STARTING WITH EMMANUEL LEVINAS:
TRAILS FOR A RENEWED POLITICS OF EMANCIPATION IN FRONT OF CURRENT ULTRACONSERVATIVE TRENDS

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Abstract

The ideological and political context at the end of the first quarter of the 21th century is characterized by a certain dynamic of ultraconservative tendencies on the European and American continents. At the same time, the left-wing political forces that carried the ideals of emancipation in the 20th century appear to be in crisis.

This article of political theory aims to explore trails drawn from Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy in order to renew a politics of emancipation. Two angles are privileged: 1) the possibility of "the departure from being" in front of the identitarianist rigidities of current ultraconservative politics, and this through the figures of escape, caress, and the face; 2) a proposal for an "anarchist social democracy", through the tensions between individual/collective, anarchy/anarchism, and singularity of the Other/social justice.

Keywords: Emmanuel Levinas; identity; political theory; politics of emancipation; ultraconservatism.

Introduction

Emmanuel Levinas's work has mainly been read from the perspective of ethics or phenomenology, and more rarely from the perspective of political philosophy. One of the few authors to have dealt centrally with the political significance of Levinas's philosophy was the late Miguel Abensour (Abensour 2021; Corcuff 2017 and 2022). Following in Miguel Abensour's footsteps, we will focus on the political dimensions of Levinas's writings, both extending some of his analyses and offering new insights. This text will present a synthetic overview of the scattered views expressed over the years on a *political Levinas* (Corcuff 2001; idem. 2002, 231-232; idem. 2015, 247-280; idem. 2017 et 2022a and 2022b), striving to articulate connections between different aspects, which was not the case, or only partially so, in previous writings.

Our disciplinary angle will be that of political theory, as Jean Leca (1985) outlined its epistemological contours within the framework of French political science, i.e., as a

space of articulations and tensions between political philosophy, in that it integrates the planes of "what should be" and "what could be," and sociological theory, in that it mainly focuses on the analysis of reality with more peripheral axiological supports. The political theory adopted here assumes that it is *situated*, i.e., it strives to respond to trends in the current ideological and political context. It is thus fully in line with what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1997) called "our time" (*l'époque*), understood as a set of possibilities and risks in which we are immersed, with difficulties in distancing ourselves from this environment that surrounds and penetrates us. This theory therefore attempts to be *critical* in the wake of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer 1975), in an effort to distance itself from the evidence generated by the dominant logics at work in the social and political order, helped by the support of a horizon of social emancipation. In doing so, this situated and critical political theory seeks to participate in what Michel Foucault described as "an ontology of the present" (Foucault 1986, 96), with which he precisely associates the Frankfurt School.

We have analyzed the ideological and political context (Corcuff 2021 and 2025) – mainly in France, but this may also apply to other countries around the world, with their own specific national circumstances – through two related trends: an ideological and electoral surge of the far right (in Hungary, Israel, Italy, Argentina, USA, etc.; in France, the National Rally became the leading party in the 2024 European and legislative elections) and a crisis in the left/right divide, primarily affecting the very notion of the left. On the far right, we can observe ideological configurations that combine hypercriticism anti-establishment and discrimination (xenophobia, Islamophobia and/or anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, etc.) gaining increasing power within nationalist frameworks. On the left, the two main political forces that had embodied it throughout the world in the 20th century, the communists and the social democrats, have been greatly weakened for different reasons: earlier with Stalinism for the former (with the defining moment of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989) and more slowly with social democracy, due to its embrace of a form of economic neoliberalism from the 1980s onwards.

The modern perspective of emancipation, from the late 18th century to the late 20th century, has been closely associated with the notion of the left. From Kant (1996) to Cornelius Castoriadis (1997), modern emancipation revolved around the conquest of autonomy in the face of domination: individual autonomy in Kant (but which presupposed political conditions) and individual and collective autonomy in Castoriadis in a post-Marxist framework of socio-political transformation. However, the thematization of a politics of emancipation has been profoundly affected by the crisis of the left. And this

all the more so that, in the interactions between this crisis and the ideological shift to the extreme right, a new "discursive formation" (in the sense of Foucault 1972, 31-39) has developed in France since the mid-2000s: the confusionist discursive formation, which refers to interference and hybridization between postures and themes of the far right, the classical right, and the left. Another discursive formation, with intersections and interactions with confusionism, has contributed to weakening the place of emancipation policy: identitarianism. Identitarianism means reducing people and groups to a main, homogeneous, closed identity, such as a national identity or a religious identity; a positive identity that is valued or a negative identity that is denounced.

