Chapter 1

EXTRA-TEXTUAL EVIDENCE AND

AN OVERVIEW OF LEVINAS' ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY

1 Introduction

This initial chapter of our study proposes two minor theses that are
propaedeutic to the overall purpose of presenting and critically
appraising the origin and development of the priority of responsibility in
Levinas' ethical philosophy. The first of these theses is primarily,
although not exclusively, methodological, viz., that the actual situation
and circumstances of a philosopher's life, from a phenomenological
perspective, constitute a context which cannot be meaningfully disengaged
from an adequate understanding of that philosopher's work. We realize
that, carelessly employed, the application of this principle could
degenerate into historicism or an ad hominem fallacy. Yet with due
precaution it need not become such. It is our contention that the
strictures of the phenomenological method will provide the necessary
precautions for utilizing this quasi-historical approach to advantage.
How this is possible will become clear in the course of our
investigation. Within the framework of this thesis, therefore, we will
provide in this present chapter a brief biographical sketch of some of the
major influences which formed Levinas' path to philosophy. This will
secure for us an initial perspective of the critical contexts from which
we will investigate Levinas' concept of responsibility.

The second minor thesis that will guide the format of this chapter

is that in order to understand any particular aspect of a philosopher's work, such as our focus on the priority of responsibility, it is necessary to view this, as far as possible, within an overall perspective of that philosopher's corpus. Thus we will present in this chapter a succinct overview of the development of Levinas' philosophical work from 1930 to the present, an overview which we offer as our own interpretation. This interpretation will be investigated in detail in subsequent chapters. We do not claim, however, to establish any ultimate perspective of this corpus (which would be contrary to the spirit of Levinas' philosophy), since, as Andrew Tallon has pointed out, such a position would be untenable insofar as Levinas is still a living philosopher.[1] Nevertheless, we believe that we are in a better position today than any previous commentators to cautiously delineate a systematic movement to Levinas' thought, and we contend that there is sufficient evidence to justify this delineation. It is this thesis which has led us to take a developmental as well as a substantive approach to understanding the priority of responsibility in our study.

2 Phenomenology and Life Experience

In the phenomenological approach to philosophy, where method is understood as a way of being in the truth for the phenomenological philosopher rather than merely the application of a technique for grasping the truth of being, there exists a meaningful affinity between the assertions, descriptions, arguments, and counter-arguments which comprise a philosophical text, and the life experiences of the author who has written it. We subscribe to the thought of Adriaan Peperzak in this regard. In a

recent study Peperzak asserts that "the presentation of a philosophical oeuvre demands not only a faithful reconstruction of its empirical and logical peculiarities but also a clarification of its ties binding it to the life of the author."[2] This is also consistent with the thought of Levinas himself. In "Réflections sur la 'technique' phénoménologique," Levinas points out that the phenomenological method is not a set of rules as this is understood by the natural sciences.[3] Rather, it is a process of self-transformation by which the phenomenological investigator seeks to overcome the presuppositions of the natural attitude and thereby to achieve a more fundamental posture toward the experienced world. Phenomenology must be understood as a way of life in the spirit of Platonic philosophy. As Levinas contends, in keeping with Plato, phenomenology is moral and spiritual in the fullest sense.[4] Phenomenology involves a lived methodology which, as we will see, is one point on which Husserl, Heidegger, and Levinas agree.

Let us make it clear, however, that at this point we are not yet attempting to justify these methodological assertions which must nevertheless concern us from the outset insofar as they represent the basic principles of our own investigation. It will be necessary to consider the entire question of the phenomenological method in greater depth throughout this present work since this is integral to the substantive questions concerning the priority of responsibility in Levinas' philosophy. But for now we wish only to indicate the intimate connection between the process of the phenomenological method and its relation to everyday experience in order to introduce the experiential contexts that will form the background and the interpretative slant of our study.

