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## Cogito and Séparation: Lacan/Levinas

“To posit oneself corporeally is to touch an earth, but to do so in such a way that the touching finds itself already conditioned by the position, the foot settles into a real which this very action outlines or constitutes — , as though a painter would notice that he is descending from the picture he is painting.”

(Emmanuel Levinas)

“I am not simply that punctiform being located at the geometral point from which the perspective is grasped. No doubt, in the depths of my eye, the picture is painted. The picture, certainly, is in my eye. But I am in the picture.”

(Jacques Lacan)

“How could this showing satisfy something, if there is not some appetite of the eye on the part of the person looking? This appetite of the eye...is to be sought on a much less elevated plane than might be supposed, namely, in that which is the true function of the organ of the eye, the eye filled with voracity, the evil eye.”

(Jacques Lacan)

“For the presence before a face, my orientation toward the Other, can lose the avidity proper to the gaze only by turning into generosity, incapable of approaching the other with empty hands.”

(Emmanuel Levinas)

### Outline

At first glance, it hardly seems promising to establish a connection between Lacan and Levinas. Levinas claims an ethics of inescapable responsibility for the Other, proposes the face of the Other as the central “ethical experience” and thereby places the human being in a face-to-face position, not only for the sake of his human-ness, but also in view of his relationship with God. On the contrary Lacan’s unorthodox “return to Freud” implies the interruption of reciprocal face-to-face contact: a face-to-face meeting takes place only at the end of the psychoanalytic session, when it comes time for payment. One [could get caught up in] the hypothesis that the therapeutic act represents a formal inversion of the conditions of the ethical act, but it nevertheless serves precisely to re-create the subjective preconditions for the practice of this ethical act. It represents, so to speak, the photographic negative that allows the fundamental film of the ethical to shine through as such, but the therapeutic act cannot adopt the ethical into itself, because the subjective preconditions are lacking on the side of at least one of the participants: neurotics find it especially difficult to approach the other with an open gaze and with open, but not empty, hands. As Habermas said: where there is a lack of communicative competence, which after all distinguishes modern rationality as a telos of language, therapeutic discourse must come in to remedy the symptoms of a systematically distorted communication.

No, this is not the way to relate Lacan and Levinas. The flaw, however, lies in the assumptions and hasty conclusions that one draws from purely physical situations. The presence of the face, that which Levinas also calls an “epiphany,” by no means entails that the face is given to the beholder to see and to read like an opened blossom or book. Levinas strictly rejects the physiognomic and the plastic, the pictorial and the picturable: “In my analysis the face is not at all a plastic form like a portrait.” (1) But how the encounter with the Other’s face is to be understood, what status it has? Is it empirical, even if in a special sense, since Levinas has just emphatically rejected as an experience of the Other the sensory presence of the image that is given and can be studied? Or is it transcendental — that is, must the face of the Other always already have presented itself to us in such a way as to have spoken that commandment to us: “You shall not kill,” “You will not commit murder”? (2) It might even be asked whether the experience of the face of the Other always requires [to be] immediately present to the senses, whether an actual sensory affect must accompany the experience. Levinas’ comments on this subject, especially since *Totalité et infini*, are ambiguous. It is also possible to ask, conversely, whether psychoanalysis, with its elimination of the sensory gaze on each face, does not perhaps represent an outstanding situation for the experience of the epiphany of the face and the experience of transcendence. One thing, in any case, is common to psychoanalysis according to Lacan and to the ethics of the Other according to Levinas: the emphasis on asymmetry in the experience of the Other, not only as a description of the starting point, that is, as a condition which is to be sublimated into a higher unity or a balanced reciprocity, but rather as an irreducible and positively valued fundamental condition of any ethical attitude whatsoever toward the Other.

Go then a step further, and ask whether there are not the traces of a relation in the Levinas’ and Lacan’s works themselves or even just in their circles. Levinas does not name Lacan anywhere, nor Lacan Levinas. Even though they were born in the same decade (albeit in very different places and in cultures that had little in common) and even published the writings with which each of them exerted his greatest influence during the same decade. Even they once published in the same place, in *Recherches philosophiques*, Volume 5 (1935-36): Levinas his essay “De l’évasion,” and Lacan a discussion of Eugène Minkowski’s book *Le temps vécu*. Even though both of them maintained important relationships with some individuals who had a considerable influence on each of them (above all Maurice Blanchot and Jean Wahl). Levinas’s statements on psychoanalysis are ephemeral and strive for distance; Lacan refers repeatedly to Jewish tradition and stresses the necessity of engaging with theology, his source being first and foremost the Freud of Moses and Monotheism. Levinas’s remarks on psychoanalysis are not hostile in nature; rather, they betray a certain respect as well as a certain fundamental understanding. For instance, the term “psychoanalysis” occurs three times in *Totalité et infini*. In the first case, he is speaking of an interminable psychoanalysis, a psychanalyse interminable, in which the subject may become involved on the basis of the experience that the world of enjoyment, of *jouissance*, does not satisfy the metaphysical claim (TI 36-37/65). Now “psychanalyse interminable” is exactly the term with which the title of Freud’s article “Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse” (“Analysis Terminable and Interminable”) has been translated, however (in)appropriately. In the second case, psychoanalysis is mentioned in the context of the “acte manqué,” and the “abortive action,” an “unlimited [illimité] field of investigation” is attributed to it (TI 204/228). Is it coincidence that both times psychoanalysis is mentioned in the text, its project is apostrophized as infinite? It is not as *infini*, or infinite in the sense of the word that Levinas reserves for the Other and his radical exteriority, then still with related, synonymous terms — which allow us to recognize a relationship, a (limited) synonymy between the two projects, that of Levinas and that of psychoanalysis. There is yet a third case, and here the reference to psychoanalysis is particularly qualified as “ininterrompue,” as “unintermitting” (TI 60/88) (3). Again this occurs in connection with the possible diagnosis that language is an abortive action — that is to say, when it does not permit the turn toward the Other that for Levinas is made possible only through language. A first supporting clue is provided by a note to the essay “Leçon talmudique. Sur la justice” (1974): One should set one’s mind against the paganism of the expression ‘Oedipus complex’ on the strength of the lines from Deuteronomy 8:5 (even if they do not appear overly instructive on the surface): ‘Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.’ Paternity has the meaning here of a constitutive category of the sensible and not of its alienation. On this point at least psychoanalysis confirms the profound crisis of monotheism in contemporary sensibility, a crisis that cannot be traced back to the rejection of some dogmatic statement. It harbours the ultimate secret of antisemitism. (4)

On the theme of “fertility” and “paternity” in particular, Alain Juranville has set Lacan and Levinas in relation to one another; he attempts to bring out a direct thematic relationship.<sup>5</sup> The last two chapters of *Lacan et la Philosophie* contain a reconstruction of the Lacanian concept of the name-of-the-father and the phallus in Levinasian terms, including the non-ontological version of a proof of the existence of God. But the relationship makes its influence felt much earlier still. Juranville takes up precisely the challenge that Levinas, as just cited, implicitly directs toward psychoanalysis: the psychopathology of an Oedipus complex can only be understood and treated correctly — that is, as a crisis of our time — if the ethical is grasped as that of which the Oedipus complex is the pathological form. This does not mean the dismissal of the Oedipus complex, but its inscription in a larger frame, in which its universal significance as a neurotic interpretation alone can be acknowledged without difficulty. Freud’s error was in identifying the Oedipus complex as a universal reality and an unavoidable condition of the development of every subject, especially the male one. According to Lacan as Juranville understands him (and in some sense according to Levinas), what needs to be demonstrated is rather that there is a universal structure of desire and a law that holds for it (at least in a transcendental sense); from this point alone can the deviant form “Oedipus complex” be thought and understood as a specific departure and failure. A non-neurotic desire must be conceived of, at least ideally, that does not succumb to the formation of the Oedipus complex; that is, a desire that can be prevented from heading toward the forbidden object not by the establishment of a rigid superego alone, and that is therefore in principle open to ethical determination.<sup>(6)</sup>

It would be going too far were one to see in Levinas’s metaphysical desire the basis for this revision of the Freudian theory of neuroses with the Oedipus complex at its center. Yet Juranville soon comes to speak of metaphysical desire in Levinas’s sense, although his reference is meant to ensure that a possible misunderstanding is cleared up in good time: the adjective “metaphysical” in Levinas (which has nothing in common with what Juranville will characterize as metaphysical discourse) designates a desire which is transcendent and aims at the absolute Other.<sup>(7)</sup> The Lacanian theory of desire and its law as a revision of the “neurotic interpretation” of desire according to Freud is undoubtedly his own accomplishment. Still, in this context Levinas’s concept of metaphysical desire and the affirmation of an absolute otherness that manifests itself only ethically via language (a concept of language that is clearly distinguished from any representative-objective model) and the speaking face may be very useful as a foil that clarifies by contrast the specific features of the Lacanian theory of desire and otherness.

