and commits me to fraternity in referring to the ‘third party’ of Illeity, ‘whom in

the midst of his destitution the Other (*Autrui*) already serves'. But it is important to note that the encounter with *Autrui* is the prior condition of possibility for the valorization of *les Autres*, such that the latter are understood as a pluralism, not as members of a genus. These ideas are transformative: the pluralism produced in ethics is hooked back onto phenomenological experience as interpretation, not description.

Here, we must strictly reject the current conflation of the idea of the Other as *Autrui* with the more familiar idea of respect for the way in which the other person (*Autre*) exceeds my cognitive appropriations. Levinas consistently rejects the possibility of merely reflecting upon, acknowledging or recording the otherness of the other in favour of the need to effectuate transcendence which would thereby justify the encounter with the face of the Other.

Acknowledgement of the inability of comprehension to exhaust the particular individual in front of me merely records the break-up experienced by philosophy *qua* phenomenology. This is precisely the trap Simon Critchley falls into when he describes the face (or, worse, the other's eyes) as a 'palpable infinity that can never exhaust one's curiosity'. Even if such respect is engendered in a conversing that is 'actively and existentially engaged in a non-subsumptive relationship',³⁷ it fails to grasp the production of transcendence intended by Levinas in ethics. The emphasis on the non-subsumptive is purely negative; it does not get out of Being. In this regard, it would read Levinas either as espousing the false infinite of the 'ought',³⁸ or the account of intersubjectivity given in Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation: both explicitly rejected by Levinas himself. The indefinable order of transcendence, as positive plenitude, is, for Levinas, not the indefinite extension of being. Instead he insists:

The I is not a contingent formation by which the same and the other, as logical determinations of being, can in addition be reflected *within a thought*. It is in order that alterity be produced *in being* that a 'thought' is needed and that an I is needed. The irreversibility of the relation can be produced only if the relation is effected by one of the terms as the very movement of transcendence, as the *traversing* of this distance, and not as a recording of ... this movement. 'Thought' and 'interiority' are the very break-up of being and the production (not the reflection) of transcendence. We know this relation only in the measure that we effect it; this is what is distinctive about it. Alterity is only possible starting from *me*. (TI 39–40)

The alternative of acknowledgement runs the risk of neglecting the universal being the particular being

incarnates³⁹ – the 'beatific contemplation' of the other is 'idolatry' (TI 172). Such is the secular variety of the 'unctuous, consoling religion' at variance with the transformation wrought by the production of the infinite.⁴⁰

The supposed 'superiority' and 'generosity' of Western thought

Wherein lies the superiority of such ideas? In so far as it presents a morality, Levinas's 'religion' offers itself as a corrective to Western nihilism: 'Morality does not belong to culture: it enables one to judge it; it discovers the dimension of height. Height ordains being' (MS 57). The idea of fraternity is premised upon the monotheistic concept of alterity *as* height, the human as potential image of God, in opposition to a notion of alterity *as* difference that would be premised upon a 'saraband of innumerable and equivalent cultures' (MS 58). Western thought is privileged in so far as it contains the germ of this value given to the individual as the finite site of the incarnation of the Infinite.

In *Signs*, Merleau-Ponty had taken up the results of Claude Lévi-Strauss's work in anthropology to advance the thesis that different cultures are multiple expressions of being on the same plane, with no one culture having direct or privileged access to eternal ideas. Universality is then understood as a practice of translation that leads to the 'lateral interpenetration' of cultures. Explicitly challenging this conception, Levinas's 'Meaning and Sense' recognizes the value of such an 'ontology of decolonization' (MS 44) but grants more importance to the consequent *disorientation*. No constructive principle is left in place which can give an orientation to existence – nihilism or the 'pure indifference of multiplicity' is the result (MS 45).⁴¹

Apparently, Merleau-Ponty had taken the 'generosity' of Western thought too far and forgotten its task of overcoming 'the infantilism of purely historical cultures', which had never understood themselves until the advent of anthropological science made of them an object (MS 58). What is that generosity? The willingness to see the *abstract* in other cultures – to accord them the dignity of being equals.