As an aspect of these methodological questions which must be

considered in order to adequately approach the radical and unique

development of the concept of responsibility in Levinas' thought, we will

have cause in the course of this present investigation to make an appeal

to some of Levinas' life experiences as an aid to the clarification and

understanding of his work, cause sufficient to begin here with a brief

sketch of his path to philosophy. Furthermore, one cannot help but notice

the sheer volume of literature in the form of interviews, conversations,

etc., incorporating a biographical element, which has grown up alongside

Levinas' properly philosophical texts, and which, in keeping with the

spirit of phenomenology, we wish to take into account if only in a cursory

manner. As Husserl points out, "the phenomenologist lives in the paradox

of having to look upon the obvious as questionable...."[5]

In addition, it is of no small importance to the understanding of

Levinas' philosophy as a whole, and necessary for demonstrating the

central place of responsibility in it, to come to understand his intimate

and yet critical relation with Husserl's phenomenology as well as the

ontology of Martin Heidegger which, among other influences — notably,

Judaism and the horror of the Holocaust — form a constant background, in

our view, out of which Levinas' original philosophy emerges. Let us turn,

then, to a brief sketch of some of the events of Levinas' early life in

order to get a feel for the influences that would later shape the

development of his original philosophical thought.

3 Early Influences on Levinas' Intellectual Development

Born in Lithuania in 1906, Levinas was introduced in his early years to

the study of the Hebraic bible.[6] This study, which was integral to the

daily life of the Jewish community in which Levinas lived, attached more importance to an intellectual and dialectical approach to the Talmud and to the love of books in general than to mystical practices or ostentatious liturgical displays.[7] For Levinas, however, and not unlike his orientation to phenomenology, the Bible is not a collection of absolute directives or prescriptions to be slavishly and unreflectively followed. It is a divinely ordained text which is always in need of interpretation, what Levinas will later describe as "hermeneutic glimpsing and feeling."[8]

In addition to his early Biblical study and formation, Levinas was also introduced to the secular culture of his day and to the history of non-religious thought. His father, who owned a bookstore in Kovno serving a clientele of local intellectuals, spoke Russian to the children at home and introduced Levinas to Russian classical writers such as Tolstoy, Pushkin and Dostoyevsky, an introduction which would leave a lasting impression on young Levinas.[9] But it would be Judaism and his Talmudic studies that would create the most productive tension in the Greek bowstring of Levinas' philosophical thought. As Jacques Derrida succinctly puts it, quoting James Joyce: in Levinas' philosophy "'Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet.'"[10]

In 1916, with civil war in Russia, Levinas' family moved to Kharkov in the Ukraine along with other Jewish refugees, returning to Lithuania in 1920. In 1923, however, the family moved once again, this time to Strasbourg where Levinas first took up his formal study of philosophy at the University of Strasbourg under the tutelage of Maurice Pradines, Jean Hering, and others. Here he also began a life-long friendship with Maurice Blanchot.[11] During this time Levinas came into contact with the experimental sociology of Emile Durkheim and was particularly influenced by Durkheim's notion of the 'social' as a 'collective' which is not equal

to the sum of the indivuduals that make it up. It was also at Strasbourg
that Levinas came under the influence of the philosophy of Henri Bergson,
especially Bergson's notions of "temporality," understood as duration ("la
durée concréte"), and "creative intuition or impulse — élan vital."[12] We
will see how these notions affected Levinas' thought later in our study.
But it was his introduction to the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, through
the chance suggestion of a friend, that Levinas first "discovered the
concrete meaning of the very possibility of 'working in philosophy'
without being straightaway enclosed in a system of dogmas...."[13]

From the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl, Levinas derived
the rigorous and systematic methodological conceptions that have
influenced the entirety of his philosophical work. Indeed, Levinas was
one of the first to introduce Husserl's phenomenology to the philosophers
of France. In 1930 he published The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's
Phenomenology which had originally been written for his doctorate, and in
1931 he and a colleague translated Husserl's Cartesian Meditations into
French.[14] The Theory of Intuition was, at the time, the only book-length
presentation of Husserl's phenomenology available to the French-speaking
world. It had a major impact. In his well-known obituary essay on
Merleau-Ponty, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre stated that he, Sartre, "was
introduced to phenomenology by Levinas" upon reading Levinas' Theory of
Intuition which he had stumbled upon, according to Simone de Beauvoir, in
the Picard bookshop opposite the Sorbonne.[15]