This undertaking of bringing Lacan into an [explicatory] relationship with Levinas — which perhaps grants the appeal of the staged encounter more than it hopes for actual correspondences — should not push us to give up the conjecture that there might also be especially from Levinas to Lacan a line of reception either direct or indirect (that is, mediated through third parties). Once again: Levinas is never quoted by Lacan, and Elisabeth Roudinesco, who knows everything on the history of psychoanalysis in France, and of Lacan’s circle, never mentions him.<sup>(8)</sup>

But Roudinesco relates about the Christianizing of psychoanalysis through Lacan. In 1969, a book published by Bela Grunberger and Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel (under the pseudonym André Stéphane) with the title (reminiscent of the Nazi concentration camps and the Gulag Archipelago) *L’univers contestationnaire. Les Nouveaux Chrétiens* (approximately, *The Universe of the Protesters: The New Christians*) exposed the profound antisemitism of this movement in an “analysis” of May 1968. This book, for the first time in French psychoanalysis, brought the quarrel over the doctrine onto the idea that only affiliation with Judaism can guarantee the correctness of the doctrine, and in this context brands Lacanism as a Christian deviation from orthodoxy. Roudinesco makes clear that the authors refer to Freud incorrectly: *Moses and Monotheism* is the book in which Freud not only challenges Judaism on the issue of chosenness, but also distances himself from the Judaism of his birth: “Now Freud also defined his own Jewishness in relation to a discovery that he wanted to de-Judaize in order to make it universal. If there were no chosen people, psychoanalysis could become universal, since its object, the unconscious, is universal. Renouncing circumcision, that is, the physical trace of difference, means assuming a symbolic castration according to which there is no superiority or inferiority of one culture in relation to others since all men are subject to the same law despite their differences.”<sup>(9)</sup> Notwithstanding this, the fuss over the symptom points back to a schism that, even if it remains anathema in co-operative work, has its virulence. The question of the God of psychoanalysis has been posed, and here Lacan — especially in his theory of the Borromean knot<sup>(10)</sup>,

which harks back to the Christian motif of the Trinity — has brought about a shift which cannot be overlooked, and is perhaps even immeasurable. To address it touches on the whole of psychoanalysis and its history, if not on history itself. To leave it out does the same.(11)

The question of the God of psychoanalysis has been posed. This is first of all the question of His necessity, for the practice and theory of psychoanalysis. According to Lacan, without the Other, who is also God, the relationship of man and woman cannot be thought. But the question also arises whether the God of psychoanalysis is the God of religion, the God of theology, or the God of the philosophers. Or, none of the above and yet somehow all of them. It will be important to differentiate them, to distinguish the lines of contact in such a way that in them the difference can be recognized which permits contact in the first place. I have suggested that there could be a (direct or indirect) reception of Levinas [by way of] Lacan, which, however, has only expressed itself in hints and traces. It may just be a series of coincidental correspondences. As a rule, researching lines or instances of reception, or even individuals who could have served as intermediaries is futile; it seldom contributes to an understanding of the issue. With respect to Seminar XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis, I would like to indicate and interpret certain correspondences that can be understood in this sense.

## **The Unconscious and the Other**

Seminar XI introduces, as its first fundamental concept, the unconscious. Just as in the already-cited essay “La position de l’inconscient,” which Lacan edited for publication at about the time of this seminar, a definition of the unconscious by way of consciousness is rejected. The Freudian unconscious discloses itself in the concept of the cause (12), which is to be understood (in contrast to the law) as referring to something anticonceptual, undefined. Cause is there where there is a lack; or, “what the unconscious does is to show us the gap through which neurosis recreates a harmony with a real — a real that may well not be determined” (Sém XI 25/22). Insofar as it is the non-realized that comes into effect in this gap, Lacan feels compelled to introduce a feature into his concept of the unconscious that not only clearly breaks with any image of mechanical causality (the early Freud was likewise trying to characterize the unconscious by a hidden causality), but also makes the unconscious in its “coming” dependent on something that is doubly beyond being (that is to say, on this side of being). It is not just a matter of the non-realized — that is, of something that has never come into being — that expresses itself, that “speaks” here, but even more, of its need for something that expects it — not in the sense of a concrete expectation that has determined beforehand the being of that which is to come, but rather in the mode of an expectation or patience that is simply trying to do all it can so that whatever merits the qualification “unconscious” in this sense can come. Lacan identifies this specific event of arrival, for which the analyst should be prepared without trying to have grasped it in advance, as “trouaille” — found material, sudden idea. The situation as a whole — that the non-realized, for the sake of its belated realization (13), needs the attendance of someone who makes its arrival easier (a midwife instead of the abortionist [faiseuse d’anges] to whom Lacan alludes), is summed up by Lacan with emphasis: “The status of the unconscious, which, as I have shown, is so fragile on the ontic plane, is ethical” (Sém XI 34/33).(14) Also: “The gap of the unconscious may be said to be pre-ontological” (Sém XI 31/29). Finally, the “gap” is described as “ontic” through which the unconscious presents itself for a moment before it immediately closes again in accordance with its pulsating motion.(15)

Levinas diagnoses as a fundamental characteristic of Western philosophy an “ontological imperialism” (TI 15/44) (16) or a primacy of ontology (TI 15/45; cf. also DEHH 103) (17) that reveals itself above all in a subordination of the ethical as a specific but limited region of being, and in the course of a reversal he sets a “primacy of the ethical” (TI 51/79) in opposition to it. And even if Levinas does not characterize the ethical as pre-ontological (18), the way is still prepared for this: there is an infinite which cannot be contained in any ontological order, and that is the infinite Other in his transcendence. As already mentioned, Levinas also identifies this transcendence (in a departure from the usual use of the term) as a “metaphysics” and can consequently assert, “Ontology presupposes metaphysics” (TI 18/48).(19)

Lacan postulates a subject of the unconscious. On the whole, it is hardly to be expected that such a subject could be brought into relation with a philosophical understanding of subjectivity. Yet we must pay attention to the path by which Lacan goes back to Descartes. The starting point is Freud’s passage on “The Forgetting

of Dreams” in *Interpretation of Dreams*, with which the seventh chapter opens. There Freud engages the question of whether the narration of the dream distorts its content and how a doubt which the patient notes about certain elements of the reported dream is to be handled. Freud sees in the identified doubt precisely an outstandingly appropriate moment for further work: a doubt stands for a resistance on the part of the patient’s ego against the unconscious content that relates to the relevant element of the dream, and it is very well confirmed when the patient, during a repetition of the dream narrative, replaces expressions in the “cloak” of the dream at this point. In this way Freud lets a certainty arise from the connotation of doubt — the certainty that here is an act of unconscious thought.(20) Here is a convergence between the methodologies of Freud and Descartes: the certainty of the cogito rests precisely on the fact that such a fundamental and radical doubt as the hyperbolic doubt, which affects even mathematical truths and exposes me to the genius malignus, the deceitful god, still lies behind the fact that I am the one who doubts. There is a subject of doubting or of thought. “In order to understand the Freudian concepts, one must set out on the basis that it is the subject who is called — the subject of Cartesian origin” (Sém XI 47/47).

But there is also an asymmetry between Freud and Descartes: for Freud — according to Lacan (21) — the subject is at home with himself (*chez soi*) in the field of the unconscious. Lacan stresses the difficulty in which the Cartesian cogito stands in the moment of its certainty: it is certain of itself in the act, as something acting in this way (thus the specific formulation already in Descartes, in the Second Meditation: “that this proposition: I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time I pronounce it, or that I mentally conceive it”) (22) — but no more. Between the act-certainty of the cogito and the truth of objective propositions there is, however, a gap that cannot be bridged from the side of the cogito alone. It requires the reintroduction of a guarantor of universal truths, for which even a cogito certain of itself cannot vouch. The Third Meditation brings that (in)famous ontological proof of God, which, from my inborn idea of God as “a substance that is infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful,” on the basis of my existence as creature deduces the sole “cause” of this idea, that is, this infinite substance itself: “For although the idea of substance is within me owing to the fact that I am substance, nevertheless I should not have the idea of an infinite substance — since I am finite — if it had not proceeded from some substance which was veritably infinite.” (23) Lacan has emphatically stressed in Seminar XI that with Descartes’s God “it is a question...of an infinite being” (Sém XI 204/225). That cannot be taken for granted. For as the Third Meditation goes on, and then again in the Fifth Meditation, Descartes concerns himself with God under the aspect of his perfection, and in the literature on the ontotheological proof of God’s existence this point also stands in first place.(24) Levinas, for his part, radically brackets the ontotheological context in *Totalité et infini* (cf. TI 19-20/46-49).(25) For him, the infinite God of Descartes is, alongside the Good “beyond being” in Plato and the One in Plotinus, one of the rare instances of an incursion of transcendence into Western philosophy, which is otherwise wedded to ontology.

Already for Levinas the (self-)grounding of the cogito — and he, like all modern interpreters, considers it undecidable whether it is to be ascribed to a deduction or an intuition (26) — is inseparable from the idea of the infinite. The cogito is the event within the self for which the idea of the infinite forms the “pendant” of the other — or conversely: the cogito testifies to the separation (*séparation*) of the self from the other. Levinas also calls this separation “psychism” or “interiority” (TI 23-29/53-58). We might speak here of “individualization,” but that would presuppose a superior category that encompasses self and other — and it is just this type of category that Levinas refutes.(27) For this separation Levinas also has ready the term “atheism.” Yet this does not stand in opposition to the idea of the infinite as the infinite Other, God. On the contrary, only an infinite God is a transcendent God, and vice versa. Atheism, then, is the break with the “question of being,” the break with the potential and the desire to think an existing God. What is required is an “ontological atheism” or an “atheistic de-ontology.” (28) Without atheism as interruption of all participation in a being, there is no receptiveness for the idea of the infinite, no relationship to an absolute Other, no metaphysical desire. Bernasconi speaks in this context, taking up an expression of Derrida’s, of a “double origin” (29) — a chronological one (that is, in the cogito), and a logical one in the idea of the infinite: “The cause of being is thought or known by its effect as though it were posterior to its effect...The posteriority of the anterior — an inversion logically absurd...” (TI 25/54) (30).

In “*Dieu et la philosophie*” (1975), Levinas clarified the relationship of the infinite to the finite, of the infinite Other to the cogito. “The difference between the Infinite and the finite is a non-indifference of the

Infinite to the finite, and is the secret of subjectivity.” (31) The in of infini here is not to be understood only as a negative prefix, but also as the in of inclusion(32): of the infinite in the finite, the other in the self. That this is a clarification becomes obvious when one looks at the term “inifinition” in *Totalité et infini* — for this means nothing other than “the astonishing feat of containing more than it is possible to contain,” of which subjectivity shows itself to be capable (TI xv/27).

