LEVINAS AGAINST THE STATE:
READINGS TOWARD A DECOLONIAL PHILOSOPHY

Yonathan Busquila Listik (Leiden)
Alexia Levy-Chekroun (Lille)
Daniel Macmillen Voskoboynik (Lund)

Abstract

The article aims to engage with possible readings of Levinas's scholarship to construct a common theme: a Levinasian account of resistance to power. The article will firstly demonstrate the way Levinas's scholarship challenges the idea of totality in western philosophy and demands an alternative epistemological construction. It will then develop a reading of Levinas's interpretation of a Talmudic passage to explore the way the philosophy that he draws from those texts can serve as an example of an alternative philosophy. The article will apply those principles to ecology as a case for a concrete relationship to the world that emerges from Levinas's proposed philosophy. A central concept in Levinas's alternative to western totality will be heteronomy. The concept of heteronomy will challenge the totalizing logic of autonomy. It will engender a conceptualization of responsibility that will then be used to reflect on ecological care and intertwinement.

Keywords: Emmanuel Levinas; decolonial theory; Talmud; ecology; epistemic disobedience.

Introduction

Our contemporary era is one of pressing overlapping and intersecting crises that threaten the very fabric of sustained human life on this planet, which as such, demand novel perspectives and a renewal of paradigms. This is not to say that we need to retheorize the world from scratch, but rather that we need to reframe what the world could be. In this endeavor, we find Levinas's philosophy and engagement with it offer fruitful insights. The very gesture, through which we seek to provide a decolonial reading of Levinas, seeks to embody the possibility to co-articulate decolonial critiques with seemingly non-decolonial

thought. As such, we claim that, through the intersection between seemingly antinomic bodies of thought, new political horizons – fostering dignity and emancipation for all – may emerge.

The article aims to engage with possible readings of Levinas's scholarship to construct a common theme: a Levinasian account of resistance to power. The article will firstly demonstrate the way Levinas's scholarship challenges the idea of totality in western philosophy and demands an alternative epistemological construction. It will then develop a reading of Levinas's interpretation of a Talmudic passage where Alexander the Great talks to the sages of the Negev to explore the way the philosophy that he extracts from those texts can serve as an example of an alternative philosophy. The article will apply those principles to ecology as a case for a concrete relationship to the world that emerges from Levinas's proposed philosophy. A central concept in Levinas's alternative to western totality will be heteronomy. The concept of heteronomy will challenge the totalizing logic of autonomy. It will engender a conceptualization of responsibility that will then be used to reflect on ecology.

We argue that the Talmudic readings offer an insight into an anti-colonial turn within Levinas's theory. Levinas' Talmudic reflections and insights, we suggest, advance critical postures that help develop what decolonial theory could be. To this extent the argument is not only reading Levinas through the prism of radical theory but also developing radical theory via Levinas. A good starting point for this endeavor can be found in Eduardo Mendieta's (2012) reflection on the centrality of epistemology in decolonial theories. According to Mendieta, as much as epistemological resistance is fundamental, to prioritize epistemology retains us within a specific frame. As much as it may challenge particular constructions of knowledge or the way knowledge as a category is framed, Mendieta affirms that the primordial role knowledge occupies in philosophy should be the focus of reflection.

The central insight the Talmudic readings allow is the construction of a heteronomic subjectivity. Catherine Malabou (2024, 67) defines Levinasian heteronomy as the responsibility for otherness. According to her this is the responsibility for the absence of order. In that sense, heteronomy is a form of anarchism since it is a normativity without prescriptive power. Contrary to the intuitive understanding that sees decolonial struggle as the construction of an autonomic posture against an external colonial intervention, Levinas hints at the possibility of a heteronomic openness that dismantles subjective formations and therefore disrupts mechanisms of subjectification. In that way, it resists any form of colonial configuration.

Our core argument is disinterested in providing an overarching account of Levinas's philosophy. Following authors such as John Drabinski (2011) and Ethan Kleinberg (2021),

and to a certain extent Moten (2018), we recognize that Levinas's oeuvre is filled with numerous unethical blind spots that limit its critical power. But unlike those authors, we do find that those do not represent definitive limitations of Levinas's philosophy. Even if the arguments constructed here cannot be fully associated with Levinas, they follow a Levinasian mode of thinking. To this extent, following authors such as Ivan Segré (2014) and Silvana Rabinovich (2016; 2024) the radical postures constructed here might not be found in Levinas and might even be in tension with some of the formulations found there, but nevertheless we hold the attitude that they should emerge from Levinas's reflections. To this extent, our intervention does not strive to provide an accurate portrayal of Levinas's scholarship but instead it strives to postulate what that scholarship should be, to translate it for contemporary times even if against Levinas himself: "To set free in his own language the pure language spellbound in the foreign language, to liberate the language imprisoned in the work by rewriting it, is the translator's task." (Benjamin 1997, 163).

1. The Critique of Totality as Proto-Decolonial Disobedience

Levinas's thought is profoundly influenced by the "speculative gesture" of Franz Rosenzweig. Sketched in *The Star of Redemption* (1921), this gesture consists in opposing two philosophical traditions—or attitudes: one expressed in 'paganism,'[1] the other in 'Judaism.' More specifically, it involves a critique of what Rosenzweig calls pagan rationality in favor of a 'new thought' – a form of reasoning that Levinas will later characterize as 'otherwise than being,' one that embraces the rationality of 'Judaism.' This rationality is not only a criticism, but also an alternative to totalizing logic. While 'paganism' stands for a form of reductions of otherness to sameness, the "otherwise than being" posture means staying with otherness; while paganism is homogenous, Levinas defends heterogeneity; while paganism engulfs everything revealing it expansive subjugations of exteriority, the philosophy of Levinas that will be delineated here and in the next sections will demonstrate how openness, what will be denoted as heteronomy, is fundamental.

In the preface to the book that Stéphane Moses devoted to Rosenzweig, Levinas himself describes this critique as a "challenge to the primordial character of a certain kind

---

[1] We maintain the conceptual framework used in the original sources. We are aware that this is a problematic way of seeing paganism and that many decolonial and eco-feminist scholars revindicate pagan approaches, particularly given the patriarchal suppression of 'pagan' approaches to spirituality.

of rationality: that which illuminates traditional philosophy 'from the Ionian islands to Jena'—from the pre-Socratics to Hegel—whose task was to totalize natural and social experience, to extract and link together its categories until building a closed, self-contained system." A rationality which, "proceeding from idealist speculation, claimed to be all-encompassing" (Levinas, 1982, 8-9, our translation). This rationality, Levinas argues, is rooted in paganism as expressed in Aristotelian philosophy – a paganism configured by a regime of immanence, from which both God and the cosmos are defined. Within this logic, God is present in the earth and the stars, or in other words, in circumscribed and definable entities. He neither precedes nor exceeds them. He dwells within them and is reducible to them. Thus, for Levinas, paganism is not "the negation of the spirit, nor the ignorance of a single God, but rather a radical incapacity to exit the world. It does not consist in denying spirit and gods, but in situating them within the world." (1935, our translation). Paganism is unable to step beyond its world so it must reduce its reality to it, hence Levinas writes: "pagan morality is merely the consequence of this fundamental inability to transgress the limits of the world" (1935, our translation). This critique should not be understood as pointing to the negation of the world on behalf of a transcendental existence. It is instead, the idea that one should be able to open one's world to its exterior.