These characteristics of the ideological and political context therefore weigh heavily on the possible redefinition of a politics of emancipation in the 21st century. It is in this context that some of Levinas's analyses may appear heuristic. Our exploration of Levinasian potentialities for participating in the reinvention of a politics of emancipation, at a time marked by both a shift to the extreme right and a crisis on the left, will unfold in two linked stages: 1) the avenues that can be found in Levinas to respond to the identitarianist trend of our time by opening up a reformulation of the question of emancipation beyond the question of autonomy; and 2) the way in which Levinas could help define a renewed framework for a policy of emancipation through the notion of "anarchist social democracy."

1. Departure from being: a potentially political response to identitarianism

The forms of ideological ultra-conservatism that are currently in vogue in Europe, North America, Israel, and Latin America, as well as the confusionism that may unintentionally facilitate their advance, are fueled by identitarianism. But these are only intersections of an autonomous identitarianist discursive formation that takes other forms (Russian and Chinese nationalism, Hindu and Islamophobic nationalism in India, Islamic conservatism in Iran, deadly jihadist violence in the name of Islam, etc. to forms of *reverse identitarianism* in the discourse of spokespeople for subaltern groups[1]). By being centered on individual and collective autonomy won against forms of domination, the political thinking of emancipation can only partially take up the current challenge of identitarianism. To make it more operational in addressing this issue in our immediate present, it

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[1] On "reverse essentialism" or "reverse identitarianism," as promoted by representatives of Indigenous of the Republic in France, see sociologists Abdellali Hajjat (2021) and Corcuff (2018).

would need to be enriched with other strands responding to the risks of identity confinement for individuals and groups. In the logic of modern emancipation, it would be a matter of ripping away from constraints, but autonomy alone cannot constitute the path and the horizon of this wrench. This calls for a complication of the politics of emancipation.

It is in the face of this challenge that Levinasian approaches could prove promising. At various points in his work, Levinas considered figures of departure from being. He outlined different ways of interrupting Spinoza's *conatus*, i.e., the principle that "Every single thing endeavors as far as it lies in itself to persevere in its own being." (Spinoza 2018, part III, prop. 6, 101) However, the perseverance of being in itself carries with it a certain renewal of identity, under the sign of the Same, in an insensitivity to what is the Other. Yet a vision of emancipation focused on autonomy, even with the fashionable charms of "empowerment" (Bacqué and Biewner 2013), risks continuing to be caught in the net of *conatus*, in the logic of identity confinement, at an individual or collective level.

We will focus on three successive Levinasian figures of departure from being: two phenomenological departures (escape and caress) and one ethical departure (the face). In the ideological and political context, certain salient features of which we have recalled, these figures reveal a stimulating political significance. When Levinas leads us beyond the *conatus*, if we follow Miguel Abensour (2021, 64).

1.1. The figure of escape

In an early text on "escape" dating from 1935, Levinas calls into question the identitarian tendencies of philosophies and politics of being:

> Being is: […] this is precisely what one states when one speaks of the identity of being. Identity … expresses the sufficiency of the fact of being, whose absolute and definitive character no one, it seems, could place in doubt. (Levinas 2003, 51)

Levinas also puts forward a social critique of a sociological form of this conservatism of being through the ideal type of "the bourgeois spirit":

> He demands guarantees in the present against the future, which introduces unknowns into those solved problems from which he lives. What he possesses becomes capital, carrying interest or insurance against risks, and his future, thus tamed, is integrated in this way with his past. (Ibid., 50)

The spirit becomes capitalist, cloistering itself in the being.

In front of the conservative tendencies of the thoughts and the politics of the being, Levinas points out an alternative: a "process of departing from being" (ibid., 62) or "a taking leave of being." (ibid., 72), based on a "profound need to get out of being." (ibid.) The literary theme of the escape, which he grasps phenomenologically, is then interpreted in this sense:

> The escape, in regard to which contemporary literature manifests a strange disquiet, appears like a condemnation-the most radical one-of the philosophy of being by our generation. (ibid., 51)

For Levinas, "with escape we aspire only to get out" (ibid., 54). And in the face of "need for escape" (ibid.), the being appears "as an imprisonment from which one must get out." (ibid., 55)

A politics of emancipation focused primarily on autonomy, based on biographical and identitarian supports, which could be deployed in a logic of empowerment, at both the individual and collective levels, risks remaining within certain boundaries. Faced with this risk, the Levinasian need for a departure from being points to a new emancipatory opening, through which, in a break with identity protections, autonomy takes the risk of adventure and the unknown.