We will see later that Lacan also offers a version of infinity, although it carries the name infinitisation and will only become comprehensible once the functions “alienation” and “separation” are introduced. For that matter, we must not indiscriminately list references, correspondences and relationships among themes, theses, and methods. Levinas locates the Cartesian cogito in the dependence on the idea of the infinite and thus on a pre-existing relationship to God; but Lacan’s own grasp of the cogito goes in the opposite direction. The Cartesian God is taken by Lacan simply as a contrasting foil in order to clarify the specific intuitions and expectations that are imposed on the analyst in practical psychoanalysis. Characteristic, in this regard, is the confrontation of specific anxieties: the fear of being deceived by the genius malignus versus the fear of deceiving the analyst, a fear that, according to Lacan, []manifests itself in certain moments of analysis (Sém XI 37/37; 126/137; 211/233). His concept of a *sujet supposé savoir*, a subject who is supposed to know certainly refers not only to the analyst of whom this is presumed; rather, an “unconscious knowledge” is to be presumed as ultimate motive on the part of the one who undergoes analysis; this concept simply serves, not only to determine the function of the idealization of the analyst, which is inevitable in certain phases of analysis, but also to cut short the thought of any resemblance between the analyst and God in connection with this unavoidable evocation. At one point Lacan even sets the *sujet supposé savoir* and God — a very specific God — in direct relation: “The subject supposed to know, God himself, to call him by the name that Pascal gives him, when one describes him through his opposite: not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the God of the philosophers, the very one who is disturbed out of his latency in all theory. *Theoria* — might that be the place in the world of theo-logy?” (33) In this context a fundamental difference between Lacan and Levinas on the question of the Other needs to be brought out: while “Levinas’s thought remains in play — a play of difference and of analogy — between the face of God and the face of my neighbour, between the infinite Other as God and the infinite Other as the other person,” (34) the Other for Lacan is first of all faceless: the Other is a site. The Other only obtains a face when someone actually inhabits this place, for instance the mother (É 813) or an “exemplar” of the opposite sex (É 849). Only then does it become meaningful to speak of a real Other (primarily the mother qua maternity and biological birth), a symbolic Other (first of all the father as the dead father, the ancestor), and an imaginary Other (the staged Other of fantasy). But firstly and fundamentally the Other is a site that is required so that the play of signifiers does not remain an empty play, or one running on empty. Lacan assigns it variously articulated determinants, which end, however, in one and the same function:

- the Other as “the locus of speech and, potentially, the locus of truth,” which can be called on, even from the position of the unconscious, and which, latent or not, is always already there (Sém XI 118/129);
- the Other as the “site at which speech verifies itself in meeting the exchange of signifiers, the ideals they support, the elementary structures of kinship, the metaphor of the father as principle of separation, the division that is always re-opened within the subject in his primary alienation” (É 849);
- “the site of the Other, the Other (as) witness, the witness Other than any one of the partners” (É 807);
- 4. the Other as “the site of the thesaurus of the signifier” (É 806);
- the Other as discourse of the Other: “the unconscious is the discourse of [de] the Other, where one must understand the de in the sense of the Latin de (as specification of the object): *de Alio in oratione* (to be completed: *tua res agitur*)” (É 814);
- the Other who “is nothing else than the pure subject of modern game theory” (É 806), “the ostensible site of the pure subject of the signifier” (É 807).

The first three aspects (of this list which is not intended to be complete) (35) are no doubt closely linked: they describe the transcendent Other who can be addressed and to whom one can refer, the irreducible expulsion of the possibility of truth in speaking (not, however, of its factual guarantee). The second point

stresses the contractual aspect of this Other, which Lacan elsewhere also calls the “symbolic pact”: here the Other merges with the codified symbolic order — the binding laws of exchange, the elementary structures of kinship, the implicit “social contract.” The third aspect lays claim to a testimony that cannot be provided by those who are speaking to one another — but even this can be better understood from the perspective of truth than from a religious understanding of “testimony” such as one finds in Levinas.<sup>36</sup> The Other can therefore be understood in Lacan as, at best, a secularized “idea of God,” as the de-personalized symbolic function [] robbed of the attribute of a face (37), which can be called on for the sake of truth and justice.<sup>(38)</sup> Can be called on — no less, but also no more. The Other, beyond the fact of holding open the dimension of truth, has no further guaranteeing function in Lacan. This finds expression in formulas like “there is no Other of the Other” (39) or the “S (A)” — the “signifier of the lack in the Other that is inherent in its very function of being a thesaurus of the signifier” (É 818). The Other also proves to be desiring, and vulnerable to castration.

According to number four, the Other is nothing other than language in the sense of a “synchronic battery of signifiers,” which the subject makes use of in the diachronic speech act. Number five names the inner otherness of the “unconscious,” which is (and this is the barrier that Lacan methodically sets up against any possible “naturalization”) in itself nothing other than the external otherness of language and discourse (“l’inconscient est structuré comme un langage” — “the unconscious is structured like a language / as a language,” where the second version, to which I myself incline, puts greater emphasis on the methodological element: the unconscious is structured when it is examined as a language) (40). Sixth point: the Other here seems to be established as a complementary function of the subject, even if an overrated and idealized one. The Other in game theory, for instance, is the fictive ideal of one who makes infallible calculations. He is a pure subject of the signifier, in the sense of doing nothing other than fitting in with this signifier, in contrast to the subject of the unconscious, who, being qua drive still bound to objects and in this way always referring at least to a remainder of the real, is always only an “impure” subject of the signifier. A pure subject of the signifier perhaps only exists in a purely theoretically defined moment — that of the infinitisation, infinitization, of the subject, when the ur-signifier is pure non-sense and does not let any unconscious meaning arise in the subject, but completely abolishes this meaning (Sém XI 227/252). Only this “case” does not seem to be so eccentric, since Lacan immediately afterward formulates the project of achieving, by way of a formalization, “the mediation of this infinity of the subject with the finiteness of desire” (Sém XI 228/252). So Lacan too is concerned with the relation between an infinite and a finite, even if in a very different way from Levinas. Here we are dealing, after all, with the infinity of a subject — which, however, can only come into existence in the first place because the subject is called on to realize himself in the field of the Other.

### The Place and Function of the Cogito and the Other in Lacan and Levinas

“Field” (champ) is a term used frequently by Lacan, seldom by Levinas. I could have added the Lacanian “field of the Other” as a further meaning of otherness, if the field-quality did not form, as it were, the structural element of all the accentuations of the function of the Other that are listed here. But before I address the “field of the Other” and the operations of alienation and separation that are to be carried out in it by the subject, it is important first to return once more to the Cartesian cogito and to establish the situation of the subject — both Lacan and Levinas offer him a “home,” a “chez soi.” For Levinas, however, this is a very dubious home, namely one in which the ego, its link as cogito with the idea of the infinite dissolved, resides in a realm of the self, in which it is free (TI 7/37). Levinasian ethics is fundamentally a critique of freedom as spontaneity; responsibility for the other is anterior to freedom — I do not even have the freedom to close myself off from this call to responsibility for the other, for thereby the responsibility only increases (which does not mean that it decreases if I heed the call — it always increases). According to Levinas, responsibility does not rest on a freely chosen commitment; rather, I am always already called to this responsibility, called in such a way that my belatedness is unavoidable and I am always already guilty (AE 174ff./136ff.).

Lacan also does not understand freedom as the spontaneity of a self-positing subject, but instead assigns it a specific place on the way to realization in the field of the Other. The “home” that he himself first offers the subject is already from the outset implicated in an otherness. The subject’s site — by this is still meant the

Cartesian subject, the hypokeimenon of that which says cogito, je pense, I think — is the complete, total site of the web of signifiers: there, where it was, where it has always been, that site is the dream. “Here, in the field of the dream, you are at home. Wo es war, soll Ich werden (41)...But the subject is there to rediscover where it was — I anticipate — the real” (Sém XI 45/44-45). The site of the dream is an interval not only in the spatial sense — between perception and consciousness — but also in a temporal sense. The diachronic temporality of “where It was”/“I am to become” [“wo Es war”/“soll Ich werden”] is the temporality of a transition in which something always comes too late: consciousness.

“[The cogito] does indeed mark commencement, because it is the awakening of an existence that takes charge of its own condition. But this awakening comes from the Other. Before the cogito existence dreams itself, as though it remained foreign to itself. It is because it suspects that it is dreaming itself that it awakens. The doubt makes it seek certainty” (TI 58/86). This certainty, however, is always only that of the cogito, never that of where it was and what it was there. For the task set by the “becoming there” “where it was” is that of grasping primary process. This is clearly distinguished from the cogito: in the dream, no reflexivity, no self-confirmation is possible. “[The subject] may say to himself, It’s only a dream. But he does not apprehend himself as someone who says to himself — After all, I am the consciousness of this dream” (Sém XI 72/75-76).

The moment of rupture is at the same time the moment of transition: the event of awakening. Lacan relates how he wakes up out of a dream, awoken by a knock on the door — to the belatedness of this narration is added a doubling, the recital of which demands a diachronic beginning. On the one hand, the causal event is reconstructed that brings about the awakening out of the dream (and through the dream) from outside of the dream (here, the knocking on the door). On the other hand, that itself is worked into the dream, which tries to connect to another real (to this, in terms of its temporality, namely that of a past which from the outset cannot be recalled, an always-already-lostness, may be ascribed precisely those attributes that Levinas has grasped in his term trace: for that to be the past which has never been the present) — to that traumatic real that is always missed, and that constitutes the kernel of the unconscious. In awakening I reconstitute my representation around this perception (the knock); my consciousness reorganizes itself, namely as a purely representing consciousness. From where I now think, that is, as a consciousness dependent on the representation, I can no longer come to the “what I am at that moment — at the moment, so immediately before and so separate, which is that in which I began to dream under the effect of the knocking which is, to all appearances, what woke me” (Sém XI 56/56). With the “emergence of the represented reality,” awakening achieves the contours of a “béance,” a “gaping” or “gap” (Sém XI 56/57), that cannot be closed.