But Levinas would later come to disagree with Sartre's
understanding of freedom and with his dualistic conception of the relation
between the 'I' ("pour-soi") and the 'other' as this was worked out in
Being and Nothingness, and which we will investigate more thoroughly in
subsequent chapters of our study. For Levinas, it was an unacceptable

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aspect of Sartre's philosophy (as well as that of Husserl and Heidegger) that the absolute freedom of consciousness, from which there is "no exit" according to Sartre, eliminated the possibility of transcendence and genuine relationship with the other, viewing the other as "a threat and a degredation."[16] Levinas was more sympathetic to the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, whom he met often at Jean Wahl's Collége de Philosophie in the thirties and forties, and who was critical of Sartre on the same point in The Phenomenology of Perception. Levinas also criticized Sartre for failing to deal adequately with 'the God question' and supported, to a certain extent, Gabriel Marcel's position on this point. Nevertheless, at a personal level, Levinas tells us that he always liked Sartre, whom he met at Marcel's home. He felt that Sartre's philosophy "was open to the possibility of ethical and political commitment."[17] But it was Husserl's thought, and especially Husserl's reflections on the methodological question, with particular emphasis on the phenomenological reduction, that would leave a lasting impression on Levinas and would be the source of both inspiration and criticism throughout the entirety of his philosophical corpus.

As a way of providing some focus for the particular questions concerning the priority of responsibility in Levinas' philosophy that will be our primary concern in this present work, let us present at this point a brief, general overview of Levinas' ethical philosophy. This is intended, as we have already explained, to familiarize the reader with the overall thrust of Levinas' thought and to indicate the central importance of the question of responsibility therein, and thus to set the stage for the detailed analysis of this question which will occupy us throughout the remainder of our investigation.

4 An Overview of Levinas' Ethical Philosophy

4.1 The Early Works: the Emergence of the Subject

After The Theory of Intuition, the first text in which Levinas begins to
work out his own original phenomenological philosophy is Existence and
Existents. The whole of this text aims at doing what Husserl said instead
of talking about what Husserl said to do, which was the necessary
structure of The Theory of Intuition. Although Levinas pays his respects
to Heidegger here, it is clearly against Heidegger that Existence and
Existents is directed.

In Being and Time Heidegger's existential analyses of Dasein are
carried out within the framework of the ontological distinction, the
distinction between Being and beings, with the goal of approaching anew
the question "What is Being?" But, Levinas charges, the ontological
distinction in Heidegger's work, although it is an original contribution
to the history of philosophy, presupposes "an equivalency or coordination"
between Being and nothingness, an equivalency experienced in the anxiety
of Dasein's finitude or being-toward-death.[18] Heidegger has not gone far
enough. For Levinas the result of Husserl's phenomenological reduction —
the bracketing of the thesis of the natural world — is not nothingness,
but a no-thing-ness which is yet 'something'. This 'something' Levinas
calls the "il y a" by which he means 'Being in general'. Being in general
is not nothing; it is an "anonymous rustling," Levinas says, a presence
made conspicuous as an absence.[19] It is over and against the sheer
anonymity of Being in general (Existence) that the existent emerges.
Whereas Heidegger begins his analysis with Dasein already constituted,

Levinas wants to show how the existent (a being) establishes itself in relation to existence (Being).

To become an existent, Levinas says, requires continual effort, a struggle against the anonymity and horror of the il y a which is experienced in insomnia, laziness and fatigue.[20] This effort on the part of the existent to become a somebody must be taken up at every instant for "the existence of the existent is by essence an activity." The "instant" is thus considered by Levinas to be the dynamic essence of the existent understood from the perspective of time as the ground of the possibility for the "perpetual birth" of the existent.[21] But in the accomplishment of becoming an existent, in taking up the burden and the struggle of becoming a determinate being through "mastery over the il y a,"[22] the existent finds itself fixed in a radical solitude, a separateness where, as Levinas puts it, "I am forever stuck with myself."[23] Thus the emergence of the existent has both a positive and a negative aspect: positively, there is the establishment of the 'time' of the existent understood in the common sense of 'clock-time', the succession of instants of annulment and resurrection which constitute the mastery and sovereignty of the "I" over the il y a; but, negatively, this 'time' of the existent, understood as regularity and sameness, is also a prison of solitude because it is not yet dialectical time in the fullest sense, not yet relation with the Other. In the closing pages of Existence and Existents Levinas asks: "How indeed could time arise in a solitary subject?"