Introducing a distinction between the plurality of cultural meanings (*significations*) and the need for a single, orientating *sense* (*sens*), Levinas concludes that desire for exteriority and the beyond, as found in monotheistic culture, provides such a sense in the midst of the variety of cultural totalities: 'the Other dispels the anarchic sorcery of the facts' (TI 99). The Other orients being because it creates a value that drives

and elevates practical reason, such that it is no longer satisfied with being and so aims at the beyond.

Again, an echo of Husserl is apparent. From as early as the 1911 essay 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science', Husserl was concerned to differentiate European, philosophical science from the plurality of historical *Weltanschauungen*.⁴² As the only cultural form to be a 'culture of ideas', to set itself infinite tasks, 'capable of an absolute self-responsibility on the basis of absolute theoretical insights',⁴³ science, if taken up explicitly, assumes the form of an ethical ideal capable of unifying humanity and fending off the barbarism. While Levinas continues to support the 'excellence of Western science' (*MS* 58), and repeats Lévy-Bruhl's insistence on 'primitive', as opposed to 'savage', minds,⁴⁴ he does not subscribe to the notion that the idea of *science* can provide an adequate ethical ideal in the face of the events that scarred the twentieth century. Instead, *fraternity* is accorded that task.

In structuralist anthropology, the excessive generosity of the West puts its own privilege in question. But, for Levinas, it is precisely here that its special contribution to the world is revealed. The argument in 'Meaning and Sense' proceeds in transcendental fashion by asking: what is the condition of possibility for constructing a flat ontology of cultural meaning? It concludes that *orientation to the Other*, the excellence of the Judaeo-Christian legacy, underlies structuralist ontology.

For there does exist the possibility of a Frenchman learning Chinese and passing from one culture into another, without the intermediary of an esperanto that would falsify both tongues which it mediated. Yet what has not been taken into consideration in this case is that an *orientation* which leads the Frenchman to take up learning Chinese instead of declaring it to be barbarian (that is, bereft of the real virtues of language), to prefer speech to war, is needed. One reasons as though the equivalence of cultures, the discovery of their profusion and the recognition of their riches were not themselves the effects of an orientation and of an unequivocal sense in which humanity stands. One reasons as though the multiplicity of cultures from the beginning sunk its roots in the era of decolonization, as though incomprehension, war and conquest did not derive just as naturally from the contiguity of multiple expressions of being. (*MS* 46)

Let me spell out three points:

1. The recognition of the richness of cultures and the suggestion that they are equivalent, depends upon an orientation to the Other; a *sense* of the status of humanity.

2. The veiled suggestion to the anthropologist is the following: we have seen that your interest in these other civilizations and cultures depends on an orientation towards the other. However, does the culture you examine *itself* reveal or valorize this orientation? The example of Chinese is not innocent given the passages referenced earlier and the insinuation that Chinese might be a barbarian language is neither retracted nor qualified. Robert Bernasconi observes that Levinas seems unaware that the Chinese also learn to speak French.⁴⁵
3. War does not only spring from a logic directed towards totality and domination. War also springs from the friction of contiguity with other civilizations. Difference cannot be valorized per se, if war is to be avoided. Peace does not just require the recognition of difference, but the orientation to the other: the *sens unique* which can ground peace. The Other as instantiating height, not the other as different.

Peace and ethical illusion

Of peace there can only be an eschatology. (*TI* 24)

Even if the ideas associated with metaphysical desire for the Infinite are ethical and foreign to China, it may still not be clear why Levinas takes them to be superior. It must be stressed that there is no epistemological privilege accorded to these ideas. Levinas explicitly touches on the affinity between these ideas – variously glossed as 'metaphor', 'illusion', 'aspiration' – and delirium (*TI* 49). 'The power of illusion is not a simple aberration of thought, but a movement in being itself. It has an ontological import' (*TI* 240). In this case, its import lies in producing the beyond, an illusion that 'constitutes a positive event' (*TI* 55).