Yet with awakening we are not free of the problem of dream and cogito; also, consciousness or the conscious, self-reflexive ego is not out of the woods. For even representation does not guarantee full transparency and, above all, it does not reduce the minimal temporal difference. Between perception and consciousness — the psychic location of the dream since Freud — is also an interval between perception and consciousness. “That which shows itself must already have been lost in order to be found again by consciousness.” (42) To that extent the cogito, the I think, as an act of stating, is always separate from the I am as statement: however clearly, physically, and immediately I may feel that I am, while I think and state that I am, that I exist — as soon as I form a representation of my “I am,” I have the problem that I am and that I am in my representation, where the two modes of being need not immediately coincide (as the famous saying of Parmenides goes, “for thinking and being are the same”) (43). Lacan also uses the modifying phrase that one does not find in Descartes: “De penser, je suis”; “I think — by virtue of thinking, I am” (Sém XI 36/35). With the turn toward je suis, a “real” is aimed at but not reached — at least not as a true one. The problematic whereby the cogito may have the certainty that proceeds directly from its act of thought, but not yet the truth of itself, does not lie in the fact that the cogito, in the process of its achievement as doubt, has rendered all possible truth invalid. It lies rather in the constitutive split between thinking and being, between myself as thinking thing, as res cogitans, and myself as existing thing, as res extensa. In a certain way, I am as a valid meaning for me of I think is only guaranteed me insofar as and as long as I think. Precisely this starting point renders it necessary for Descartes to dispel the disturbing hypothesis of the genius malignus, that is, to return to a God who guarantees metaphysical truths. And Levinas, as we have seen, placed before



the cogito the relationship toward the infinite itself.

Levinas has also focussed specifically on the “evil genius” which is articulated in Descartes, and recognized its proper malignancy in the fact that it denies the affirmative word, and in fact any speech whatsoever, and so releases a lie that cannot be refuted because it is not even established verbally in the first place (TI 63-64/90-92). For the cogito as the end- and turning-point of a process of doubt, of which the highest point consists in the fact of being at the mercy of this evil genius, means that for the moment it achieves itself only as “the thinking subject which denies its evidences” and attains in the cogito “the evidence of this work of negation” — thus Levinas (TI 65-66/93). “Perhaps the I think, reduced to this punctuality of being certain only of the absolute doubt concerning all signification, its own included, has a still more fragile status than that in which we were able to attack the I am lying” — thus Lacan (Sém XI 129/140-41). This “movement unto the abyss,” this vertigo that carries the subject off with it, can only be halted by the word of the other, for “[i]t is not I, it is the other that can say yes” (TI 66/93). And Levinas concludes this disturbing thought-experiment of a world without the Other, a “world absolutely silent that would not come to us from the word” (TI 63/90), with the assurance that — and this holds true, in his opinion, for Descartes — “to possess the idea of infinity is to have already welcomed the Other” (TI 66/93).(44)

In Lacan the emphasis shifts. “I” am to realize myself in the field of the Other. “I” am, as it were, to go out to him, to break through an interiority or at least the appearance of one, even if it is posed only by the narcissism of the ego.(45) But in a certain way the Other is always already with me, in me — so much in me, with me, that he represents my own “with me,” my “at home”: the unconscious. The atheism of a break with participation in Levinas, which is at the same time a prerequisite for my being able (having been able) to receive the Other — finds its pendant in a formulation of Lacan’s that questions especially drastically the guaranteeing function of the Other, but in a certain way also gives it new support: “the true formula of atheism is not God is dead...the true formula of atheism is God is unconscious” (Sém XI 58/59). We can also see this sentence as an exaggeration of Nietzsche’s famous dictum that “we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar” (46): that is, that God can exert an especially powerful influence there, in the unconscious.

More important still is that the Other to whom the subject must turn and to whom he must hold for the sake of realization is also understood as desiring (I do not dare pose the question here whether this holds only for the Other as site insofar as it is occupied by someone — perhaps father or mother — or whether a desire can also be attributed to the Other as thesaurus of language — perhaps that desire of the Other of which Lacan says that it is the desire for the human being). It also holds true for Lacan that the Other is always already there, if not exactly via the idea of the infinite as one who is welcomed, then still as addressee of my speech and my desire.

This can also be demonstrated precisely in relation to the dream, which Freud recognized as a type of unconscious thought. If Lacan attributes a subject to this unconscious thought (that is, a subject of the unconscious), this means in relation to the dream that “it thinks before it attains certainty” (Sém XI 37/37). This certainty for Lacan attaches itself to constellations of signifiers — thus the examination of the repetition of the dream narrative and the observation of the changes that are recognizable in it. But what is more important is that certainty is not in the same place as the expression of the dream. “For the subject of certainty is divided here — it is Freud who has certainty” (Sém XI 47/46). In other words, the constellation of the subject of the unconscious and his certainty already stands in a relationship to the Other, a relationship that already bears the decisive marks of transference, as Lacan understands it. For as he will say later in the part of Seminar XI devoted to transference, “the subject is looking for his certainty. And the certainty of the analyst himself concerning the unconscious cannot be derived from the concept of the transference” (Sém XI 118/129). The analyst is called on to give “ethical witness,” that is, in the “moment when he feels he has the courage to judge and to conclude” (Sém XI 40/40). The analyst’s responsibility, in the analysis as well as in general, is to hold open access to the unconscious, or, because the unconscious invariably closes itself up again (and here again the closing up occurs in individual analysis as well as does, as a loss of the unconscious, in the history of psychoanalysis) — Lacan speaks in this context of a “pulsation” (Sém XI

44/43, 115/125, 131/143, 189/207) — to be by his presence a “witness of this loss” (Sém XI 116/127). And to enter into “a new alliance.”

Lacan differentiates in transference between an affective and a structural element. Lacan does not reject the understanding of transference as affect; he only thinks it does not go far enough. The aforementioned affect is for him transference love, and it brings in the dimension of deceit (47), which in a conventional understanding of transference is too quickly reduced to the effect of confusion. To speak of confusion presupposes too much: namely, that one has control over access to the truth, to a reality that can be used as a reliable measuring rod. This is not the case. Moreover, the affective element is flanked by the structural element as a necessary condition, and this is nothing other than the analytical situation as a situation of speaking in the presence of the analyst. One could also speak of synchronic organization; in relation to this, transference love forms the diachronic element, that is, as the achievement of a closing of the unconscious — which as such is not merely disadvantageous, but is rather the necessary condition for interpretation to begin in earnest (Sém XI 119/131).

“Transference is the enactment [mise-en-acte] of the reality of the unconscious” (Sém XI 137/149). To be noted here is the ethical connotation of “acte,” (48) which, whether as sexual or testamentary act, always implicitly or explicitly gives testimony. It is only that the status of testimony, as far as the reality of the unconscious is concerned, lies with the Other — in this case, with the analyst.

## Séparation

The whole of Seminar XI contributes to a more exact definition of that which was already clarified in the discussion of the Cartesian cogito as the actual problem of subjectivity (as a subjectivity affected by the unconscious): the subject is divided within himself, and this division or rift is one that manifests itself as an effect of language. Lacan distinguishes the subject of stating (which is here correlated with the I think) from the subject of the statement (the I am, more or less). Now, this distinction is also found in linguistics, and there serves in the analysis of what Husserl once called “occasional expressions,” which, like the personal pronouns, have no actual definable meaning, but have to be filled in each time by the “real.” What looks linguistically like a bridging function between speech and reality, sense and existence, always remains in tension for Lacan and never closes itself up. The treatment of the cogito has shown that here also a temporal difference — a diachrony, as Levinas would say — is inscribed. We notice that the distinction between the subject of stating and the subject of the statement also corresponds to the Levinasian distinction between dire and dit, between saying and the said, which at least since Autrement qu’être has achieved pre-eminent methodological value in Levinas.(49) However, Lacan also speaks increasingly of dire and dit, in formulations which in their tone also are strongly reminiscent of Levinas. One example:

The saying of Freud [le dire de Freud] follows from the logic that has as its source that which is said by the unconscious. Insofar as Freud has discovered this said, it ex-sists.

It is necessary to reconstitute the saying of it so that the discourse of analysis can constitute itself (to which I contribute), namely from the experience in which it shows itself to exist.

One cannot translate this saying into truth-terms, for truth is only available half-said [midit], smoothly cut off, but that there is this pure half-said (it may be conjugated on the model of tu médites, je médis [you consider, I insult]), achieves its sense only from this saying.(50)

More could be said concerning the relation between dire, dit, and Dieu. (51) But I turn now to a result that bears on it indirectly, insofar as it becomes noticeable in a mutual exclusion between being [Sein] and sense [Sinn]. The starting point is the necessity that has already been discussed for the subject to realize himself in the field of the Other (that is, above all but not exclusively, in the field of language). This necessity deepens and widens the division of the subject: “Through the effects of speech, the subject always realizes himself more in the Other, but there he is already pursuing no more than half of himself. He will simply find his desire ever more divided, pulverized, in the circumscribable metonymy of speech. The effects of language

are always mixed with the fact, which is the basis of the analytic experience, that the subject is subject only from being subjected to the field of the Other, the subject proceeds from his synchronic subjection in the field of the Other. That is why he must get out, get himself out, and in the getting-himself-out, in the end, he will know that the real Other has, just as much as himself, to get himself out, to pull himself free" (Sém XI 172/188 [translation amended]). The latter point, however, does not let us conclude that there is a reciprocity between the subject and the Other; here Lacan draws a line between circularity and reciprocal relationships (cf. Sém XI 188/207; É 839). On this point there is no difference between Levinas and Lacan. The above-mentioned synchronicity is to be understood in two ways: on the one hand as a synchronicity of the signifier, and that always means as the structural condition of language itself; if something is significant, so by the same token everything is meaningful — nothing is excluded from significance, from meaning, so the "encounter" with this something as the (fictive) first signifier turns directly back to the subject — in the search for my own significance.(52) On the other hand, it is to be understood in that temporally-paradoxical sense of the concept of structure as a methodological cut through time, by which diachronic events can be distinguished even more clearly. Lacan also stresses this peculiar temporality: "The subject is born in so far as the signifier emerges in the field of the Other. But, by this very fact, this subject — which was previously nothing if not a subject coming into being — solidifies into a signifier" (Sém XI 181/199).(53)

The situation of realization in the field of the Other as subjection to the signifier, as something represented by a signifier for a signifier (É 840), is not without an alternative, although the alternative is more of a seeming alternative: it is called aphanisis and denotes a fading of the subject, with lethal tendencies (Sém XI 189/207-8). In the operation denominated alienation, the subject in the act of self-establishment must choose between the sense produced by the signifier on the one hand, and aphanisis on the other. This is a choice that is not really a choice in the sense that one can have that on which one decided: the choice of alienation always ends in the need to let something go. If we try to hold on to one thing, the other disappears.