This problem of the solitude of the existent is taken up by Levinas in Time and the Other, a text written somewhat later than, but from about the same period as Existence and Existents. In Time and the Other Levinas argues that the existent attempts to overcome its solitude in two ways: ecstasis (or enjoyment) and knowledge.[24] But these "evasions" of solitude

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fail because in ecstasis, or the enjoyment of the Other, there is a collapse of the subject into the object; and in the knowledge relation there is a collapse of the object into the subject. In both cases the separateness of the subject is lost: "these relationships," Levinas says, "result in the disappearance of the other."[25] But there is another alternative in which the sovereignty of the separate being is maintained while, contra Sartre, a transcendence toward the Other is possible. Levinas calls this relation "Sociality." Initially, he describes it primarily from the perspective of his phenomenological analysis, contra Heidegger, of time.

As Heidegger pointed out, time is always futural. But the future, for Levinas, is not that which I know will happen at some future time. Rather, for Levinas, the future is precisely that which "is in no way grasped," or what is "absolutely surprising," absolutely other, like my death.[26] From this understanding Levinas argues that time is relationship with the Other where the otherness of the Other is not reduced to the sameness of knowledge or ecstasis. It is a relation of "diachrony" or an always-going-towards that which will never become a determinate object, in a fashion that is similar to Hegel's aufgehoben.[27] Sociality is a being-with the Other where the Other always remains a mystery to me; a relation with that which cannot be comprehended and which thereby opens up the dimension of the Infinite. Levinas uses two existential analyses in Time and the Other as phenomenological 'evidence' to support this thesis: the caress and paternity.

The desire of the caress, "voluptuousness," is a hunger that is never satisfied. "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."[28] Thus the voluptuousness of the caress is analogous to the temporality of Sociality insofar as it is a definite relation to that which can never be reduced to a determinate object. Levinas understands fecundity or paternity in a similar manner. My child is both me and not me. Through the child the parent is able to escape from his solitude while at the same time, in a most concrete fashion, maintaining the separateness that genuine relationship requires.

4.2 The Later Works: Subjectivity as Inter-subjectivity

Jacques Derrida has pointed out that Levinas' philosophical texts are like a series of waves approaching a beach, where each wave deepens and radicalizes what has come before.[29] In Existence and Existents Levinas begins by showing the escape of the being from 'Being in general' (il y a) in the separateness of existing. In the analyses of temporality, voluptuousness, and fecundity in Time and the Other he describes how the existent escapes the solitude of being in Sociality with the Other. Let us now turn to his more recent works to see how these themes are deepened and intensified there.

Totality and Infinity, the text for which Levinas is perhaps most well-known, continues the focus on Sociality by bringing to light the fundamentally ethical dimension of the intersubjective relationship. This analysis is worked out using the concepts of the Same (the 'I', ego, or consciousness) and the Other (the other person, alterity) — terms borrowed from Plato's Sophist. Levinas argues that the interpersonal relationship involves a radical responsibility for the Other that is prior to thought and freedom. The totalizing aspirations of the whole of Western philosophy, which supposedly culminate in Hegel's Idealism and the pretensions of thought to achieve an absolute synthesis of consciousness

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and Being, is criticized by Levinas through his analysis of the non-synthesizable Infinity that is opened up in the face to face relationship with the Other. We have already seen a predelineation of this argument in Levinas' earlier works, but let us briefly review how it is worked out in Totality and Infinity.