Some might balk at this emphasis, but the face as eschatological interpretation commences from 'metaphor' as the 'marvel of language'. Philosophy and certain human sciences might try to reduce its power by drawing up a list of its sources, but this practice cannot 'destroy its intention': 'lucidity does not abolish the beyond of these illusions' (*MS* 56). If the beyond established is not simply to repeat onto-theology, or be determined by being, it must be a human, subjective production. It is because of this projection that Levinas describes the metaphysical as an 'aspiration for radical exteriority' – ethics is defined by its 'transcendent intention' (*TI* 29): 'the beyond which the metaphor produces has a sense that transcends (its origin); the power to conjure up illusions which language has must be recognized' (*MS* 56). The face is not the discovery by the West of a pre-existent truth.

The courthouse for eschatology is not the limits of theoretical reason or phenomenological description. The key lies in the ability of the idea of fraternity to orient peace. As in Neo-Kantianism, the idea is originary (*ursprünglich*) in that it sets the test it itself must undergo: it orients the task (*Aufgabe*) of practical philosophy on which it depends for its justification or validity. The excellence of the West would be located in a potential that must be manifested such that the other cultures of the world follow that example and Europeanize. That is, the belief in the superiority of monotheism's ideas can only be verified in attempting to produce it. As such, orientation is speculative: a form of bootstrapping described in *Otherwise than Being* as 'levitation' that has no other guarantee than its own activity:⁴⁶ 'to be worthy of the messianic era one must admit that ethics has a meaning, even without the promises of the Messiah'.⁴⁷

The bottom line is peace. *Pace* Caygill, but via a different route, *Totality and Infinity* is an 'immense treatise on hospitality and war' (*L&P* 209 n2). Orientation is directed to the production and generalization of the prophetic vision of peace, averting the possibility of war (*MS* 46) – that this is best produced by eschatology is the gauge at the heart of Levinas's Occidentalism.

To recap, in so far as they exceed philosophical support, the ideas of the face and fraternity draw their power from the monotheism that informs Western culture. Rendered into Infinite Ideas, they form an eschatology that orients ethics, whose value, above other cultures and their particular ideas, lies in the ability to produce a politics directed to peace. This hypothesis can only be tested historically through this very production – it is fundamentally speculative. Or, as Cohen puts it, 'There will be no peace among nations unless our example is followed'.⁴⁸

The Infinite and Asia: the influence of Rosenzweig

What sources support Levinas's prejudice against China and Asian thought? Given that he undertook no research himself, the obvious source is Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption* (on this score, itself a repository of third-hand banalities), where Eastern thought is compared to idolatry,⁴⁹ a charge repeated by Levinas.⁵⁰ The debt is recognized in the Preface to *Totality and Infinity*: 'We were impressed by the opposition to the idea of totality in Franz Rosenzweig's *Stern der Erlösung* (*Star of Redemption*), a work too often present in this book to be cited' (*TI* 28).

Reading the first part of *The Star of Redemption*, one is swiftly struck by the repeated oppositions

between concepts inherent to Judaism and Christianity and those of the Chinese and Indian religions. The Judeo-Christian legacy is valorized by virtue of a conceptual superiority: the ideas of God, world and human are defined by the specific interrelation of transcendence and immanence and the concept of historical time.⁵¹ For Rosenzweig, the experience of the 'face' (*das Gesicht*) of the other in language is not open to those dwelling within Asian cultures, for they have an inadequate conception of the relation between immanence and transcendence: the voice of the other cannot be heard – they flee the 'face of the living God for abstraction'.⁵² In the Hindu conception of a world of veils, which reduces human reality to appearance, he sees too much separation between transcendence and immanence – nothing of value can appear *in this world*. In the Buddhist and Confucian conception of a world of excessive variation, he finds only a throng of spirits multiplying – an excess of mixing between immanence and transcendence.⁵³ If the transcendent is too fully merged into the world then there is only a negotiation through its infinity – nothing of value can be extracted from this proliferation. In short, Buddhist and Hindu metaphysics are presented as polar opposites, but from which there is the same result – *the human individual is not the root of value*. The weakness of India and China for Rosenzweig is that they are unable to live beyond the immediate present, since history for those cultures is simply the passage of various contingent arrangements – the future cannot be the site of meaning by which to guide the transformation of the present. In contrast, the history of the Judaeo-Christian West has been formed by a more complicated interaction of immanence and transcendence – according to the Bible, humanity was made in the image of God – and it finds itself suspended between the animal and the divine. This, combined with the concept of prophetic time, produces a wholly different culture, a wholly different past. Prophetic time signals the specific biblical temporality whereby revelation is not given once and for all as edict to follow, but as prophecy, giving signs that must be discerned in the future to come.⁵⁴