The alternative itself already represents a foreshortening. Lacan clarifies this in the apparent opposition between the subject's sense [Sinn] and being [Sein]. If one chooses the being of the subject, precisely that subject disappears who must achieve realization in the field of the Other, of language, and who can achieve sense only there; if one chooses sense, one must be equally prepared for a loss — that of the non-sense that the unconscious represents, the formations of which, we remember, have the status of the non-realized, which cannot be classified as either being or non-being. The lethal tendency of the choice of alienation becomes even clearer in the example your money or your life — either I lose both, or I keep a life diminished by the element of money. Lacan traces this back to the fact that the vel, the or, of alienation functions in the sense of union in set theory and consequently becomes equivalent to an et (sic et non) (É 840).

With the return out of alienation the second operation sets in, which Lacan outlines in the context of the realization of the subject in the field of the Other as an "encounter" with the signifier: this is separation. In set theory, the function of intersection corresponds to it. In an expansive analysis of the meaning of the verb *se parare*, Lacan derives from this verb the meanings "to defend oneself," "to resist," but also "to adorn oneself," "to dress oneself," and finally "to generate oneself." Essentially, however, separation is a response of the subject to the "intimation that the Other makes to him by his discourse." The subject thereby becomes aware of something that in itself is the desire of the Other, but that cannot yet be experienced by the subject as desire, and instead presents itself in all its impenetrable mystery as a lack. The subject experiences himself as exposed to the question: "He is saying this to me, but what does he want?" (Sém XI 194/214; É 843-44). He answers with the production of a lack of his own, the most convenient one being to offer himself as lack, that is, to offer his own disappearance as an active test of what it is that comes from the Other. Lacan sees in this episode between child and adult the seed of that which is called "mental anorexia." (54) Yet this is not a psychological event, nothing that could be understood as disturbed communication, analyzed, and cured. It is not only that the experience of the desire of the Other is unavoidable; just as unavoidable is the confrontation with an inner dimension of loss which advises one precisely to bring oneself into play as loss, as disappearance, if perhaps only for lack of something better. The lethal dimension to which Lacan has referred again and again in the entire passage is not an imaginary one: it is death itself. It

is death as the negative quantity of the libido — the negative quantity of which Lacan speaks for the first time in Seminar XI at the introduction of the cause as explanation for the unconscious, and for the second time when he is concerned with making possible “the mediation of this infinity of the subject with the finiteness of desire” (Sém XI 228/252):

It is the libido, qua pure life instinct, that is to say, immortal life, or irrepressible life, life that has need of no organ, simplified, indestructible life. It is precisely what is subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction. And it is of this that all the forms of the objet a that can be enumerated are the representatives, the equivalents. The objets a are merely its representatives, its figures. (Sém XI 180/198)

The object a is the product of separation (in cases where the subject finds something to separate, something that falls off from the body, and not, as in the case mentioned above, where the subject must give himself up as lost), and it is Lacan’s response to Heidegger. For him death is “signifier and nothing but signifier, for can it be said that there is a being-for-death?” (Sém XI 232/257). The object a embodies Dasein, as Lacan notes elsewhere.(55) It embodies it in the “form” of a negative quantity, a “purely topological reality,” an “irreal.”

Separation would lead back into alienation (and in the case of “mental anorexia” this is what happens), if the (as it were) ceded object did not intervene. For one can also see this ceding, this letting-something-fall-away-from-the-body or letting-something-emerge-from-the-body, as the genesis of the drive. The drive and the object a have the same origin. With the object the lethal dimension of loss is covered over without being able to be completely forgotten; every component drive remains, latently, a death drive. In this way Lacan has brought about the closest possible connection between death and sexual reproduction, without having to pay the full price of a mythologization of the death drive or a biologization of the theory of drives. Not to mention that in this way he also saves Freud’s participation in the search for a substance of eternal life from a mistaken interpretation that would expose it to ridicule.(56)

In Levinas, separation is the division of the self from the Other as a precondition for the fact that a relationship between them is never able to reduce the infinite distance, that is to say the transcendence, which is posited by the division. As we have seen, separation for Levinas is closely bound up with the cogito: the cogito testifies to the division, and with it that atheism of the break with the heathen gods which is the prerequisite for the assumption of the idea of the infinite. But separation is also the precondition for that which Levinas calls “psychism,” the “inner life” or “interiority.” However, separation must not be confused with segregation or closing off. Rather, “the uniqueness of separation must paradoxically consist in a structure which cannot be reduced to closure. It must be the work of a primordial change, a ‘non-allergic’ relationship to otherness that lends or inspires density, or the hyperbolic intensity of uniqueness.”<sup>57</sup> Separation as “psychism” or “inner life” is “life from...,” is “jouissance” (“enjoyment” or “bliss”) (TI 82ff./110ff.). The love of life that makes itself known in this (“Life is the love of life...”) is emphatically distinguished from care about being. Separation is, as paradoxical as it sounds, a manner of being-with-oneself, that is, in enjoyment as life from...: “In enjoyment throbs egoist being. Enjoyment separates by engaging in the contents from which it lives. Separation comes to pass as the positive work of this engagement; it does not result from a simple split, like a spatial removal. To be separated is to be at home with oneself. But to be at home with oneself...is to live from..., to enjoy the elemental” (TI 120/147). Thus separation is at the same time a relation of openness to the things in the world which are not prematurely reduced to their usefulness for something. By the elemental is meant in fact the elements — air, water, earth — in which the human being moves, in which he or she “bathes,” and which the human being enjoys before considering that and how he or she lives from them. This is an enjoyment which in its fundamental nature is, however, quickly forgotten in favour of a relationship to the world in which instrumentality, in the shape of availability and accessibility, remolds the elemental, or even the nourishing, and removes it from thematic attention. But below the level of equipment, the element offers itself to enjoyment as the “universal category of the empirical” (TI 106/132-33). As such, enjoyment lies on the level of sensibility or corporality: it is pre-reflexive. And the element even precedes the separation of finite and infinite. “To enjoy without utility, in pure loss, gratuitously, without referring to anything else, in pure expenditure — this is the human” (TI

If one thinks Lacan and Levinas together at this point, then enjoyment would be the expression of libido in life, uninfluenced by anything else — it would be dying as enjoyment and enjoyment in dying, yet precisely “in pure consumption,” “in pure expenditure,” consequently also before the consciousness that would represent in this context the agency of postponement. It would be the successful “mediation” of the infinite and the finite — so successful that it would no longer even be “mediation,” but rather the finite in the infinite and the infinite in the finite (in the sense described by Levinas above); that is to say, it would be precisely the ideal which rejects mediation as unnecessary, but which in reality is still mediation, because psychism is not so constructed that it could abandon itself fully to this enjoyment. In Lacan it comes down to a splitting of enjoyment into an enjoyment of the Other, or absolute enjoyment, and a phallic enjoyment (Alain Juranville has described the relationship between them well).(58) The phallus itself takes over the function of this negative quantity between finite and infinite, but in this function is constantly threatened by and never insured against the possibility of being made positive, being made into an image, and being confused with an available worldly object. Only — such a phallus is as much a theoretical fiction as the representation of pure primary process. And so it is true that death is not only imperceptibly present in an absolute enjoyment that enjoys itself as pure expenditure, but also imposes itself, through “search,” “desire,” and the “question,” as the “scandal” of a “pur rapt,” a “pure rape/rapture,” an “abduction,” a “break-out” on a subject who strives for the “mediation” of finite and infinite. “My mortality, my sentence of death, my time at the point of death, my death which is not possibility of impossibility, but pure abduction [pur rapt], these constitute the absurdity that makes possible my responsibility for the other at no cost.” (59) And at the same time this absurdity causes the “access to a meaning in which the after-death cannot be thought of as an extension of the time of before death after death, but in which the after-death has its own motivations.” (60) Two things need to be overcome: death as sacred sacrifice to a “deus obscurus,” but also the fixation, which in Levinas’s view is equally pagan, on one’s own death as something that cannot be represented (by another). Both are heroisms that lack one thing: the patience to prove oneself through the death of the other, to let the dying of the other be my death.

For psychoanalysis according to Lacan, castration is the site of a “mediation” of finite and infinite, one that has not just comfortably lived out its term, but rather is sought by the subject. More exactly, this is symbolic castration. While Levinas understands the relation to the death of the other as a responsibility in which I am always already placed, for which I therefore do not have to decide and cannot even do so, psychoanalysis articulates this relationship as one of guilt. In “Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning,” Freud completes the narrative of the patient who had dreamed that his father, who had died some time ago, was alive again and did not know that he had already died, with additions that mark the intervention of the patient’s wishes into the dream narrative. It is the guilt of the Oedipal death-wish for the paternal rival that Freud exposes in this way.(61) Lacan shifts the emphasis of the interpretation: with the father’s death has died the one who, according to genealogy, is earlier in line to offer himself to death, and so is able to relieve the subject of the confrontation; if the father is dead, there is no one left in front behind whom the subject can hide.(62) That the “dead father” himself is still in play, and therefore the protection is not to be had apart from contamination by a profound connection with guilt, strengthens the latent neurotic dimension of this constellation. If one looks at the Levinasian conception of responsibility for the death of the other together with the guilt relationship of paternity (or, more exactly, of sonship), as diagnosed by psychoanalysis, then they appear as reciprocal avoidances. Levinas emphasizes responsibility that is not to be rejected, that is second to nothing, to the point of an immeasurability that causes the element of guilt to disappear behind it; guilt as active, individual becoming-guilty can only be thought as a consequence of this measureless responsibility. Psychoanalysis, by contrast, and this holds especially for the Freudian kind (but also that of Melanie Klein), makes the Oedipus complex into a universal constellation that has the subject become guilty on account of his wishes, before being able even to take on an ethical responsibility for himself, since moral authority only proceeds from the defeat of the Oedipus complex. In Lacan, however, a loosening of the sharp opposition becomes evident, since he, unlike Freud, is not trying to universalize the perspective of the theory of neuroses, but rather subordinates it to the foundation of a non-neurotic “pure” desire.