Analyzing both authors together in her book *Judaism and Philosophy*, Sophie Nordmann observes that this rejection – shared by Rosenzweig and Levinas – constitutes an indictment of a gesture inherited from paganism and common to the entire tradition of Western philosophy: "that of the *'thinkable All'*, from which the ongoing attempt has proceeded to reduce the multiple to the one, difference to identity, transcendence to immanence" (2008, 64, our translation). This gesture can also be characterized as a form of Idealism. The systematic aim of traditional philosophy is to subsume everything, including subjectivities that escape it. The existence of particulars always eludes conceptual thought, which seeks the universal. In doing so, pagan, conceptual, ideal thought – prolonged in the philosophical tradition and culminating notably in Hegel and in Heideggerian ontology – pretends to encompass all reality and to reduce it to thought. In this case, thought is believed to precede the existence of the thinker. However, Levinas claims that "philosophy thus remains captive to a simple and elementary principle, according to which one can neither think nor experience anything that does not exist or is not presumed to exist." (1979, 124, our translation). Moreover, its trajectory has always been "that of a return of the Same to the Same: the path of Ulysses, whose adventure in the world was only a return to his native island – a complacency within the Same, a misunderstanding of the Other" (Levinas 1972, 43, our translation).

For Levinas, this quest for the same is not the innocuous safety of the known and recognizable. As in the tale of Ulysses, it is imperial endeavor to master the world. It is not merely a misunderstanding in the sense of a miscommunication, it is an impossibility to understand generated by the act of probing and the demand for subjugation.

Levinas's opposition to paganism does not unfold outside of time or politics. It resonates with a problem of political epistemology: the correlation between, on the one hand, the formation of the knowing or cognitive subject, the kinds of knowledge and rationalities deemed virtuous for making them an autonomous, critical epistemic subject, and, on the other hand, the formation of the political subject capable of building and sustaining a democratic society. For Levinas, this correlation is clear: the pagan knowing subject, that both presupposes and imposes totality, leads to a political subject that adheres to Hitlerism. Hitlerism serves for Levinas a paradigmatic example of the logic he wants to resist. It thus appears as a contemporary political expression of paganism, insofar as it negates Jewish existence in the name of a totalizing idea that subsumes – and consigns to nothingness – the Jewish real.

For Levinas, paganism – and the philosophical tradition to which it gives rise – is inextricable from a certain violence. Levinas uses the paradigm of food to illustrate this violence. The Same, the epistemic-political subject imbued with 'pagan' thought, interacts with its Other, turned into an object, through the prism of need. The Same needs the Other: it seeks to possess, consume, digest, and dispose of the Other in a circular movement leading back to itself, in order to constitute itself – again and always – as a mono-subject, the sole holder of the exclusive right to articulate Truth and construct Reality. This knowing subject claims itself as the monopolistic bearer of a single, unique, and universal truth. Its subjectivity is constructed in self-reference, folded back upon itself. This incapacity to exit from itself is the very source of violence, for the pagan knowing subject is animated by one imperative: to preserve its being, and therefore to wage war – in an expansionist logic – to that end. The modality of knowledge production formulated by traditional philosophy, with respect to alterity, "is but one moment in this trajectory from self to self (…) which aims to suspend, to abolish, to possess and domesticate 'the uncertainty of the future'" (Nordmann 2008, 128, our translation).

The encounter between the 'pagan' knowing subject and the non-pagan Alterity never truly takes place, for it is from the outset predestined as a mechanism of assimilation into the Same – a structure inherently conducive to epistemic violence. This non-encounter and possession of the Other can be further developed via the concept of "ego conquiro" formulated by the Argentine philosopher Enrique Dussel – himself deeply inspired by

Levinas. For Dussel, the prototypical figure of modern man is that of the conquistador, which also manifests itself in the epistemico-political arena. In our case that is the figure of Alexander in the Talmud. If Levinas condemns the conquering dimension of philosophical thought, Dussel goes even further, asserting that "the *ego conquiro* practice precedes and prefigures the metaphysical *ego cogito* formulated by Descartes in 1637" (Quiroz and Colin 2023, 135, our translation). Hence, from Descartes' maxim 'I think, therefore I am,' Dussel's Levinaniaian insight reformulates the principle as: *I conquer through thinking, therefore I am*. Philosophy, as pagan rationality, needs to conquer the Other in order to affirm the virtuosity and superiority of its mono-subjects.

Dussel explains how, within early modernity and its 'colonial encounters,' the colonized subject "in its specificity is denied as Other and is alienated, obliged, and compelled to incorporate itself into the dominating totality as a thing, as an instrument, as one oppressed" (Dussel 1992, 41). Likewise, although territorial conquest may appear as the most visible form of colonial violence, Lissel Quiroz points to the simultaneous existence of an "ontological violence that seeks to disqualify and then domesticate non-European forms of life and existence" (Quiroz and Colin 2023, 135, our translation). Thus, Levinas's thought – and its ramifications among Latin American decolonial thinkers—jointly indict the traditional philosophy imbued with paganism and its complacency toward the Same. The circulation of Levinas' thought thus allows for correlations between, on the one hand, the conquering and self-centered dimensions inherent in the totalizing rationality of 'pagan' philosophy, and, on the other hand, the forms of social, cultural, political, and geopolitical administration – manifestly totalitarian – that it conveys: among them, Hitlerism and colonialism.