In his quest for departure from being, Levinas turns his attention to figures other than escape through encountering the Other, first in a still phenomenological context with the caress, then in an ethical extension of the phenomenological gesture with the face.

1.2. The figure of caress

In a text published after the Second World War, Levinas explores another figure of the departure from being, but this time in a configuration where the elsewhere of adventure is associated with another human being. He therefore focuses his analysis on a feminine figure of "the caress", opposed to the dominant masculine erotic of "grasping" and "possessing". When we speak about "feminine" and "masculine", it has nothing to do with the hypothesis of a "feminine nature" and a "masculine nature". It has to do with the socio-historical definition of "feminine" and "masculine" that is dominant in Western societies, even if it is currently being eroded. Levinas presents a phenomenological description of the caress:

> The seeking of the caress constitutes its essence by the fact that the caress does not know what it seeks. This "not knowing," this fundamental disorder, is the essential. It is like a game with something slipping away, a game absolutely without project or

> plan, not with what can become ours or us, but with something other, always other, always inaccessible, and always still to come [*à venir*]. The caress is the anticipation of this pure future [*avenir*] without content. (Levinas 1987, 89)

The elsewhere of the caress is infinite exploration, one that cannot stop at an ultimate realization. This elsewhere has to do with another human being, whose discovery leads to infinity, to a "naccessible." The utopia of the caress does not constitute a state one attains, for it is an unending movement. For Levinas, the opening of the being, here under the modality of the caress, constitutes a cardinal characteristic of the human, in its movement to get out of being.

This opening of the being can be constantly bridled by the return of the being, another logic, that of Spinozist conatus, more pregnant empirically perhaps but less specifically human from a Levinasian perspective. The return of the being takes the form of the reduction of the Other to the Same, the form of what we have called identitarianism. What Levinas, in a radical political criticism, labels as "power," understood as a claim to total control and knowledge of the Other:

> Can this relationship with the other through Eros be characterized as a failure? Once again, the answer is yes, if one adopts the terminology of current descriptions, if one wants to characterize the erotic by "grasping," "possessing," or "knowing." But there is nothing of all this, or the failure of all this, in eros. If one could possess, grasp, and know the other, it would not be other. Possessing, knowing, and grasping are synonyms of power. (Ibid., 90)

There would be something in the Other that necessarily escapes me, that allows only partial grasping on my part, that "slipping away" from my claim to total grasping. If this were not the case, it would not be *another*, it would be the *same*. However, this does not prevent the deployment of the logic of power as a mode of expression of the *conatus*, when the latter encroaches on the Other in a fantasy of control.

The figure of the caress highlights a utopian dimension in Levinasian thought, but one that is not naïve, as it takes into account "the dark side of the force" of identity. The utopic is associated with radical political criticism.

1.3. The figure of face

Totality and Infinity (Levinas, 2007) and *Otherwise Than Being* (Levinas, 2010) are the two major works of Levinas's philosophical maturity. The exploration of the departure from being extends in another direction that deepens the question of the Other. Phenomenology will nourish and be overwhelmed by ethics. Levinas mobilizes in these

books the ethical figure of the face of the Other, the expression of a singular distress that interpellates my responsibility, "in the total nudity of his defenceless eyes" (Levinas, 2007, 199).

For the Levinas of maturity, the human, as "an irreducible singularity, exterior to the totality" (ibid., 242), present itself as the singular Other, escaping irremediably from my grasp. It is its ability to come out of categorizations and thematizations, the Infinite as opposed to Totality, that constitutes the central characteristic of humanity, calling for a shift from classical humanism to a "humanism of the Other" (Levinas 2006). Levinas therefore moves the question of an ethics of intersubjectivity to the impossibility of completely understanding [*comprendre*] the Other, in the sense both of knowing totally and of encompassing. Because there is something in the Other that escapes my totalizing grasp: the irreducible singularity of their face. Levinas speaks of "ethics as that disruption of our being-in-the-world which opens us to the Other." (Levinas and Kearney 1986, 23)

This is another form of interruption of *conatus*. "Man must also be thought from the responsibility more ancient than the conatus of substance", writes Levinas (2006, 68). Individual autonomy does not disappear in this mouvement, but it loses its pretensions to a view from above and to exclusivity in the expression of personal singularity, by becoming decentered in the interhuman:

> I become a responsible or ethical "I" to the extent that I agree to depose or dethrone myself – to abdicate my position of centrality in favor of the vulnerable other. (Levinas and Kearney 1986, 27)

By drawing on responsibility towards the distress of another individual, individual autonomy is both consolidated and localized, being overwhelmed in intersubjectivity by the face of the Other. Levinas opens up a new possibility in the risks of identitarian confinement. The ethics of the face opens up a new possible breach in identitarianism. In a context of rising identitarianisms, it has political significance for a politics of emancipation.