As in Levinas, a unique concept of humanity rests with messianic monotheism: it is not present in other traditions whose own ideas can be encompassed by the Greek dimension of Europe.⁵⁵ For Levinas, these cultures cannot teach us, they bring nothing that we do not already contain: 'You can express everything in Greek. For example, you can say Buddhism in Greek'.⁵⁶

In his essay on racism in the history of philosophy, 'Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up', Bernasconi

identifies three tasks for any writing to be adequate as intellectual history.⁵⁷ These are:

1. 'identifying the problematic statements of these thinkers that are prima facie racist';
2. 'locating them in the context of their works and the broader historical context';
3. 'establishing their sources'.⁵⁸

While that essay fails to think through its historicist apparatus, and its convenient valorization of the potential virtues of 'continental' practice, I have tried to situate Levinas's writings in the suggested manner. While Levinas's comments on Asia have been well known for some time, they have been separated from the 'serious' work. Bernasconi himself has attempted to effect this wall by differentiating occasional comments from philosophical texts: 'it would be a mistake to assume that the philosophical texts conceal behind their complexity the same appalling message that is said so directly in the interviews.'⁵⁹

Here I have demonstrated that the views expressed in those pieces, whose sheer frequency should be underscored, do not 'run counter' to Levinas's ethics – if Levinas's radical, *metaphysical* transformation of that term is appreciated. Indeed, I have argued that the 'idea of the face', the spur to ethics, is fundamentally tied to a theory of separated cultural totalities which circumscribes the particularity of its obligating force. Levinas fears a valorization of alterity that would not orient around the transcendence resulting from 'Sacred History' distilled into ideas. To repeat, the alterity of height is distinguished from an alterity of difference. For Levinas, contiguity without orientation will lead to wars worse than those witnessed in recent history.

In light of this, I can share neither Bernasconi's suggestion that Levinas's work 'contains the most promising resources for addressing the enigma of persecution, hatred, and violence', nor Judith Butler's idea that Levinas can help to reanimate the 'human' in the 'humanities'.⁶⁰ the structure of 'what binds us morally' can find in Levinas only a representation of a specific religious tradition. Given the complacency with which Levinas rests on his shaky sources,⁶¹ his philosophy evinces the easy, armchair belief in superiority which is constitutive of prejudice and discrimination: the claims for Judaism lack any form of independent testing beyond backing it – fidelity and ignorance trump science.

This leaves me to conclude with two questions. First, why have the philosophical readings of Levinas missed the, admittedly troubling, notion of transcendence and instead reduced his work to more familiar

ideas? To paraphrase Kierkegaard: what does this 'mollifying exegesis' signify? Second, is it possible to break with an idea of the West, given the particular investments that underlie 'continental' or 'modern European' philosophy? Breaking with Bernasconi's forensic model of prosecution and apology, which fails to reflect on the privilege of latecomers, might not the challenge be not only to portray these writings in their own context, but to represent ourselves in, and our ties to, that same context? Is Western philosophy simply one cultural formation among others limning its own borders? What would it entail to act otherwise? These fundamental questions challenge the particularity of all philosophizing and cannot be avoided given current institutional and world-historical conditions. That the formative figures of twentieth-century thought offered solutions that we would now disavow does not mean that the problem to which those solutions were addressed is illusory.