Both Levinas and Quiroz share a radical critique of Hegel's philosophy of History and of the process of secularization it produces – specifically of its evolutionist and teleological logic, which prefigures the narrative of European modernity. For them secularization is another facet of totalizing logic. Europe – rooted in pagan and normatively Christian rationality – constructs the story of its History from a meta-narrative according to which its process of secularization and disenchantment of the world was destined to embody "the culmination and center of world History" (Hegel in Dussel 2016, 203). Quiroz points out that for Hegel "the Orient was the childhood (*Kindheit*) of humanity, the place of despotism and the absence of freedom," and therefore had to orient itself toward the West in order to begin its "march toward the full realization of Freedom and Civilization" (Quiroz and Colin 2023, 138). As Talal Asad – a decolonial theorist of the secular – recalls, Hegel believed that "from the Reformation through the Enlightenment and the Revolution, what was to

emerge, ultimately, was a harmony between the subjective and objective conditions of human life, resulting from the 'painful struggles of History,' a harmony grounded in the recognition of the Secular as capable of being an embodiment of Truth" (Hegel in Assad 2003, 192).

This perception can be elaborated via the work of the Colombian decolonial philosopher Castro-Gomez, also influenced by Levinas's critique who affirms that the modality of knowledge production – employed by scientists and men of the Enlightenment – would resemble that of a deity, neutral, outside concrete realities, from a 'zero point' that could not be criticized or discussed. Thus, Castro-Gomez considers that: "Like God, the observer observes the world from an unobserved platform of observation, with the intention of generating a truthful observation free from all doubt. Like the god of metaphor, modern Western science positions itself outside the world (on the zero point) to observe the world." (Castro-Gomez in Quiroz and Colin 2023, 161).

According to Jean-Claude Milner this belief in easy integration – through the negation of the positivity of the Other – into a collective aspiring to represent the totality of humanity comes from the Christian doctrine of Paul of Tarsus who proclaimed: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Milner 2006, 104). Thus, the conception of Jewish integration and assimilation into European modernity arises jointly from a pagan rationality and from a gesture imbued with "Christology" (Milner 2006, 105).

Levinas therefore denounces this Hegelian conception because it is structured by a regime of immanence – the idea that truth can be reduced to the tangible, to territoriality, to matter. The Hegelian conception of truth is inseparable from a doctrine that, using Asad's conceptualization, lies at the very foundation of the modern nation-state as a paradigmatic form of political organization: secularism. This doctrine allows itself to set the normative standard to which otherness should be reduced to. The erasure of otherness is not its absolute disappearance but its conditional existence within a totalizing homogeneity. Secularism does not explicitly advocate for the disappearance of so-called 'religious' traditions, but for their reconfiguration so as to fit the state's claim to holistic sovereignty. In the case of Judaism, the category of religion represents its absorption and digestion by pagan rationality (Batnitzsky, 2011; Yadgar, 2018; Boyarin, 2018), as it was "transformed into an abstract confession" (Levinas 1997, 257).

Before so-called secular emancipation, Jewishness entailed not only a philosophical stance but also a particular way of administering the political and the real from a situated perspective. Once absorbed and consumed to satisfy the needs of the new modern

French State, Judaism was de-epistemized, rendered incapable of co-producing truth – within the epistemic arena monopolized by totalizing philosophy and by the hard and legal sciences –; and thus, rendered incapable of political presence. Judaism, consumed in its alterity and rendered incapable of articulating Truth and governing the real, was thereby subordinated to the modern state's self-proclaimed monopoly on truth. Modern states, in their very raison d'être, must justify their exclusive capacity to possess Truth, in order to legitimize their authority to "regulate all aspects of individual life seeks to regulate all aspects of individual – even the most intimate, such as birth and death" (Asad, 2003, 199). Secularism domesticates alterity. The modern State, as the sole holder of Truth, now supervises and governs all social activity by virtue of its law. The totalization denounced by Levinas is thus inseparable from this conceptual operation through which the modern state arrogated to itself a monopoly over Truth, excluding from the domain of the true all philosophical traditions labeled 'religious.'

The construction of a model of Jewish emancipation in 1791 France is built on a universalism of the Same. This emancipation was founded on the dissolution of Jewish epistemico-political alterity into the totality of the Christian national collective.

Europe banished Moors and Moriscos; the Jews were more stubborn in their refusal to leave Europe, but a trap was set for them. Two centuries later, they were offered the chance to "integrate," to join modernity. The condition for Jewish "emancipation" was secularity, that is, the (sacrophobic) "right" to hide their faith in the public realm and to give up communal life once and for all. And so, finally feeling integrated into the milieu that had historically persecuted them, European Jewry tasted the honey of modernity and bit the bait called nation state. (Rabinovich 2024, 131)

For Levinas, Judaism was de facto invested and subsumed by pagan-traditional thought. The mode of Jewish incorporation into European modernity privileged by this mode of thought was characterized by Levinas as a failure. He writes in the preface to Stéphane Moses's book: "Did not the progressive de-Judaization of the Jewish citizens of the national States of Europe throughout the nineteenth century testify, however, to the fragility of this first philosophy? Emancipation, guaranteeing the Jews the continuation of a purely confessional Judaism, came to mean assimilation." (Levinas and Moses 1982, 14). He continues in *Difficult Freedom*: "And yet assimilation failed. It failed because it did not put an end to the anguish felt by the Jewish soul. Assimilation failed because it did not placate the non-Jews, or put an end to anti-Semitism; on certain points, it stirred up heated reactions and arguments once more" (Levinas, 1997, 255). He adds that assimilation "seems to have led to dissolution. A strange apathy about Judaism has penetrated the innermost depths of

the Jewish soul" (Levinas, 1997, 255). And that the fact that this assimilation succeeds only in dissolution "is the most serious crisis of assimilation. We have in fact forgotten the ambitions of its promoters: they hoped to maintain Judaism. They wanted to reconcile a Jewish religious existence with a national existence at the heart of States" (Levinas, 1997, 256). This failure of assimilation, he tells us, "in the forms its success takes, attests to the fragility of the philosophy guiding it and to the lack of precision in that philosophy's concepts." (Levinas 1997, 256).

According to Levinas, re-epistemization of Jewish rationality and thought is fundamental in this context. He asserts that Judaism is not a "'fossil,' as a superstitious mode of thinking and living, proper to communities degraded by the miserable conditions of a victim, living in ghettos and mellahs." (Levinas 1997, 13). On the contrary, he postulates that even if these Jewish truths "were determined by circumstances, conflicts and polemics long since forgotten and rendered insignificant, the words of the Doctors of Israel [the Talmud] fix categories, intellectual structures that are absolute in thought" (Levinas 1997, 68). Thus, Jewish thought would have its own epistemic and political value.

In this call for a rupture with the Christo-centric and totalizing conception of European–pagan universality, Levinas lays the groundwork for a philosophical gesture that extends his thought: Dussel's decolonial plea, inspired by Aimé Césaire's notion of 'concrete universality,' for a "transmodern pluriversal" (Dussel 2009, 124) It is a plea for a universality shaped by a multiplicity of concrete subjects – by subjectivities neglected or excluded by the ideal and modern totality: "thinking from marginalized lives and experiences (…) allows different viewpoints on the world to be made accessible and thus generates critical questioning" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2014, 24) and to formulate modes of existence based, above all, on an ethical principle and the plurality of viewpoints. This is a call for a pluriversalism, within the borders of modern Western societies, resting on a break and possibility of re-epistemization.