The three Levinasian figures of the departure from being that we have retained have both intersections between them, particularly in a utopian elsewhere inscribed at the heart of human experiences, and specificities. These three modalities do not exhaust the question of the departure from being, as other modalities are conceivable. The process of "disidentification," emphasized by Jacques Rancière in his critical dialogue with Axel Honneth (Honneth and Rancière 2016), constitutes another modality, studied in particular by Rancière through the itineraries of the first enunciators of workers' speech in France from the 1830s onwards, as they sought to escape from identitarian confinement

(Rancière 1989). The concept of "creolization," formulated in a postcolonial context of globalization by the Caribbean writer Edouard Glissant (2020), which emphasizes hybridization and openness of identity, presents itself as another modality of the departure from being.

Furthermore, another modality of departure from being may be faintly discernible in Levinas's own biography: when he appears deeply disturbed by the Sabra and Shatila massacres perpetrated in Lebanon by Christian Phalangist militias against Palestinians in September 1982 under the eyes of the Israeli occupation army, which did nothing to prevent them, thus bearing at least indirect responsibility. In a radio dialogue, he speaks of "the shock that the human possibility of the events in Sabra and Shatila, whatever their perpetrators, signifies for our entire Jewish and human history" (Levinas, Finkielkraut, and Malka 1982-1983, 7)[2]. Here we see a tension between the importance of the existence of the State of Israel, after the ultimate horror of the Shoah (particularly within his family), in the formation of Jewish components of a stabilized personal identity, and an event that introduces disruption. However, the limitations of Levinas's questions regarding the Sabra and Shatila massacre and other acts of violence against Palestinians, directly carried out this time under the responsibility of the Israeli governments, can be interpreted as the return of *conatus* through identitarianist inertia.

The openness made possible by the question of the departure from being in a renewed conception of emancipation confronted with current identitarianist challenges is only one of Levinas's contributions to the reconstruction of a politics of emancipation in the 21st century, following the crisis of the two political poles that embodied it in the 20th century, the communist pole and the social-democratic pole. Levinas can also provide some of the outlines of a global framework for this politics.

2. Anarchist social democracy: landmarks for a politics of emancipation

The openness to a utopian elsewhere, but identified within the experiences of ordinary life, in a tension between exteriority (utopian) and interiority (presence in the materiality of experiences), could constitute only one component of a broader Levinasian framework for thinking a politics of emancipation for the 21th century. This framework could be called *anarchist social democracy*, in an infinite tension between the contributions of the social democratic tradition around common goods and social justice, which

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[2] The translation is mine, Ph.C.

emerged at the end of the 19th century with strong Marxist references, and the anarchist tradition, which in a certain sense could embody the Levinasian opening to an elsewhere that is paradoxically already present in social experiences.

To begin exploring this possibility, we will need to consider three moments: 1) the place of others in understanding the relationship between individuality and the common good; 2) the tension between anarchy and anarchism; and 3) the tension between face and justice.

2.1. The individual and the common:
the double path of the Other and the third party

A polarization tended to run through the galaxy of emancipation in the XIXth and XXth centuries: between individuality and the collective, between individual emancipation and collective emancipation. Generally speaking, the Marxist tradition has placed greater emphasis on the collective dimension of socio-political transformation, while the anarchist tradition has more preserved the place of individualities. And what has often been retained in common thinking, even today, is a strong link between Marxism and the collective and, conversely, a strong link between anarchism and the individual. However, when we look at this polarization in detail, it becomes more complicated to grasp within both Marxism and anarchism. For example, the French phenomenological philosopher Michel Henry (1983; Corcuff 2014) highlighted the importance of the individualistic components of Marx's writings, distancing himself from the evidence of "Marxist" software as it was constituted and stabilized after Marx's death. On the anarchist side, the American thinker Murray Bookchin (1995) defended a form of "social anarchism" against tendencies in contemporary anarchism that he considered too individualistic.