If the elemental is to precede the division of finite and infinite, the question of the relationship between enjoyment and God also arises. It is answered by Levinas at best indirectly, in terms of the connection between separation, psychism, enjoyment, and the infinite. For this reason it is not advisable to add in here, without qualification, the corresponding chapter from the seminar *Encore*: “*Dieu et la jouissance de La femme*” (“*God and the Enjoyment of the Woman*”), where the suggestion is nevertheless offered that we understand “the part of God as being borne by the enjoyment of woman.” (63) Here one would first have to discuss the feminine in Levinas, and that is a tricky matter.(64) In *Totalité et infini*, the feminine is thematized in the context of inhabitation, which in turn is conceived in terms of separation. “And the other whose presence is discreetly an absence, with which is accomplished the primary hospitable welcome which describes the field of intimacy, is the Woman. The woman is the condition for recollection, the interiority of the Home, and inhabitation” (TI 128/155). Before entering into an analysis of the position and function of woman in Levinas, his entire social theory would have to be engaged. Inhabitation, and the tying of woman to the household that goes along with it, is part and parcel of a wide-ranging attempt to understand separation as an economy — as a law of the household, if one goes back to the Greek terms — but also as an employment of material in the interest of a procrastination, a postponement. What is extraordinary about the Levinasian representation is that in its description it does not even mention the actual acts that separate, the acts of a “division from...”, of a sacrifice (the only “sacrifice” is the one implicit in separation, that of the heathen gods and of participation); rather, it is formally oriented toward the positivized results: the history of separation almost as a history of institutions — inhabitation, household, property, labour, the body subjected to a will, and finally the freedom of conception and creation, later the work, commerce, and law. What is extraordinary is that all of this becomes more comprehensible if one understands separation in exactly that double sense which Lacan too has proposed for this expression: division, but also generation, self-generation. We might even consider whether the perspectives of Lacan and Levinas, as far as separation is concerned, do not stand in a complementary relationship. Yet the pursuit of such a hypothesis, even if it does not seem tangential here, should be considered with care; it seems to me that for the present we will get further by proceeding with a contrasting evaluation.

In *Autrement qu’être*, this already reads quite differently. There “*jouissance*” is closely linked with pain (cf. AE 71/55, 80/63-64, 83/66) — in a way that Juranville has also shown to be valid in his reconstruction of Lacan.(65) “[E]njoyment is the singularization of an ego in its coiling back upon itself” (AE 93/73); thus it fulfills the function of separation, which in this work no longer plays the organizing role it does in *Totalité et infini*. Also, the linking of cogito and separation on the one hand, and of the Other as infinite, no longer appears as harmonious as in the 1961 book. In *Autrement qu’être*, Levinas has not only intensified the demand of responsibility into sheer immeasurability, but also exposes to this demand, besides psychism, the body in particular. The consequence is “an incessant alienation of the ego (isolated as inwardness) by the guest entrusted to it. Hospitality, the one-for-the-other in the ego...The animation of a body by a soul only articulates the one-for-the-other of subjectivity” (AE 99/79).(66) In a note to the last sentence, Levinas points out the acuity of the Cartesian move, which consists in not admitting any commonality between the body as source of the sensible and the knowledge of ideas. For Levinas this proves “the unintelligibility of incarnation, the ‘I think’ separated from extension, the cogito separated from the body. But this impossibility of being together is the trace of the diachrony of the one-for-the-other. That is, it is the trace of separation in the form of inwardness, and of the for-the-other in the form of responsibility” (AE 100/79).

Thus in Levinas, too, those terms are paired which are known to us as a pair from Lacan: alienation/separation. Several times “*psychism*” [*le psychisme*, here translated by Lingis as “*psyche*”] is defined as “the other in the same, without alienating the same” (AE 143/112, 146/115, 160/125). And on page 75 of *Autrement qu’être* Levinas defends his move against the hermeneutics of suspicion, that among other things calls into question the responsibility of the human being from the point of view of psychoanalysis in the guise of an objective anthropological knowledge. This anthropological knowledge, which assumes that the human being is conditioned, subjected to a *conditio humana*, is, however, irrelevant considering one’s neighbour and the demand that has always already been issued to me by him; still, Levinas poses the question, “what would there be if...”: what would there be if “anything in the world [were to]

deliver more immediately, beneath its alienation, its non-alienation, its separation, its holiness?" (AE 76/59).

Actually we should now turn back from Levinas to Lacan. Actually, we should now enter anew upon the movement of approach and distantiation, of setting-in-relation and assuming-distance, of drawing together and withdrawing — in a movement which orients itself according to that which Levinas has outlined as the step from dire to dit and dédire, calling back — in order to arrive in this way at a midire? Who knows? Nothing has yet been said, and above all far too little about the ethical in Lacan and Levinas.(67)

*Translated from the German by Angela Esterhammer*

## Notes:

(1) Emmanuel Levinas, "Philosophie, justice et amour," in *Entre nous. Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris: Grasset, 1991), p. 122.

(2) For the conversion of the experience of the face into the commandment (which is formulated more ambiguously in the French translation of the Bible and can also be read as a prediction, a prophecy: "You will not commit murder") and the "ethical resistance" that makes murder ethically impossible, even if it can be committed in fact, cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961), pp. 172-74; in English, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), pp. 197-200. Levinas stresses "the very straightforwardness of the face to face, without the intermediary of any image, in one's nudity, that is, in one's destitution and hunger" (p. 174/ Eng. p. 200). For the question of the status of the experience of the face—empirical or transcendental—cf. Theodore de Boer, "An Ethical Transcendental Philosophy," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, edited by Richard Cohen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 83ff., and Robert Bernasconi, "Rereading Totality and Infinity," in *The Question of the Other*, edited by Arleen B. Dallery and Charles E. Scott (New York: SUNY Press, 1989), p. 23ff., who takes issue with de Boer.

The following abbreviations will be used in this essay: for Levinas, TI (*Totalité et infini*, English translation *Totality and Infinity*); AE (*Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974], English translation *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, translated by Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981]); DEHH (*En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* [Paris: Vrin, 1974]); for Lacan, É (*Écrits* [Paris: Seuil, 1966]); Sém XI (*Le Séminaire Livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* [Paris: Seuil, 1973], English translation *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Alan Sheridan [New York: Norton, 1978]).

[Quotations from Lacan and Levinas are taken from the English translations listed above; page numbers in parentheses refer to the French edition first, the English second. Texts that have not been published in English are given in my own translations, translated directly from the French texts whenever these were available. Transl.]

(3) Frustratingly translated in the German edition as unendlich 'infinite, unending.' The German translation of *Totalité et infini* by Wolfgang Nikolaus Krewani is thoroughly problematic. For one thing, the translator misses the precision within Levinas's terminology (for instance, occasionally tricky distinctions such as between *jouissance* 'enjoyment' and *joie* 'joy,' or *maîtrise*, domination, and *souveraineté*, which may of course all be translated 'mastery,' but which, used next to one another, take on very different connotations—with Krewani this often gets confused). Secondly, he also seems to have great difficulty with the (translation of) Levinasian syntax and often breaks up his admittedly complex sentence structures into smaller units—not always without the loss of allusiveness. Not to mention the distortion in tone when, for instance, *production* is universally translated as *Ereignis* 'event,' and the tendency toward euphemization or moderation of extreme images: a "cut into life" where the original has a "coupure dans la chair vive," an "incision in the living flesh" (TI 48/76).

(4) In *L'Herne*, No. 60, Emmanuel Lévinas (Paris: L'Herne, 1991), p. 133 (emphasis in original). The final

sentence in Levinas's answer to an interviewer's question about his relationship to psychoanalysis and its practice is similar: "One speaks of the man who has 'gone through his Oedipus complex' (fait son Oedipe)—who has symbolically killed his father and taken his mother to wife—as of someone who has received first communion." But here too there is a clear difference between a practice, and above all the misuse that can be made of it ("I have a great mistrust of the practice of psychoanalysis and its abuses")—what is meant here is an ideologically normative abuse in the doxa of a culturally-socialized psychoanalysis and a society permeated by psychoanalytic culture—and the concept of the unconscious, assuming that this unconscious is no longer thought of as a representation or re-presentation, but as something unfolded in a temporal dimension, as Heidegger has explicated it in "The Anaximander Fragment" (Emmanuel Levinas, "Entretien," in *Répondre d'autrui*. Emmanuel Lévinas, edited by Jean-Christophe Aeschlimann [Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1989], pp. 13-14). Also worth noting is Levinas's attitude during a conference devoted to the question *La psychanalyse est-elle une histoire juive?* ("Is Psychoanalysis a Jewish History?"). Confessing his embarrassment over his sketchy knowledge of psychoanalysis, Levinas (author of "Quelques vues talmudiques sur le rêve" ("Some Talmudic Observations on Dreams")) describes this more specifically: "My embarrassment derives, incidentally, from the fact that I stand completely outside of psychoanalytic research, under whatever forms it is pursued, and that I am neutral toward the battles it brings about, despite the sympathy that the people themselves evoke in me." (*La psychanalyse est-elle une histoire juive? Colloque de Montpellier, 1980* [Paris: Seuil, 1981], pp. 114-15). And in "Réflexions sur la 'technique' phénoménologique," phenomenological method, as far as its openness and general applicability is concerned, is mentioned in a single breath with the "method of mathematical physics according to Galileo and Descartes," "dialectic according to Hegel and especially Marx," and "psychoanalysis according to Freud" (DEHH 111). When Elisabeth Weber speaks of a "very summary rejection of psychoanalysis" in Levinas (*Verfolgung und Trauma. Zu Emmanuel Lévinas' "Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence"* [Vienna: Passagen, 1990], p. 180, n. 96), I consider it as at best exaggerated; and the criticism that she raises with reference to an annotation in *Autrement qu'être*, where an unconscious is mentioned as a term that is the inverse of consciousness, which Weber takes as a starting point from which to accuse Levinas of the same misunderstanding of psychoanalysis as Habermas, would find no support in the statement I have cited above from Levinas on the unconscious. And if Levinas rejects an unconscious, defined as the reverse of consciousness, he is not doing anything different from Lacan: cf. É 830 ("La position de l'inconscient".)