Thus, the re-epistemization of Jewish thought in Levinas does not concern only the resolution of the 'Jewish question' that Europeans pose to themselves. For him, it also entails the founding of another universality – one that comes into being through the shattering of the totality sustained by traditional philosophy and its unifying conception of emancipation-as-digestion. We denote this new posture as a form of heteronomy. In this call for a break with the Christocentric and totalizing conception of European-pagan universalism, Levinas lays the foundations for decolonial critiques that will extend his thought. As such, we believe, in anachronic terms perhaps, that he provides the possibility to construct epistemic

disobedience: both towards oppressive rationalities structuring Western societies, and their continuations nowadays through the mimetism structuring formally colonized societies.

2. Talmud as a Decolonial Source

In 'Beyond the State in the State' Levinas (2007) explores a Talmudic passage narrating the encounter between Alexander of Macedonia, after conquering the land, and the sages of the Negev. In the meeting Alexander asks them ten questions in what is both an act of curiosity and control. The dialogue turns tense when the sages challenge Alexander's power by arguing that one should "hate power and authority" (Levinas 2007, 80). The passage also includes a section where Alexander continues his expedition to meet with African women in his colonial endeavour. Levinas (2007, 103) highlights the colonial character of this expedition and how extraordinary it is to encounter women in such a text. All that is described to the reader of the Talmud is that Alexander arrives in an African village inhabited exclusively by women. The resonance between the sages and the women, found in their analogous responses to power, is an additional element in this construction.

We would like to delve into these topics by dividing the Talmudic passage into five scenes. The first scene concerns Alexander's first 3 questions. Those are his metaphysical questions. Alexander is asking the sages about their world via questions of whether the land or the sea was created first or whether the distance from the sky to the earth is bigger than the distance from east to west. This feels at first like an innocuous conversation or dialogue where worldviews meet. But following the Talmud, Levinas (2007, 84) highlights that this is not a plain conversation. From the very beginning, he notices that even though the sages are responding to Alexander, they are not fully engaging with him. They are to a great extent suspicious and afraid of his enquiry. For example, already in their answer to the first question, the Talmud states that even though they give Alexander an answer with a reasonable justification, they did not in fact believe that answer to be true and hence to represent their belief system.

This is proved by their answer to the third question where the text explicitly states that they provided him not just with a misleading answer that the matter was not yet resolved but also one that shows signs of avoidance because they were afraid that he would continue his line of inquiry, forcing them to divulge information that they were not comfortable sharing. This is evidenced by the fact that after the second question, the answers no longer make explicit references to scripture. It is common in the Talmud that arguments must be supported, and they initially are, but after the third question this direct reference stops.

Rabinovich (2024, 18) adds a new layer to this element by stating that in the Talmud, the reference to other sources, or the lack of in what is clear direct reference, does not constitute plagiarism. The subject is not sovereign or autonomous but merely the carrier of the other's words. The subject is a listening subject which entails that the other's words are not theirs, it is a relationship without property. It is an heteronomous relationship in which conversations are not about convincing, mastering or reporting but about dialogue. The sages dialogue among themselves but resist talking to Alexander. It is a case of a "relaxation of virility without cowardice" that Levinas (1998, 185) calls being otherwise than being. Using Levinas's statement that we should strive for "a passivity more passive than all passivity" (1998, 48), Rabinovich (2024, 122) argues that the heteronomous listening's exposure to the other is passive in the sense that it pacifies violence and aggression: it resists its occurrence.

Alexander is here a figure of the Same and his question engenders a movement of homogenization. He is an epistemic-political subject whose interactions with its Other, in this the sage as a form of radically different "object". Their meeting is framed through the prism of need both in the sense that Alexander demonstrates a need to expand his kingdom and in the sense that Alexander needs them to recognize his authority in order for his sovereignty over them to be fulfilled. To achieve such a goal, he must know them: he seeks to possess, consume, and digest them, and as it will appear in our analysis of the conversation his appropriation of them is a circular movement returning to itself—it is a gesture of constituting himself as an autonomous subject.

The Talmud makes it explicit that this is not a conversation but something akin to a police interrogation. As it will become clear in the remainder of the text, Alexander is not talking to the sages, he is probing them. Even though Levinas (2007, 81) does not put it in these terms, he hints in that direction when he comments that Alexander's first question is infantile and pointless, for its logic is only one of mapping the empire and measuring its greatness. To this extent, the sages' answer can be viewed as one that is misleading in an attempt to appease the ruler and avoid its attention. The sages' response to the third question demonstrates that. Levinas denotes their attitude as prudent while highlighting the power dynamic so he does not fully emphasize the resistance in that suspicion. We argue that it is possible to see in that prudence, already the attitude that later in the dialogue becomes an open statement that one must hate power. It is an exercise of the right to opacity developed by Éduard Glissant (1997, 120): the right to not be under surveillance and to not be an object of colonial curiosity. In other words, it is the right to not be turned into an exotic object of investigation be it a humanist dialogue or a police probing, or better yet, the refusal is a mode of showing that these two attitudes fall under the same logic.

The second scene concerns a set of four ethical questions. Alexander asks about who is wise or how one should live. Levinas (2007, 91) is quick to point out that those are the same questions addressed in the Pirkei Avot, the ethics of the fathers, an earlier Jewish text. Levinas also highlights that most of the answers are the same with the notable exception of the first concerning the meaning of wisdom. In the Talmudic passage, the sages respond that the wise is the one who can anticipate what is coming. The Pirkei Avot, which are also the most canonical answers, states that wise is who learns from everyone. Levinas does not explicitly state it but by highlighting this distinction, he is calling out attention to the heteronomous nature of wisdom. Moreover, the fact that the sages withhold that answer from Alexander the immediate context of having anticipated his probing of their knowledge in his third question reinforces the reading that they are resisting his approach.

Levinas connects this 'divinatory' element of wisdom, to the fifth question about strength. The sages argue that to be strong is to control the bad inclination. Levinas (2007, 90) reads bad inclination as the desire for domination. It is the rational desire to protect oneself and ensure one's safety by conquering the external world. For Alexander, the world is a battlefield for survival where one must kill or be killed. The rationalistic desire that Alexander represents is then indirectly confronted by divination in the fourth question and directly challenged in the fifth and sixth.