The face to face relationship with the Other is understood by Levinas to be an event which cannot be thematized in language, an "epiphany" which thus does not deteriorate into the "bad infinity" of Anaximander's apeiron or the Absolute Knowledge of Idealism, but, rather, opens up the Infinite as a 'surplus' in the positive sense of Descartes' Third Meditation. The face to face relation is ethical in that the approach of the Other disrupts the self-identity or self-coincidence of the existent (the Same) so that the objectifying movement of thought is not allowed to become totalitarian. Here we will see the impact of the fact that the memory of the Holocaust is never far from Levinas' reflections and, as we will demonstrate, is instrumental in determining the agenda of those reflections.[30] This disruption wrought by the otherness of the Other is essentially what Levinas means by responsibility, a responding to the Other prior to any conceptualization, a response which is an event at the level of sensibility. Existence and Existents established the existent as a determinate being and thus as that which is capable of being acted upon, a sensible or sensate being. Although consciousness, the achievement of the sovereign individual or the solitary existent, is an active principle, the sensibility and finitude of the body represent, for Levinas, an absolute passivity.

Totality and Infinity extends this basic argument through an analysis of "exteriority." As exteriority or alterity, as that which resists infinitely the attempt of conceptualizing thought to grasp it, the

Other challenges the sovereignty of the existent's identity of thought and subjectivity. The exteriority of the Other revealed in the face of the Other as that which cannot be grasped, shows subjectivity now to be an infinite passivity rather than a totalizing activity. To be a subject in the _ethical_ sense for Levinas does not mean to be a master of Being as it did in _Existence and Existents_. By the time of _Totality and Infinity_, to be a subject means _to be subjected to_ and, thus, in a non-coercive way, to be 'compelled' to respond to the "approach" of the Other. _Totality and Infinity_ moves from the exteriority of the Other to the interiority of the Same, an interiority which is not an identity or self-coincidence but, in the context of Sociality, an _exposure_ and a "vulnerability" to the Other, a place from which I go out of myself with no hope of return, a giving of myself to the Other, despite myself and before any choice on my part, for the Other's good: the wandering and repetition of Abraham over the return and closure of Ulysses.

This radical view of what is meant by the ethical, from the perspective of subjectivity, is continued in Levinas' next major philosophical text, _Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence_. This text focuses on the investigation of the ethical dimension of intersubjectivity, understood as responsibility, particularly from the perspective of language. As Hans-Georg Gadamer pointed out in _Truth and Method_, human being is distinguished not so much by Aristotelian 'rationality' as by "_linguisticality_." Succinctly put, "linguisticality," in Gadamer's formulation, means: "Being that can be understood is language."[31]

In this spirit and with certain Heideggerian overtones, Levinas begins his analysis of language by making a distinction between "Saying" and "the said."[32] In any utterance, Levinas explains, what is _said_ cannot

be understood apart from the _Saying_ 'from' which it arises. Saying,
according to Levinas, is a pre-thematic and pre-conscious expression of
our being-_with_-the-Other, a "signifyingness" or signification that is a
passive "exposure" to the Other.[33] It is not yet syntactical speech but,
through desire, it gives rise to an intentionality that results in a
statement, a "said." According to Levinas, this distinction has _ethical_
ramifications. Saying, the very possibility of language, _obligates_ me to
the Other because it is not only a being-with-the-Other but a
being-_for_-the-Other as well. It is an openness and willingness to express
myself to the Other without calculation. This puts my self-identity, my
same-ness, my oneness, my will-power, into question. The face to face
relation with the Other, worked out in _Totality and Infinity_, understood
as Saying, is exactly what makes it impossible for me to reduce the Other
to any objective _cogitatum_.

In the context of his argument from sensibility, Levinas points out
that the face is different from other parts of the body. It is presented,
generally, naked; but with a "_chaste_" nudity that is an innocence against
which no totalitarianism could stand. The being of being-for-the-Other,
which establishes the ethical relationship as responsibility for the
Other, is a communication or giving of oneself with "total gratuity."[34] It
is prior to freedom and consciousness and, in fact, gives rise to these,
and proposes to them a perpetual critique, as can be derived from the
above analysis; since philosophies of freedom and consciousness already
presuppose a subject to which moral qualities can or cannot be attributed,
i.e., they presuppose an already existing subject without accounting for
this.