(5) Despite a multitude of references to Lacan, Elisabeth Weber in *Verfolgung und Trauma* restricts herself to extracts that are meant to support, clarify, or even correct and complete particular theorems or arguments in Levinas, and in the course of this instrumental usage she reads him in some places simply as a theory of psychosexual development (for example, 182-85; this is no different from the way Alphonso Lingis proceeds, when he similarly, in the context of a "genetic analysis of the meaning and the value of the sign of the subject," assumes something of the Lacanian concept of the entrance of the child ("in-fant") into language; cf. *Deathbound Subjectivity* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989], 7, 156ff.). In addition, I know of several works that confront Levinas with Freudian psychoanalysis: the basically interesting article "La proximité chez Lévinas et le Nebenmensch freudien" (in *L'Herne*, No. 60, Emmanuel Lévinas, 431-43) by Monique Schneider (who gets carried away, however, when she tries to infer the Oedipus complex from the "complex of the Nebenmensch" [441]), and the study by Noreen O'Connor, "Who suffers?" (in *Re-Reading Levinas*, edited by Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991], 229-33), which is not very enlightening because it remains overly general, and which brings the Levinasian understanding of suffering together with François Roustang's theory of psychoses.

(6) Cf. Alain Juranville, *Lacan et la Philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1984), p. 194ff.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 13n.

(8) Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan & Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985*, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.)

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 592.

(10) Cf. Alain Juranville, *Lacan et la Philosophie*, pp. 407-27.

(11) Valuable reflections on Christianity as an important point of reference for the Lacanian reformulation of psychoanalysis can be found in an obituary for Lacan by Michel de Certeau, "Lacan: une éthique de la



parole,” in *Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), p. 186ff.

(12) The French cause, from the Latin *causa*, also means the “issue” concerned, especially if it is controversial or in the courts. Lacan will later speak of a “cause perdue,” a lost cause/origin as well as a lost case. And in the same context he will urge a “transcendental analysis of cause” (Sém XI 117/128).

(13) The terms belated and realization, especially in combination, are problematic here: they play down the extreme temporal circumstances, insofar as they bring to mind a delay rather than the surfacing of something that has not announced itself in advance by even the tiniest signal. Levinas provides the conceptual and descriptive tools for a radical thinking of these matters in his “concept” of the trace as an immemorial past, which was never present, and of diachrony as an irreducible rift in time.

(14) Lacan explicitly admits that he must here break with at least the letter of the Freudian text: “If I am formulating here that the status of the unconscious is ethical, and not ontic, it is precisely because Freud himself does not stress it when he gives the unconscious its status” (Sém XI 35/34).

(15) These statements by Lacan receive an interesting treatment by Jacques Rolland, who, in an essay on Blanchot in which he quotes at length from Seminar XI, does not directly relate Lacan and Levinas, yet opens a way to Totalité et infini through the mediation of some of Blanchot’s remarks. “Pour une approche de la question du neutre,” in *Exercices de la patience*, No. 2, Blanchot (1981), pp. 13-16.

(16) As early as 1936, in the final sentence of his essay “De l’évasion,” Levinas outlined the necessity of a conceptual reversal: “Our concern is to emerge from Being on a new path, at the risk of reversing certain concepts that seem most evident to the general understanding and to the wisdom of the nations” (De l’évasion [Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1982], p. 99). And in the same essay a complaint is already lodged about “ontologisme” as the “fundamental dogma of all our thinking” (p. 96).

(17) Derrida raised as early as 1964 clear objections against Levinas’s remarks on the primacy of ontology or a primacy of being over existents (cf. “Violence et métaphysique,” in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 69 (1964), p. 452ff.; revised version reprinted in *L’écriture et la différence* [Paris: Seuil, 1967], 198ff.; English version “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978], p. 136ff.). For the question of whether Derrida’s essay on Levinas is to be read as critique (as is generally done) or already as the seed of deconstruction, cf. the article by Robert Bernasconi, “Deconstruction and the Possibility of Ethics,” in *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, edited by John Sallis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 122-39.

(18) The word itself does not appear a single time in *Totalité et infini*; in *Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence*, there are allusions to the “pre-ontological weight of language” (p. 55/43) and the “irrecoverable pre-ontological past, that of maternity” (p. 99/78).

(19) A complication should, however, not be overlooked. In answer to a question by Theo de Boer, Levinas explains “anteriority,” which is to be understood as transcendental, as follows: “with the qualification that the ethical comes before ontology. It is more ontological than ontology, more sublime than ontology” (De Dieu qui vient à l’idée [Paris: Vrin, 1982], p. 143—emphasis in original).

(20) Cf. Sigmund Freud, “The Forgetting of Dreams,” in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, Vol. 5 (London: Hogarth, 1953), pp. 512-32. Lacan relies above all on the sentence, “That is why in analysing a dream I insist that the whole scale of estimates of certainty shall be abandoned and that the faintest possibility that something of this or that sort may have occurred in the dream shall be treated as complete certainty” (p. 516). But the whole paragraph is significant. Right at the beginning Freud points out that there is no basis of “intellectual warrant” for doubt and that “there is in general no guarantee of the correctness of our memory” (p. 515). Shortly before, he had still stressed the necessity of treating the apparently arbitrary improvisation of the dream narrative as “Holy Writ” (p. 514). I have investigated the implications that result from this for an understanding of text and textuality in psychoanalysis in my essay “Text und Unbewußtes (Freud, Lacan, Derrida),” in *Parabel. Schriftenreihe der Evangelischen Studienstiftung*, No. 16, Textwelt (Gießen, 1993), pp. 86-110.

(21) It is not possible here to go into the diverse questions that result from the Lacanian rapprochement of Freud and Descartes. Cf. Bernard Baas and Armand Zaloszcyc, *Descartes et les fondements de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Navarin Osiris, 1988), and Guy Le Gaufey, *L’incomplétude du symbolique. De René Descartes à Jacques Lacan* (Paris: E.P.E.L., 1991).

(22) René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross,

edited by Stanley Tweyman (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 51.

(23) *Ibid.*, p. 67.

(24) In Dieter Henrich's account of the Cartesian proof of the existence of God the question of the infinite / finite comes in only at the margins (cf. *Der ontologische Gottesbeweis*, 2d ed. [Tübingen: Mohr, 1960], pp. 10-22).

(25) Robert Bernasconi ("The Silent Anarchic World of the Evil Genius," in *The Collegium Phaenomenologicum: The First Ten Years*, edited by John C. Sallis, Guiseppina Moneta, and Jacques Taminiaux [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988], pp. 257-72) clearly identifies the problems that result from Levinas's disregard of the ontotheological context in Descartes (pp. 258-59); the essay by Jean-François Lavigne—"L'idée de l'infini: Descartes dans la pensée d'Emmanuel Lévinas," in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 92 (1987), pp. 54-66—is more positive. In earlier essays Levinas himself had still put the main emphasis on the perfection of God (cf. DEHH 96, 113).

(26) The standard for this question has been set by Jean-Luc Marion in *Sur la théologie blanche de Descartes* (Paris: PUF, 1981).

(27) In "Le temps et l'autre," a publication that goes back to lectures from 1946-47, Levinas still outlined this act as "hypostasis" (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1979, 3p. 1ff.). In each case the precondition is the emergence out of all forms of sacred participation. Levinas also refers in this context to Lévy-Bruhl.

(28) Thus the formulation of John Llewelyn, *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 55.

(29) Robert Bernasconi, "The Silent Anarchic World of the Evil Genius," *cit. supra* n. 25, p. 266.

(30) Cf. also, on posteriority, TI 126/153 and 143/169.

(31) Emmanuel Levinas, "God and Philosophy," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987), p. 162.

(32) *Ibid.*, p. 160.

(33) "La méprise du sujet supposé savoir," *Scilicet* 1 (1968), p. 39.

(34) Jacques Derrida, "Donner la mort," in *L'éthique du don. Jacques Derrida et la pensée du don, Colloque du Royaumont, décembre 1990*, edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté and Michael Wetzell (Paris: Métailié-Transition, 1992), pp. 80-81.

(35) For instance, because of its strongly Hegelian cast, the passage from "The agency of the letter in the unconscious" was deliberately omitted in which Lacan brings the "Other" into operation as "the second level of Otherness": "If I have said that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other (with a capital O), it is in order to indicate the beyond in which the recognition of desire is bound up with the desire for recognition" (É 524; English translation in *Écrits: A Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan [New York: Norton, 1977], p. 172).

(36) Cf. especially the lecture "Vérité comme dévoilement et vérité comme témoignage," in *Le Témoignage* (Actes du Colloque organisé par le Centre International d'Études Humanistes et par l'Institut d'Études Philosophiques de Rome) (Paris: Flammarion, 1972), pp. 101-10, which was adopted in extensively revised form under the title "Subjectivité et infini" as the fifth chapter of *Autrement qu'être*. Paul Ricoeur provides a comparative examination of the problematic of testimony in Heidegger (conscience), Nabert, and Levinas: "Emmanuel Lévinas. Penseur du Témoignage," in *Répondre d'autrui—Emmanuel Lévinas*, pp. 17-40. Ricoeur stresses "that testimony opposes the certainty of the representation that includes self-certainty and the manifestation of all existents" (p. 35). Levinas, for his part, dedicated an essay to Ricoeur which likewise deals with "giving testimony": "Du langage religieux et de la crainte de Dieu," in *L'au-delà du verset. Lectures et discours talmudiques* (Paris: Minuit, 1982), pp. 107-22.

(37) One could perhaps speak here of "de-facement." Levinas speaks in several places of "dé-visager" (AE 201-2/158-59).

(38) A striking statement is found in *Encore*: "The Other, the Other as the site of truth, is the only place, however irreducible, that we can assign to the term divine being—God, to call him by his name" (Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire Livre XX: Encore* [Paris: Seuil, 1975], p. 44. The continuation of this passage can be found in note 51.)