To the sixth question about who is rich, it is simply answered: whoever is satisfied with his lot. Levinas highlights the irony in the scene. What is supposed to be a stoic principle, i.e., Hellenistic, is being put forward by the barbarians who have just been colonized. This irony becomes even deeper when one considers that the sages were using that principle to challenge Alexander who is obviously rich but who nevertheless has travelled the world only to conquer them. Again, the imperial logic of building one's autonomy via subjugation of the world. The move towards heteronomy is confirmed in Levinas's interpretation of the seventh and eighth questions: How to live? / Let oneself die; How to die? / Let oneself live. For Levinas this is a statement against "biological egoism" (2007, 93). According to him what is being contrasted here is the idea of a life framed by autonomy and individualism in opposition to a life of openness to others. It is something along the lines of asking:

[U]nder what circumstances could I allow myself to be taken up and possessed by others, be in the hands of others, give up anything like a kind of sovereign self-determination …. What kind of communism could there be where I could just allow some people to do some shit for me, at the level of scale, and at the same time those people would also at other moments allow me to be doing that kind of thing? So, in what ways are we practicing, when we're for a dispossession of ourselves and allowing ourselves to be possessed in certain

other ways, allowing ourselves to consent not to be one, at a moment that also lets people act on us and through us, and doesn't constantly require us re-constituting ourselves, which I think is implied? (Moten and Harney 2013, 146, my emphasis)

The third scene involves Alexander's three last questions as well as his only rebuttal to an answer. It also involved a final question that falls outside the parameters of his investigation since it does not concern his desire to familiarize himself with the beliefs of the sages. The eighth question asks what one must one do to be popular, i.e., to exercise authority legitimately. The sages' answer is categorical: hate power and authority. Malabou (2024, 72) argues that for Levinas, Jewish tradition creates an anarchic soul that does not allow the love of power.[2] Malabou is talking about loving a ruler, but we hold that the passage has a greater range and also refers to the objection of holding power oneself. Ivan Segré (2022, 21) highlights the way unlike other ancient myths, the Jewish myth places them as slaves seeking liberation. In this analysis, the tradition of Jewish sovereignty is one that does not engender power but instead deconstructs it. It is not a conception of freedom that emerges out of unboundness but one that seeks liberation from its bounded condition: it builds freedom from an unfree condition. To this extent the sages are familiar with subjugation, as it is clear by their confrontation with Alexander, but they refuse to become subjects of that condition.

Alexander responds that he has a better one: using power for the benefit of those subjugated to it. Levinas (2007, 95) reads the sages' response as pre-emptively refusing this instrumentalization of power. He adds that it is a refusal of a philanthropic power that acts on behalf of its subjects. We add that this is a power that not only exerts violence but finds moral justification in its philanthropic narrative: it subjugates for the benefit of those subjugated. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the sages' refusal of instrumentalization is not a call for an autonomous authority in opposition to Alexander's external domination: good beneficial authority in contrast to exploitative authority. It is a refusal of authority per se.

Alexander then asked them if it is better to live on land or in the sea to which they state that it is better to live on land because everyone who adventures at sea, then strives to return home. Perhaps Levinas feels no need to hit the same note he repeatedly struck in the past, but we read this passage in line with his previous contrast between Ulysses and Abraham. The desire to return to the same represented by Ulysses here gains a new layer, that

---

[2] Malabou is aware that for Levinas this does not refer exclusively to the jewish people but to humanity in general. This is also consistent with Jewish approaches, for example, the prominent scripture scholar Umberto Casuto's (1976, 40) interprets Deuteronomy 10:17 as stating that God shows no preference for the Jewish people.

one could say was already present in the original trope (Levinas 1986, 348). The nostalgia for safety and sameness is now charged with the imperial attitude of embarking on the adventure to build that safety: conquering others is not dissociated from building the home one must then return to. On the other hand, for

Israel's feeling toward the world is entirely different. It is imbued with suspicion. The Jew does not have in the world the definitive foundations of the pagan. In the midst of the most complete trust accorded to things he is gnawed by a silent unease. For as unshakable as the world appears to those called sane minds, it contains for the Jew the trace of the provisional and of the created (Levinas 1935, our translation).

The irony that the sages now bring to the table, is that this project is infinite since regardless of how far one 'adventures', the border open to otherness will always be in front of you. Hence one can never return because there is always something to be conquered. Essentially the sages are asking Alexander how he came there in the first place since they have nothing to offer him. We interpret the sages' response that it is better to stay on land, as their direct statement that it would have been better for Alexander to have stayed home. That is an explicit resistance to this colonial presence among them, but, on a more explicit note, they are also resisting the idea of coloniality in its totality: the futility of conquering to build autonomy is demonstrated by the fact that regardless of how far one ventures, one always needs to return.

For the decolonial argument being constructed here it is important to highlight that this is the same answer the African women will give him. When Alexander arrives in Africa, he immediately wants to confront the local women and is taken aback by their answer that subverts his power: in case he defeats them, there will be no glory since he would be defeating a weaker adversary and if he is defeated by them, would he would be humiliated. It is an aporia of power where it is both self-evident since it is already concrete before the gesture that would impose it, while not being fully established since it needs to impose itself. Alexander then settles into his position of power by demanding that they feed him bread. Their response is giving and they give him a bread made of gold placed on a golden table. Alexander questions them about who would eat such a loaf to which they respond that he had bread at home. They refuse to cooperate with his sovereignty while recognizing its power over them. In the same line as the sages, the women also defy Alexander by making his domination explicit and therefore forcing him to acknowledge what his adventure strives for: collecting riches.

Finally, the last question is about equality. Alexander asks whether there is an hierarchy among the sages to which they answer that there is not. Levinas emphasises the collective element of the answer: the sages are one body of equals. Developing Levinas's perception we can see their answer as an opposition to the heroic individuality of Alexander. Instead, the sages are presenting themselves as heteronomous. And this is the understanding Alexander gets when he then asks them "why are you confronting me?" Alexander makes it clear that he is asking the question from a place of power, as someone who can get them killed. Rather than deny it, the sages confirm it: Satan is always victorious.

For Levinas (2007, 99), Alexander's question regards his frustration that the sages do not recognize his victory over them or acknowledge his supremacy. We see in this dynamic a situation where power demands recognition. Or it only functions through recognition but the sage's response pushes it back to its concrete reality: violence. Alexander wants the sages to be subjects of his force but in confronting him, they are refusing to obey and therefore forcing him to take his whole as a colonizer.