Levinas's writings provide us with some resources for beginning to problematize the relationship between the individual and the common in a different way, which can be summarized as follows:

- individual uniqueness is very much at the heart of his philosophy through the figure of the face;
- however, far from the monadic individualism developed by Max Stirner (2017), which fueled individualistic forms of anarchism, individuality is understood in a relational, intersubjective way, starting with the uniqueness of a singular other;
- this relational grasp of singularity through others opens up a common ground between two people, calling for responsibility in front of a distress;

• Levinas associated this common between two with Marx, as distinct from "Marxism": "In Marx's critique we find an ethical conscience cutting through the ontological identification of truth with an ideal intelligibility and demanding that theory be converted into a concrete praxis of concern for the other;" (Levinas and Kearney 1986, 33)

• this common does not necessarily call for reciprocity – "I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity […] Reciprocity is *his* affair" (Levinas 1985, 98) – but is structured by an asymmetry in which the weak person who calls out to me overhangs me in a certain sense – "the intersubjective relation is a non-symmetrical relation;" (*ibid.*)

• this asymmetrical common represents a break with the capitalist extension of market equivalence to a diversity of human relationships: thus, in this common of responsibility towards the Other, "the debt increases in the measures that it is paid" (Levinas 2010, 12), the more I feel responsible for you, the more I owe you, even reversing the usual rules of market exchange;

• however, in tension with this asymmetrical common of responsibility for the Other, there is a common of reciprocity, that of justice, institutions, and politics, called "the third party," that is all others other than the singular other: "The relationship with the third party is an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity in which the face is looked at." (Levinas 2010, 158)

We can see that the complications of this Levinasian configuration of the individual and the common disrupt the polarization that has run through and continues to run through the galaxy of emancipation. Rather than a unilateral view of the problem or a Hegelian-inspired perspective of overcoming contradictions within a totality, this configuration brings infinite tensions into play. These complications, which place at their heart an individuality grasped relationally in tension with the common of reciprocity, are lacking in the most stimulating current approaches to the common, such as the processual and cooperative approach of Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval (2019), but are too much thought under the overhang of the common towards the individual (Corcuff 2019).

2.2. *An-archy* and anarchism

"The will of the I affirms itself as infinite (that is, free), and as limited, as subordinated. […] The I's form no totality […] There is an anarchy essential to multiplicity, " writes Levinas in the conclusion to *Totality and Infinity* (Levinas 2007, 294). Anarchy

here is both a radical opening of the human, beyond being and beyond *conatus*, and a radical plurality that cannot merge into totality.

In *Otherwise Than Being*, the *an-archic* qualifies the responsibility for the Other by implicitly referring to the Greek etymology of the word (*an-arkhḗ*, absence of beginning, of first principle: Colson 2019, 31): "the non-original, the anarchical, prior to or beyond essence," (Levinas 2010, 10), "a time without beginning." *(*ibid., 51) Anarchy also refers to the radical turmoil generated by the interpellation of the face of the other: "the anarchical provocation which ordains me to the other," (ibid., 16) responsibility itself being characterized as anarchic: "the anarchy of responsibility," (ibid., 26), "trace of what is inordinate, does not enter into the present, and inverts the arche into anarchy." (ibid., 117). The event of this anarchical responsibility provokes a liberation, but not a liberation in the classical sense: "An anarchical liberation, it emerges, without being assumed, without turning into a beginning, in inequality with oneself" (ibid., 124)

However, anarchy as emergence, disturbance, and openness is not anarchism as a political movement opposed to social order: "But anarchy is not disorder as opposed to order [...] Disorder is but another order, [...] Anarchy troubles being over and beyond these alternatives." (ibid., 101). This is why anarchy understood in this way is anterior to anarchist politics, even destabilizing the latter when it attempts to recreate a synthesis around anarchist principles:

> The notion of anarchy we are introducing here has a meaning prior to the political (or anti political) meaning currently attributed to it. It would be self-contradictory to set it up as a principle (in the sense that anarchists understand it). Anarchy cannot be. sovereign. like an arche. It can only disturb the State - but in a radical way, making possible moments of negation without any affirmation. The State then cannot set itself up as a Whole. But, on the other hand. anarchy can be stated. Yet disorder has an irreducible meaning, as refusal of synthesis. (ibid., 194)

For Miguel Abensour (2021, 244 and 257), this Levinasian gap between anarchy and anarchism prevents anarchic disorder from being undermined by a new unified doctrine, while retaining its capacity to radically disrupt politics.