Notes

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1. 'Emmanuel Levinas' (1986), in Florian Rötzer, *Conversations with French Philosophers*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1995, pp. 57–65, p. 63.
2. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (1961), trans. Alphonso Lingis, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1969, p. 35; hereafter *TI*.
3. The specific relation to *Otherwise than Being* involves the reconstruction of a different systematic structure as Levinas introduces the concepts and ideas of diachrony, psyche, hostage and the nazirate. The key influence on this latter book is the notion of *Urimpression* found in Husserl's *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1978), trans. Alphonso Lingis, Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht, 1991. Edmund Husserl *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (1905–1910), ed. Martin Heidegger, trans. James S. Churchill, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1964.
4. In this regard, I respect two of the protocols expounded by Howard Caygill's *Levinas and the Political* (Routledge, London, 2002); hereafter *L&P*. 'Instead of separating Levinas's "philosophical" and his "Jewish" writings ... the importance of the relationship between "Israel" and the State of Israel in Levinas's thought makes it essential to insist on them being read together. And finally, given the inseparability of reflection on the political from political events, it is vital to pursue as far as possible a disciplined chronological exposition of the development of Levinas's thought and to avoid the

- luxury of the anachronistic pursuit of thematic parallels that is enjoyed by many commentators' (*L&P* 2–3).
5. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Jewish Thought Today' (1961), in *Difficult Freedom – Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seán Hand, Athlone Press, London, 1990, pp. 159–66, p. 160; hereafter *JTT*.
 6. See Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (1919), trans. William W. Hallo, Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1985.
 7. 'The yellow peril! It is not racial, it is spiritual. It is not about inferior values; it is to do with a radical strangeness, which is alien to all the density of its past, from where no voice with familiar inflection filters: it comes from a lunar or Martian past.' Emmanuel Levinas, 'Le Débat Russo-Chinois et la dialectique' (1960), in *Les Imprevus de l'histoire*, Fata Morgana, Montpellier, 1994, pp. 170–73, pp. 171–2.
 8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Everywhere and Nowhere', trans. Richard C. McCleary, in *Signs* (1960), Northwestern University Press, Evanston IL, 1964, pp. 126–58, p. 139.
 9. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Beyond Dialogue' (1967), in *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith, Athlone Press, London, 1999, pp. 79–89.
 10. For the German context, see Hans Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 1993. For the dominance of Neo-Kantianism in the France of the early twentieth century, see Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy* (1979), trans. L. Scott-Fox and J.M. Harding, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, and the discussion in Caygill's first chapter, especially *L&P* 9ff.
 11. Jacques Derrida, 'Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German' (1989), trans. Moshe Ron, in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar, Routledge, New York and London, 2002, pp. 137–88, pp. 174–5.
 12. See Book One of Part III of *The Star of Redemption*.
 13. Edmund Husserl, 'The Vienna Lecture' (1935) in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970, pp. 269–99, p. 275; emphases added.
 14. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Lévy-Bruhl and Contemporary Philosophy' (1957), trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav, in *Entre nous: Thinking-of-the-other*, Continuum, London and New York, 2006, pp. 34–45. Lévy-Bruhl is referenced at *TI* 234 and *TI* 276.
 15. Lévy-Bruhl and Contemporary Philosophy', p. 35, translation modified.