The conclusion of the dialogue between Alexander and the sages is illuminating in many ways, but two are striking. On the one hand, Alexander, despite noticing their resistance to his power, honors their defiance by dressing them in purple and giving them gold chains. This is a similar reaction to the African woman's victory over him. In both cases, the victory over imperialism is an empty victory. We may read a parallel in the widespread usage of decolonial theory terminology today (this article included), which may in fact demonstrate the ability of the empire to engulf its opposition. On the other hand, when Alexander asks the sages about directions to Africa so he can continue his imperial endeavor, they refuse offering him information at first, therefore forcing him to flex his strength. This aporia of colonial defeat, and hence the meaning of decolonization, is not solved in the Talmudic text. Instead, we see in this lack of resolution the possibility of an alternative perspective on what theoretical work is. Rather than prescribe or govern what resistance is, the Talmud seems to ask what decolonization could be.

The overarching conclusion of the tractate shows that impasse is not a dead end. Alexander reaches the entry of heaven, hence completing his imperial domination: he is able to move beyond the physical world and arrive at the doors of heaven. Still, there his sovereignty is not recognized. He is barred from accessing because he is unable to be 'defeated' and accept the limitation to his power. At the door, he is given an eye that outweighs all his riches. The weight of the eye comes from its curiosity and its ability to see the world, i.e., its heteronomous nature. This is revealed by the fact that it loses its weight by putting

dirt on it and hindering its capacity to see the other. We interpret this passage as a demonstration of the inevitable defeat of imperial power. Alexander is never 'defeated' despite arguing that he was. His power remains undisputed and unchanged and therefore he never takes a heteronomous approach to the world. He still wants to measure the difference between his empire and the curiosity of the eye rather than accept the difference without common measure of a heteronomous posture. The eye has no value because it outweighs all possible values. The Talmud refuses the possibility that Alexander learns from his interactions with his subjects. It might not determine what decolonization is but it establishes the necessity of it. That power cannot be dialogued with and must instead be hated.

This is also an elucidation of what colonial mentality entails. Often colonialism is framed as a failure to recognize the value of objects, cultures or worldviews. A form of ignorance or ethnocentrism that frames the world within a limited scope. In the passage, Alexander is not unable to recognize the path to Eden but despite recognizing it, he is unable to step away from his imperial mentality. Levinas captures the first realization while missing the second. For him the dialogue between Alexander and his subjects signals a connection while for us, while this interaction does exist, it only marks the overwhelming presence of power dynamics.

The philosophical gesture of Jewish decolonial thinking thus consists, from the dawn of its cognitive operation, in not positioning oneself as a mono-holder subject of Truth and of the meaning of History. It is the heteronomous approach of leaving space, for the Other as co-holders of truth. This re-epistemization of Jewish thought thus inserts itself into the debates of political epistemology mentioned at the beginning. The heteronomous subject leads to the advent of a political subject that is non-conquering, non-authoritarian, and non-totalitarian. Thus, it is able to circumvent the epistemo-political effects of totalizing rationality.

More concretely, Levinas considers that Jewish thinking is synonymous with ethics. For Levinas, the wisdom of the Doctors of the Talmud results in the institution of a "meta-political" principle (Cohen-Levinas and Abensour 2012) of hospitality, of welcoming Otherness in its absolute Otherness, within modern European political structures themselves. In doing so, Levinas thus advocates a radically different conception of universality from that deployed by the modern model of emancipation-as-digestion: "A totally different vision of universality, one no longer subordinated to confrontation. The light will be produced when the darkness covers 'all your people'; when silence falls on all those teachings that call you to fallacious confrontations, when all the prestige of exteriority fades and is as though it

never existed" (Levinas 1997, 94). It is at this moment that "the real light can shine. At this point the real universality, which is non-Catholic, can affirm itself" (Levinas 1997, 95).

This call for an alternative universalism – grounded in the ethics of hospitality – is further pursued, and, one might say, radicalized by a careful reader of Levinas, the Judeo-Algerian philosopher Jacques Derrida. Elaborating on this imperative of hospitality, and the reformulation of European universalism within Western societies, Derrida writes:

All 'living together' presupposes and keeps, as its very condition, the possibility of this singular, secret, inviolable separation from which, in hospitality, a stranger is accorded to a stranger. To recognize that one lives together, and well, only with and as a stranger, a stranger 'at home,' in all the figures of 'at home,' that there is 'living together' only where the whole does not form and does not close, where living together (adverb) contests the completeness, the closure, and the cohesion of a 'whole' (the noun, the substantive), of a substantial whole, closed, identical to itself: to recognize that there is only 'living together' where, in the name of promise and memory, of the messianic and of mourning without work and without healing, it welcomes asymmetry, anachrony, non-reciprocity with another (Derrida 2014, 37).

Derrida, in radicalizing Levinas, thus proposes that this alternative universalism – what we denoted as a "transmodern plurivalism" in Dusselian terms – must interrogate and unsettle, from within, the very structures of the political. According to Derrida, the heteronomous principle of hospitality derived from Jewish thinking entails an internal examination of what was originally totalized and therefore circumscribed via categories that delimit theiur legal, social, cultural, and political roles. He further contends that this principle of hospitality implies the obligation to undertake "a vast and formidable duty of translation." (Derrida 1997)

This duty of translation "is not merely pedagogical, 'linguistic,' domestic, or national", it must also involve "a transformation of law, of the languages of law" (Derrida, 1997). In essence, this is a call, grounded in Levinasian thought, to enact the de-hegemonization and decolonization of Europe. It is a call to create space – within politico-administrative, judicial, and educational institutions. Ultimately, it is a call to cultivate a universalism that is continuously shaped and renewed on an equal footing by the diverse subjectivities and epistemic traditions inhabiting Western territories. This new conception of universality is tinged with Jewish messianism—that is, with the idea of emancipation as an event that has not yet occurred, and which, to this day, remains foreign to tangible or circumscribed entities: "A gate would thus be open to the messianic, which Derrida describes as 'the coming of the other, the absolute and unpredictable singularity of the arrivant as justice.

[…] This messianic remains an ineffaceable mark […] of the experience of inheritance in general.'" (Rabinovich 2024, 39).

3. Levinas and the Liabilities of Destruction, or 'Who is responsible for the climate crisis?'

We live in a burning world. As documented by a convergence of diverse scientific sources, the world faces a major ecological crisis, which threatens the conditions for sustained human existence. The trajectories of environmental destruction have brought many thinkers to call for an urgent reformulation of philosophical-political thinking to deal with the crisis, and a reinterpretation of older thought to find sources of direction (Yuk Hui 2021; 2024). The key questions facing us today include: how are we to build ethical systems adequate for the unfolding new dangers? How do we think through justice and accountability for violences caused by layered historical decisions?