However, since anarchy is not sovereign, it comes into tension with institutions and politics, called upon by the third party. Anarchy is on the side of infinity and proximity – "an anarchic signification of proximity" (Levinas 2010, 81) – while the third party opposes it with the boundaries inherent in the common of reciprocity or "limitation of

anarchic responsibility" (ibid., 159). In this infinite tension, neither anarchy nor the institutions of justice have the final say. Anarchic openness cannot be closed without imposing itself in all circumstances.

2.3. The singular Other and social justice

How can available resources be distributed most fairly within a city? Since Greek Antiquity, conflicting conceptions of social justice have been at odds in Western political thought. The theory of justice developed by American philosopher John Rawls (1971) is probably the contemporary political theory that has sparked the most intellectual debate around the world since its publication. This theory has been categorized as "social democratic" (Guillarme 1999). With such a theory of justice, as with others that have been opposed to it, we are in the realm of measurement between people (the measurement of what is owed to each other), which supports a certain distribution of given resources. A theory of justice must be conceived as a measuring instrument. This is what makes things and people *commensurable*, measurable in the same space, within a common framework, based on the same criteria.

We will focus on the affinities between the theme of social justice, insofar as it leads politically to a redistribution of wealth according to certain criteria, and social democracy, as a political space that has defended ideals of social justice and solidarity and historically encompassed currents that sought a break with capitalism and others that sought a social compromise within capitalism via a welfare State. However, if we reduce the question of emancipation to that of social justice, we risk losing an important dimension: that which tends to escape measurement, i.e., the immeasurable, including individual singularities. So, while a theory such as Rawls's addresses the social democratic aspect of the problem, it leaves aside what we might call the anarchist aspect. Because anarchist thinkers have frequently emphasized the risks of individual singularity being crushed by collective frameworks of measurement and bureaucratization in the statification of solidarity.

It is here that Levinas's formulations can prove heuristic for a political theory of emancipation. Levinas thus proposed a way of linking two dimensions: the incommensurable part - insofar as individuality apprehended intersubjectively through the figure of the Other tends to exceed any common measure – and the commensurable part - the common framework of social justice and solidarity. He writes in *Ethics and Infinity*:

> If I am alone with the Other, I owe him everything; but there is someone else. Do I know what my neighbor is in relation with someone else? Do I know if someone else has an understanding with him or his victim? Who is my neighbor? It is consequently necessary to weigh, to think, to judge, in comparing the incomparable. The interpersonal relation I establish with the Other, I must also establish with other men; there is thus a necessity to moderate this privilege of the Other; from whence comes justice. Justice, exercised through institutions, which are inevitable, must always be held in check by the initial interpersonal relation. (Levinas 1985, 89-90)

He adds in *Otherwise Than Being* that "the presence of a third party" requires "a justice among incomparable ones," "a comparison between incomparables" (Levinas 2010, 16). "The comparison of incomparables" (ibid., 158) is precisely the key formula for the tension between social justice and singularity, social democracy and anarchism. Levinas thus began to point out the necessary and irreconcilable tension between the incommensurable character of the singularity of the Other, on the one hand, and the common space of measurement, justice, and solidarity, equipped with institutions, through the figure of "the third party" (the place of "all the others" than the singular other), on the other hand. The opening of being meets there the relative institutional stabilization of rules of justice. Such a perspective does not characterize emancipated society as a "harmonious" framework (according to a religiously inspired expression) or as a "overcoming" of social contradictions (according to a certain Marxist vision of communism inspired by Hegel's dialectical philosophy). For the formula "comparing the incomparable" assumes and confronts an infinite dynamic of contradictions between the logic of individuality and the logic of social justice.

Through a series of tensions - between the individual and the collective, the face and the third party, anarchy and anarchism, or the singularity of the Other and social justice - the global framework of a anarchist social democracy has been sketched out, preserving a place for the possibility of departure from being.

3. Conclusion

The ideological and political context at the end of the first quarter of the 21th century was characterized by a certain dynamic of various ultraconservative tendencies, especially identitarianism. At the same time, the left-wing political forces that carried the ideals of emancipation in the 20th century appear to be in crisis. In this context, we have sought to draw on Levinas's work to reinvent a politics of emancipation for the 21th century, addressing in particular the challenges posed by identitarianism. New avenues have

been opened up thanks to the concepts of departure from being and anarchist social democracy, which themselves have points of intersection.

The analyses presented here constitute only a partial exploration of Levinas's work, including its potential for emancipation, and offer only partial answers to the challenges of a politics of emancipation. However, they allow us to move beyond the theoretical routines of the emancipation galaxy, which is not accustomed to drawing on authors such as Levinas, away from authors considered more "political".

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