 16. 'The pure form of time is unknown to primitives, the instants each have their own different potential, in contrast to the homogeneity of the form of time (in Kant).' *Ibid.*, p. 42, translation modified. Compare the foregoing to the critique of 'empty, homogeneous time' in Benjamin's 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (trans. Harry Zohn, in *Illuminations*, Fontana Press, London, 1973, pp. 245–55). In this regard, see Nickolas Lambrianou, 'Neo-Kantianism and Messianism: Origin and Interruption in Hermann Cohen and Walter Benjamin', in Peter Osborne, ed., *Walter Benjamin: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*, 3 vols, Routledge, London, 2004.
 17. Levinas, 'Lévy-Bruhl and Contemporary Philosophy', pp. 42–3.
 18. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 41.
 19. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism' (1934), trans. Séan Hand, *Critical Inquiry* 17, Autumn 1990, pp. 62–71, p. 64.
 20. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Place and Utopia' (1950), in *Difficult Freedom – Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seán Hand, Athlone Press, London, 1990, pp. 99–102.
 21. Commenting on 'Reflections on Hitlerism', Caygill writes: 'Each [pagan and Christian civilization] has its own way of structuring time, in particular historical time; each has its own understanding of destiny and freedom and both have their opposed "predeterminations or prefigurations of their adventure in the world"' (*L&P* 32).
 22. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Franz Rosenzweig' (1965), trans. Michael B. Smith, in *Outside the Subject*, Athlone Press, London, 1993, pp. 49–66, p. 62.
 23. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Space is Not One-dimensional' (1968), in *Difficult Freedom*, pp. 259–64, p. 262.
 24. Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism* (1919), trans. Simon Kaplan, Frederick Ungar, New York, 1972. Here, religion is a 'new extension' of the concept of man, as individual, and humanity, which mark the limit of traditional ethical understanding (*ibid.*, pp. 19–32). It teaches ethics to say 'Thou' to 'he'.
 25. 'However, the original and primal concept of knowledge does not reach a concrete totality of experience in this context, any more than it reaches a concept of existence. But there is a unity of experience that can by no means be understood as a sum of experiences, to which the concept of knowledge as teaching [*Lehre*] is immediately related in its continuous development. The object and content of this teaching [*Lehre*], this concrete totality of experience, is religion, which, however, is presented to philosophy in the first instance only as teaching [*Lehre*].' Walter Benjamin, 'On the Program of the Coming Philosophy' (1918), trans. Mark Ritter, in *Selected Writings: Volume 1 – 1913–1926*, ed. M. Bullock and M. Jennings, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, London, 1996, pp. 100–110, p. 109.
 26. Crucially, reason is taken to have entered world history with the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century. In essays such as 'Messianic Texts', he argues that Jews are no longer excluded from political or state history and as a result messianic thinking is *no longer* appropriate. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Messianic Texts' in *Difficult Freedom*, pp. 59–96. As noted by Caygill, part of Levinas's valorization of technology is that it shows us that the gods are of this world (*L&P* 154).
 27. Robert Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1992, p. 165.
 28. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Meaning and Sense' (1964), trans. Alphonso Lingis (revised by Simon Critchley and Adriaan T. Peperzak), in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1996, pp. 33–64, p. 64; hereafter *MS*.
 29. Kant's essay 'What is Orientation in Thinking?' (1786), trans. H.B. Nisbet, in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 237–49, proves the precursor for this question of religion and orientation in thought. See also Nickolas Lambrianou's doctoral thesis for a thorough discussion of orientation in Cohen, Rosenzweig and Benjamin. Nickolas Lambrianou, 'Origin and Becoming: Anticipation, Orientation and Creatureliness in the Work of