Within this process of reflection, the work of Levinas – despite its arguably lack of an explicit engagement with environmental themes – has been the subject of significant scrutiny and reflection from many ecological philosophers. There have been attempts to connect Levinasian readings with deep ecology (Molina Garcia 2021; Agolia, Barzola Elizagaray and Arcos 2024), particularly given his contributions to 'alterity theory,' ethics, hospitality, and his longstanding critique of modernity's totalizing tendencies. As the philosopher Timothy Morton reflects: ecological thinking itself implies that there is no world. The system of life forms is open-ended and infinite…It's Levinas who allows us to think our coexistence not as a world, but as a disturbing proximity between strangers, for whom I, in the core of my existence, am formally responsible, even when they cause me harm. This opens a way of thinking ecological ethics without a world. Wouldn't this be helpful in an era of climate catastrophe, in which our "normal" world is melting, and furthermore, our ideas of what a world is are also melting? (Goodbody and Rigby 2011, 169)

Morton is here combining the two elements of Levinas's philosophy: his criticism of totality and his demand for a heteronomy. Morton is arguing that the idea that there is no world, no absolute ontological concept that would engender government, and that in its absence we must engender an ethics that accounts for alterity, is a clear application of the fact that one must hate power.

Yet one dimension of ecological critique which is arguably implicit within Levinas, yet which has received scant attention is the implications of his thinking on

responsibility and accountability for conversations on climate justice. Climate justice refers to a whole array of conversations, dialogues and struggles related to addressing the climate crisis with a deep attentiveness to multiple dimensions of justice. In particular, climate justice is intimately connected with acknowledging the colonial origins of the climate crisis, and the ways in which it unfolds along lines of imperial inequalities and intersectional oppressions. In this way, climate justice thinking and decolonial theory are intimately intertwined, with climate justice approaches affirming that an adequate response to climate breakdown is both unthinkable and unattainable without decolonization.

Levinas' (2019) writings on the Talmud – 'Damages Due to Fire' – where the thinker deals with a Talmudic passage which recounts the liabilities incurred for a fire that burns out of control help us find avenues for thinking widely about climate justice and decolonial ecology. In this text, the Talmud details with great specificity the extensive responsibilities incurred by the person responsible for sparking the fire. For Levinas, "The release of elementary and anonymous forces is made equal to the intention that aims at a precise mark", leading to a critical implication of this point is that "[o]ne is responsible for even that which one does not see." (2019, 277).

This initial proposition takes Levinas to reflect on a range of dimensions, from the limits of private righteousness to Auschwitz, before ultimately presenting a thesis which is "a call to man's infinite responsibility, to an untiring wakefulness, to an absolute insomnia." (2019, 274). Levinas' extension of responsibilities is one where the "responsibility for damages caused by a disaster" is levied firmly at the initial instigator, but "immediately escapes the powers of the guilty party" (2019, 265). As Josh Cohen reflects:

A debt 'older' than any contract, increasing the more it is paid, Levinasian responsibility names an ethics which refuses its own fulfillment; it 'takes place' only in the form of a vigilantly maintained failure to take place. If Auschwitz imposes a task upon thought and action, it is one that takes its force from a resistance either to assumption or accomplishment, and whose accomplishment, paradoxically, is this resistance. (2005, 72).

It is not the 'debt' of a tax collector as in external law that needs to be imposed on the subject: "Levinas's teaching: heteronomy questions the very concept of will and, in that sense, the *nomos* (Law) of the *heteron* (Other) is no longer understood as a set of rules imposed from one on the outside but rather as the justice *of the* other, to whom we are indebted." (Rabinovich 2024, 28). This notion of debt is in line with Moten and

Harney's statement that it is not debt but credit that destroys communities: "Credit is a means of privatization and debt a means of socialization … debt is social and credit is asocial. Debt is mutual. Credit runs only one way" (2013, 61).

It does not require us to make a bold interpretation for us to read a strong relevance of Levinas' analysis for issues of climate violence and justice. The climate crisis emerges with the extravagant burning of fossil fuel deposits led by colonial powers in the Industrial Revolution, the unleashing of an elemental force. If we trace even the rudimentary physics of the greenhouse effect – which outlines that the emissions released centuries ago linger for generations to affect the climate system – we notice an atmosphere of layered responsibilities and complicities. But these do not require us to step up and take control in the sense of being masters of reality. They require the brave reduction of virility that is adopting a heteronomous posture. Rabinovich (2024, 122) links this Levinasian attitude described so far to the one proposed in Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa's statement that we are small ghosts in the eyes of the spirits. We are young and fragile and mortal and therefore all our hubris is pointless. We find that this is the lesson the Talmudic passage teaches via Alexander.

A conventional climate justice argument advocates for holding the wealthiest states, corporations and actors – those most responsible for the climate crisis and most able to financially deal with its repercussions – to be disproportionately responsible for repairing the crisis, and financing a transition beyond an economy of ecological destruction. Reading Levinas both confirms this argument, and asks us to go far further, dealing with the countless layers of responsibility. Following the notion of heteronomy, this is not a responsibility that comes from quantifiable deficit. Like Cohen mentioned above, it is a debt that increases the more it is paid because it is engendered on a heteronomous ethics that does not have a fulfillment. It does not operate under the logic of a universal value system that would enable a form of homogenization by allowing the colonizers to simply pay for one's damages. Alexander's gesture of covering the sages in purple and gold chains or recognizing defeat against the village of woman reinforces rather than hinder his position as a colonizer. The heteronomous responsibility elaborated here is the openness to the other that Morton mentioned in his analysis: the idea of world is not a place we share as a neutral background to be divided and exploited, it is the configuration of the ethical binds we build to allow for common life.

Levinas' deployment of heteronomy invites us to sit with, and be confronted, with the dizzying othernesses of ethics. The climate crisis, where contemporary ecological violences are multiplied by past ecological violences, where current decisions implicate and affect unborn future generations, encapsulates this pressing puzzle.

While we may and arguably must start, in line with frameworks of decolonization and reparations, with the Global North and colonizing powers taking the lead in resourcing a bold global response to the climate crisis, as Levinas' argument develops, this is just the beginning. The sheer moral and temporal dimensions of the planetary conundrum rapidly overwhelm this logic. In Levinas' outlook, we are all bound. While colonial powers, and their contemporary beneficiaries may be inordinately responsible, an indivisible responsibility falls to us all. Or as Anya Topolski writes on Levinas' view, "it is only by taking responsibility for the world that I can prevent its further destruction." (2015, 193)

Conclusion

The extension to Levinas's relevancy for today's world is a contested topic. On the one hand, his legacy belongs undoubtedly to conservative voices that praise modernity and the West as anchors of thought. On the other hand, it is also unequivocal that Levinas was a harsh critic of Western civilization, the Enlightenment and its modernist promise of progress. And under this second avenue, he has become a key figure in contemporary radical thinking. The arguments here develop this radical possibility within Levinas's theory in the direction of a fully counter-hegemonic philosophy.
In this context, his ethics become an alternative account of totality. The notion of heteronomy represents a form of universality without homogeneity. It stands for the possibility of world-making that does not entail hegemony and instead replaces it with responsibility for – infinite and pluralized – Otherness. In our argument, this philosophical approach received a concrete ramification via the reflection on the ecological challenges prominent today.