(39) In contrast to Levinas, who can actually assert: "God is not simply the 'first other,' the 'other par excellence,' or the 'absolutely other,' but other than the other [autre qu'autrui], other otherwise, other with an alterity prior to the alterity of the other, prior to the ethical bond with another and different from every

neighbor” (“God and Philosophy,” pp. 165-66).

(40) Cf. the essay of mine mentioned in note 20.

(41) Emphasis in original. The quotation from Freud is in German in Lacan’s text. Lacan repeatedly stressed that the “I am to become” [“soll Ich werden”] is to be understood in the ethical sense of a command (cf. the representative passage at É 417).

(42) Emmanuel Lévinas, “Langage et proximité,” in DEHH, p. 222.

(43) For a critique of the translation and a forced new inflection of this sentence, cf. Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976), p. 104ff., and “Moira (Parmenides VIII.pp. 34-41),” in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 4th ed. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1978), p. 223ff. In particular, to auto, the “same,” is a “riddle” for Heidegger (p. 233).

(44) On this “thought-experiment,” cf. also the above-mentioned article by Robert Bernasconi, “The Silent Anarchic World of the Evil Genius,” p. 269.

(45) However, this raises the question of whether in Lacan as well we must assume two different conceptions of the “ego,” or else whether the devaluation of the ego as a misjudging authority, as generally attributed to Lacan, is the whole truth. For the “I” of the “I am to become” can hardly be the “I/ego” of narcissism, at least not (anymore) once it has become what or where it is to become. Alain Juranville, in his essay at the Zürich symposium “Kant/Lacan—ethische Grundfragen,” reached the same conclusion beginning from a different background. Cf. Alain Juranville, “Subjekt, Individuum, Ich,” in *Ethik und Psychoanalyse. Vom kategorischen Imperativ zum Gesetz des Begehrens: Kant und Lacan*, edited by Hans-Dieter Gondek and Peter Widmer (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1994).

(46) *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 483.

(47) Lacan provides only very modest hints that this “true love” (as, following Freud, he also refers to it) is more than just deceit, voluntary or involuntary. Alain Juranville has made clear that for the sake of the success of the analysis a love must be evoked that is something other than transference love (cf. Lacan et la Philosophie, cit. supra n. 6, pp. 333-34).

(48) Cf. the essay by Alain Juranville in this volume, where the ethical weight of this term is revealed.

(49) Simon Critchley refers to it repeatedly in *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, while also stressing the non-synchronicity of *énoncé* and *énonciation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 7, p. 163f., p. 167.

(50) Jacques Lacan, “L’*étourdit*,” in *Scilicet* 4 (1973), p. 10 (my emphasis—H.-D. G.). The relationship of *dire* and *dit* is thoroughly thematized in this essay, also with reference to the distinction between stating and statement. The tone is established right from the beginning: “*que le dire reste oublié derrière le dit*” (“that the saying lies forgotten behind the said”) (p. 6).

(51) For Levinas, “saying is witness; it is saying without the said, a sign given to the Other.” “I can indeed state the meaning borne witness to as a said [that is, Levinas does not equate the distinction between *dire* and *dit* with that of stating / statement]. It is an extraordinary word, the only one that does not extinguish or absorb its saying, but it cannot remain a simple word. The word God is an overwhelming semantic event...” (AE 192-93/151). This word is *kerygma*, whether it is pronounced as “prayer” or as “blasphemy,” for “already the Infinite speaks through the witness I bear of it” (AE 193/151). What would Levinas have thought of the following summation of Lacan’s (a continuation of the quotation in note 38): “God is actually the place where, if you will permit the pun, *le dieu – le dieur – le dire* arises. It takes nothing for saying to make God [Pour un rien, *le dire ça fait Dieu.*] And as long as something continues to be said, the hypothesis of God will be there.” Here, too, a proximity to Nietzsche can be detected (cf. note 46 above).

(52) It is important to note that signifiers and not signs are being discussed here; between them, even if Gerda Pagel does not see it this way, there is a significant difference. Cf. the article of mine cited in note 20.

(53) This temporality appears so important to him here that he immediately repeats once more: “The subject is this emergence which, just before, as subject, was nothing, but which, having scarcely appeared, solidifies into a signifier” (Sém XI 181/199). Cf. also É 840, where the precarious temporality is stressed even more strongly in “an instant before” / “an instant after.”

(54) And perhaps also the seed of sacrifice. Hence also comes the necessity of breaking with the sacrifice and the “Dieu obscur” who demands it (cf. Sém XI 247/275). One could perhaps even say that both Lacan and Levinas understand the overcoming of the sacred, especially of the sacred sacrifice, as an essential element of that which is called revelation—through which a God who was previously “dark” and “hidden”

becomes a God of the face. For the context of this strange reference to sacrifice in the last session of Seminar XI, cf. also my essay, "Das rituelle und das moralische Opfer," *RISS. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 18 (1991), pp. 52-65.

(55) "De la psychanalyse dans ses rapports avec la réalité," *Scilicet* 1 (1968), p. 59 ("ce résidu corporel où j'ai suffisamment, je pense, incarné le Dasein, pour l'appeler par le nom qu'il me doit: soit l'objet (a)"—"this bodily remainder, in which I have sufficiently, I think, incorporated Dasein, to call it by the name that it owes to me: the object a"). Other points at which Dasein similarly appears, also in more or less explicit relation to object a, should be added (e.g., *É* 40: "Mange ton Dasein"—"Eat your Dasein"; *Sém* XI 216/239: "Pas de fort sans da et, si l'on peut dire, sans Dasein"—"There can be no fort without da and, one might say, without Dasein," where the relation to the fort-da game is established). Of course this equation contains some problems that need to be treated separately. Thus Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe have accused Lacan of an imprecise use of philosophical terminology, among other things of a self-adornment with words from the Heideggerian environment while at the same time continuing to use the traditional term "subject." Dasein is not a simple substitution for the classical subject, and therefore it cannot simply be undone. But to clarify such questions an exact and comprehensive examination of the relationships and encounters between Heidegger and Lacan, above all of the stages of reception by Lacan, would be necessary, which, just like the present reading of Lacan with Levinas / Levinas with Lacan, has Descartes as its central point of reference. A preliminary study in this vein is offered by the middle section of my article, "Die Angst als 'das, was nicht täuscht'," in *Psychoanalyse und Philosophie. Lacan in der Diskussion*, edited by Bernhard H. F. Taureck (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1992), pp. 113-19.

(56) Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *S.E.*, Vol. 18 (London: Hogarth, 1961), p. 44ff.

(57) Joseph Libertson, "La Séparation chez Lévinas," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 86 (1981), p.437.

(58) Cf. Lacan et la Philosophie, cit. supra n. 6, pp. 387-88.

(59) Emmanuel Levinas, "La mort et le temps" (cours: 1975-1976), *L'Herne*, No. 60, Emmanuel Lévinas (Paris: L'Herne, 1991), pp. 73-74; since reprinted separately as *La mort et le temps* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1992), p. 132, p. 135.

(60) *Ibid.*, p. 47, p. 67.

(61) Cf. Sigmund Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," in *S.E.*, Vol. 12 (London: Hogarth, 1958), pp. 225-26.

(62) Lacan treats this dream in the first part of his (as yet unpublished) seminar on *Le désir et son interprétation*.

(63) *Le Séminaire Livre XX: Encore*, cit. supra n. 38, p. 71 ("la face Dieu," which can also mean "the face of God"). [This line has also been translated by Jacqueline Rose as follows: "And why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as supported by feminine jouissance?" Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 147. -Tr.]

(64) Derrida has insisted on the dubiousness of Levinas's conception of femininity in his two essays on Levinas, "Violence et métaphysique" and "En ce moment même dans cet ouvrage me voici," as well as in other references. A close analysis of the feminine in Levinas is provided by Catherine Chalié, *Figures du féminin. Lecture d'Emmanuel Lévinas* (Paris: La nuit surveillée, 1982).

(65) On the reciprocal implications of suffering and enjoyment, cf. *Lacan et la Philosophie*, cit. supra n. 6, p. 407.

(66) No doubt there is much to be said about the language of *Autrement qu'être*—about the priority of *dire* over *dit*, with the result that every thematization immediately betrays the saying of that which in this way is taken only as said; about the language of the ethical, which can no longer be the language of ontology; about the language theory of Levinas in general, which no longer measures language against the representation of a pre-existing objectivity, but understands it as something given, that itself creates objectivity as the only possible relationship between absolutely separated things (this last point is already to be found in *Totalité et infini*). Thus, in any case, the "thematization" of *Autrement qu'être* undertaken here sets itself in the wrong from the outset. But for reasons of brevity I must content myself with a reference to the already-mentioned book by Elisabeth Weber, who in her first section describes the "Method and Writing" of Levinas comprehensively, exactly, and competently (*Verfolgung und Trauma*, p. 45ff.), and to the essay by Thomas Wiemer (the German translator of *Autrement qu'être*), "Das Unsagbare sagen," in *Parabel. Schriftenreihe der Evangelischen Studienstiftung*, No. 12: Lévinas (Giessen: 1990), p. 18ff.

(67) To mention only two desiderata: Lacan and Levinas both in certain respects assume an approving attitude toward skepticism (moderated also to stoicism), which Lacan describes as an “ethic” (Sém XI 203/224) and Levinas in *Autrement qu’être* praises at length (AE 210-18/165-71). A further point that is treated by both is the question of the “fear of God”: Lacan addresses it in his seminar on psychoses in connection with the “quilting point” [point de capiton] and in relation to a reading of Racine’s *Athalie* (*Le Séminaire Livre III: Les Psychoses* [Paris: Seuil, 1981], pp. 298-304; Eng. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III, The Psychoses 1955-1956*, translated by Russell Grigg [New York: Norton, 1993], pp. 263-68), Levinas in an essay dedicated to Ricoeur: “Du langage religieux et de la crainte de Dieu,” in *L’au-delà du verset*, pp. 107-22.

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