- Walter Benjamin, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Hugo von Hofmannsthal', Ph.D., Birkbeck College, University of London, 2006.
30. Stella Sandford, *The Metaphysics of Love: Gender and Transcendence in Levinas*, Athlone Press, London and New Brunswick, 2000, p. 124. See *L&P* 99ff. for a discussion of the 'excessive' character of ethics which exceeds the noetic-noematic structure of intentional analysis.
 31. The term is introduced in 'Meaning and Sense'.
 32. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (1943), trans. Hazel E. Barnes, Routledge, London, 1969; hereafter *BN*.
 33. It should be noted that the crucial experience differs for the two writers: Sartre emphasizes the shame of being caught in a compromising act; Levinas, the shame of encountering a master who 'brings me more than I contain'.
 34. In 'Space is not One-Dimensional' (p. 300 n1), he observes that people can close themselves off from such encounters by 'translating them into banal language'. This should be directly related to Heidegger's discussion of the chatter of they-talk.
 35. Here Derrida's concerns over the persistent spatiality of Levinas's metaphors are of central importance. Jacques Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics', in *Writing and Difference* (1967) trans. Alan Bass, Routledge, London, 2001, pp. 97–192, pp. 139–46.
 36. Stéphane Mosès, *Au-delà de la guerre: trios études sur Levinas*, Éditions de l'éclat, Paris and Tel Aviv, 2004, pp. 15, 102.
 37. Simon Critchley, 'Introduction' to *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 1–32, pp. 27, 12.
 38. Hegel thus formulates the bad infinite: "Something becomes an other: this other is itself somewhat; therefore it likewise becomes an other, and so on ad infinitum. This Infinity is the wrong or negative infinity; it is only a negation of a finite: but the finite rises again the same as ever, and is never got rid of and absorbed." ... In the situation we have described the other ([*Autre*] does not become likewise an other [*Autre*]; the end is not reborn, but moves off, at each new stage of the approach, with all the alterity of the Other [*Autrui*]. Note the difference between the alterity of the different *Autres* compared to the alterity of *Autrui*. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, p. 193 n34.
 39. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Is Ontology Fundamental?' (1951), in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, pp. 1–10; p. 7.
 40. Levinas, 'Franz Rosenzweig', p. 55.
 41. As he confirms in the interview with Rötzer: 'Naturally there were first-rate thinkers like Claude Lévi-Strauss. People read him with great interest, but no norms for thinking came out of it.' Rötzer, 'Emmanuel Levinas', p. 57.
 42. Edmund Husserl, 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science' (1911), trans. Quentin Lauer, in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, pp. 71–147.
 43. Husserl, 'The Vienna Lecture', p. 283.
 44. In his essay on Lévy-Bruhl, Levinas notes that the privilege of Occidental reason comes not from the cogito (a transcendental or universal argument) but from the *independence from history* that its thought has achieved. Levinas, 'Lévy-Bruhl and Contemporary Philosophy', p. 43.
 45. Robert Bernasconi, 'Who is My Neighbor? Who is the Other? Questioning "the Generosity of Western Thought"', in *Ethics and Responsibility in the Phenomenological Tradition* (Ninth Annual Symposium of the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center), Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1992, pp. 1–31, p. 22.
 46. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, p. 170.
 47. Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (1982), trans. Richard A. Cohen, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1985, p. 114.
 48. §41 *Deutschtum und Jugendtum*, cited by Derrida, 'Interpretations at War', p. 183.
 49. 'The living "gods of Greece" were worthier opponents of the living God than the phantoms of the Asiatic Orient. The deities of China as of India are massive structures made from the monoliths of primeval time which still protrude into our own times in the cults of "primitives.'" Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 35. And a later aside: 'at least the gods of myth lived' (*ibid.*, p. 38).
 50. 'It is probably because it evokes Greece that idolatry can still be preferred to something else! But idolatry also encompasses all the intellectual temptations of the relative, of exoticism and fads, all that comes to us from India and China, all that comes to us from the alleged "experiences" of humanity which we would not be permitted to reject.' Emmanuel Levinas 'And God Created Woman', in *Nine Talmudic Readings* (1970), trans. Annette Aronowicz, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990, pp. 169–76, p. 176.
 51. This summary of Rosenzweig is synthesized from three brief sections: 'Asia: The Unmythical God' (pp. 35–8); 'Asia: The Non-Plastic World' (pp. 57–60); 'Asia: Non-Tragic Man' (pp. 73–6).
 52. *Ibid.*, p. 36. Incapable, therefore of pluralism, leading Levinas to repeatedly make reference to 'masses' and 'hordes' when referring to Asia and Africa.
 53. This notion of China overflowing with spirits (*ibid.*, p. 35) may underlie Levinas's references to the 'density of China's past'.
 54. Rosenzweig specifically categorizes Islam as *pagan* because of its once-and-for-all-time revelation in Mohammed; Judaism would also share this structure were it to rest with the Pentateuch. Indeed Islam is described as a *pagan plagiarization* of Judaism, with Mohammed 'taking over' revelation but neglecting the proper presuppositions of prophecy (*ibid.*, p. 116) so that the Koran is only a 'magical miracle' and Allah (who is not God) only an 'oriental despot' (*ibid.*, p. 118).
 55. Rosenzweig glosses Eastern thought in terms of 'Primitive Atheism', 'Primitive Phenomenalism', and 'Primitive Idealism'.
 56. Rötzer, 'Emmanuel Levinas', p. 63.
 57. Robert Bernasconi, 'Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up: The Challenge of Enlightenment Racism to the Study of the History of Philosophy', *Radical Philosophy* 117, January/February 2003, pp. 13–22.
 58. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 59. Bernasconi, 'Who is my Neighbor? Who is the Other?', p. 14.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 2; Judith Butler, 'Precarious Life', in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, Verso, London and New York, 2004, pp. 128–51.
 61. See Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas*, pp. 119, 145–6.