We affirm that Levinas's philosophy is not only in line with prominent and canonical decolonial theorizations, but it also a fruitful key for further developing them. Therefore, we argue that Levinas's theory allows for a radicalization of contemporary decolonial thinking. While this is not explicitly constructed in the argumentation, this insight also implicitly positions itself within Levinas's scholarship and disputes dominant readings of his philosophy. And in that way, it also makes a statement about what

Levinas's legacy should be. Briefly, the claim being postulated here is that decolonial thinking is advanced by Levinas's insights to the same extent that Levinas's theory is advanced by being framed within decolonial perspectives.

Dr. Yonathan Listik, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University,
y.listik[at]hum.leidenuniv.nl
Alexia Levy-Chekroun, PhD. Cand., École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales
(Institut Jean Nicod), Paris, alexialevychekroun[at]ehess.fr
Daniel Macmillen Voskoboynik, Ph.D. Cand., Department of Human Geography,
Lund University, daniel.macmillen_voskoboynik[at]keg.lu.se

References

Agolia, Ofelia, Pehuén Barzola Elizagaray, and Camilo Arcos. "Recuperar la imaginación como herramienta para reinventar lo colectivo." *Prometeica (Mar del Plata)* 31, no. 31 (2024): 212–25.

Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 1997. "The Translator's Task" Translated by Steven Rendall. *TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 10(2): 151-165.

Batnitzky, Leora. 2013. *How Judaism became a Religion*: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Boyarin, Daniel. 2018. *Judaism: Genealogy of a Modern Notion.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Casuto, Umberto. 1976. *Torah, Neviim, Ktuvim: Interpretations*. Tel Aviv: Yavneh.

Cohen, Josh. 2005. *Interrupting Auschwitz: Art, Religion, Philosophy*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Cohen-Levinas, Danielle, and Miguel Abensour. 2012. *Emmanuel Levinas, l'intrigue de l'humain : Entre métapolitique et politique. Entretiens avec Danielle Cohen-Levinas.* Paris : Hermann.

Derrida, Jacques. 1997. "L'hospitalité selon Jacques Derrida" *Le Monde*, 2. décembre. https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1997/12/02/l-hospitalite-selon-jacques-derrida_3810936_1819218.html

Derrida, Jacques. 2014. *Le dernier des Juifs*. Paris: Editions Galilée.

Drabinski, John. 2011. *Levinas and the Postcolonial : Race, Nation, Other*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Dussel, Enrique. 1992. *1492. L'Occultation de l'Autre.* Les Éditions Ouvrières.

Dussel, Enrique. 2009. "Pour un dialogue mondial entre traditions philosophiques". *Cahiers des Amériques Latines*, n° 62 (2009): 111-127.

Dussel, Enrique. 2016. "Sistema-mundo y transmodernidad" in *Modernidades coloniales*. El Colegio de México Publicaciones.

Garcia, Erika Natalia Molina, 2021. "All my earthothers: Levinasian tools for deep ecology" in *Narratives in the Anthropocene Era*. Lago, Italy: Il Sileno Edizioni.

Glissant, Éduard. 1997. *Poetics of relation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Goodbody, Axel, and Kate Rigby. 2011. *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

Hui, Yuk, and Pieter Lemmens, eds. 2021. *Cosmotechnics : For a Renewed Concept of Technology in the Anthropocene*. London: Routledge.

Hui, Yuk. 2024. *Machine and Sovereignty: For a Planetary Thinking*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Kleinberg, Ethan. 2021. *Emmanuel Levinas's Talmudic Turn: Philosophy and Jewish Thought*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1935. "L'actualité de Maïmonide" *Paix et droit : Organe De L'Alliance Israélite Universelle,* April 1. https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/?a=d&d=ped19350401-01

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1972. *Humanisme de l'autre homme*. Paris : Editions Fata Morgana.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1979. *Le Temps et l'Autre*. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.

Levinas, Emmanuel and Stéphane Moses. 1982. *Système et Révélation. La philosophie de Franz Rosenzweig*. Paris : Editions Verdier.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1986. "The trace of the other." In *Deconstruction in context,* Edited by Mark Taylor, 345-359. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1997. *Difficult freedom*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1998. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 2007. *New Talmudic readings*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 2019. *Nine talmudic readings*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Malabou, Catherine. 2024. *Stop Thief!: Anarchism and Philosophy*. Newark: Polity.

Mendieta, Eduardo. 2012. "The Ethics of (Not) Knowing: Take Care of Ethics and Knowledge Will Come of Its Own Accord." In *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, Edited by Eduardo Mendieta and Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, 247-264. New York, NY: Fordham

Milner, Jean-Claude. 2006. *Le Juif de savoir*. Paris : Editions Grasset.

Moten, Fred, and Stefano Harney. 2013. T*he Undercommons : Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions.

Moten, Fred. 2018. *The Universal Machine*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Nordmann, Sophie. 2008. *Philosophie et Judaïsme. H. Cohen, F. Rosenzweig, E. Levinas*. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.

Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria. 2014. *Les savoirs situés de Sandra Harding et Donna Haraway. Sciences et épistémologies féministes*. Paris : L'Harmattan.

Quiroz, Lissel, and Philippe Colin. 2023. *Pensées décoloniales. Une introduction aux théories critiques d'Amérique latine.* Paris : Editions La Découverte.

Rabinovich, Silvana. 2016. "Heteronomía: el otro de la ley." In *Tópicos Del Seminario*, *2*(12), 123–134.

Rabinovich, Silvana. 2024. *Notes for a decolonial political theology*. Oxford: Routledge.

Segré, Ivan. 2014. *Judaïsme et révolution*. Paris : La fabrique éditions.

Segré, Ivan. 2022. *La souveraineté adamique : une mystique révolutionnaire*. Paris.: Éditions Amsterdam.

Topolski, Anya. 2015. *Arendt, Levinas and a Politics of Relationality*. London Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International.

Yadgar, Yaacov. 2018. *Sovereign Jews: Israel, Zionism, and Judaism*. Buffalo, NY: State University of New York Press.