4.3 Recent Work: From Inter-subjectivity to God

In his most recent major work, De Dieu Qui Vient à L'idée, Levinas takes the development of his long phenomenological 'ontology' and extends it to its logical 'conclusion'. In this text, Levinas moves from the concept of the priority of responsibility to "the command of being-for-the-Other" understood now as "saintliness" ("sainteté") or "the source of all values," which is "an imperative of love ("l'aimer").[35] The Infinite (God) is revealed in the incommensurateness of the face of the Other. The Infinite is thus 'expressed' in terms that break forth to the "otherwise than being," beyond the reductionistic, objectivistic, totalitarian pretensions and intrinsic will to power of consciousness.

Levinas begins from Descartes' reflections on God. But, unlike Descartes, Levinas is not so much interested in proving the existence or non-existence of God, where the term "God" indicates "a being." In De Dieu Levinas says: "Ce ne sont pas les preuves de l'existence de Dieu qui nous importent ici, mais la rupture de la conscience, qui n'est pas un refoulement dans l'inconscient mais un dégrisement ou un réveil secouant le "sommeil dogmatique" qui se dort au fond de toute conscience reposant sur l'objet." ("Proofs for the existence of God are not so important for us here, but the rupture of consciousness, which is not a repression into the unconscious but a sobering up or a waking up that shocks the 'dogmatic slumber' which lies at the bottom of all consciousness reposing on its object.")[36]

Here, basically, is how Descartes resolves the God question: Since something greater cannot be produced by something lesser, the human, finite mind of man could not have produced the idea of the Infinite; and since we do, in fact, have the idea of the Infinite in our minds (because we can think it), this idea must have been caused or put in the mind by something greater than the human mind. This something greater is God.

Here we find the ontological argument revived and revised.

What Levinas takes from Descartes' construal of this argument is
the interpretation that God (the Infinite) is experienced as a "surplus,"
an overflowing without end, and thus in this sense as an Absolutely Other.
God signifies the ultimately incomprehensible. But God's
incomprehensibility is not nothing; it is the ultimate source, as ultimate
trace and ultimate alterity, of the break-up of the pretensions of thought
to reduce the Other to an object of thought; the ultimate source of all
value that is a disruption of all values; an an-archy: "L'idée de Dieu,
c'est Dieu en moi, mais déjà Dieu rompant la conscience qui vise des
idées, différant de tout contenu." ("The idea of God is God in me, but
God already breaking-up consciousness aiming at ideas, different from any
specific content.")[37] For Levinas, God is not a Supreme Being. God is not
a being at all. Like Plato's "Good" in the Republic and his "One" in the
Parmenides, God, the Infinite, is beyond being: "...l'idée du Bien
d'au-delà de l'etre."[38] Levinas replaces the vertical telos of the old
metaphysics with a "beyond" which is a horizontal or historical
transcendence. The Infinite is not so much over and against us as with
us. 'God' is God-in-me. In keeping with the Jewish tradition, God, for
Levinas, is historical and lives among His people, is written and revealed
in the prophetic literature, art and history of a people, and is
manifested to me personally in the face to face relationship of
responsibility for my neighbor.

This marks the climax of Levinas ethical philosophy. The general
thrust of it, and much of its specific content as well, will be
understood, according to our argument, as a continuing study of ethical
responsibility. This will begin with the responsible struggle of the
existent to master the "il y a" as this is depicted in Existence and

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Existents; the movement from this first level of responsibility for self and its solitary sovereignty to the break-up of this in conjunction with exteriority understood as temporality, eros, and paternity as presented in Time and the Other; responsibility understood as a pre-thematic sociality or response-ability to the Other in the face to face relation presented in Totality and Infinity; responsibility understood as language, as prior to and the ground of subjectivity and freedom presented in Otherwise than Being; and, finally, responsibility as an openness to the disruption of the Infinite in the approach of the Absolute Other manifested as an ongoing and effective historical presence in the witness of prophecy that is at the base of sociality: God as verb rather than some Supreme Being or Absolute Knowledge, revealed in the saintliness of the Other in De Dieu qui vient à l'idée. This development of the concept of responsibility — how it is arrived at by Levinas and its meaningfulness in making sense of the concrete situation of human being — is the central focus of the present study.

5 Conclusion

We have already indicated the main lines of the critical posture of our investigation in which we will offer a critique of Levinas' critique of the primacy of consciousness from the perspective of a Husserlian/Heideggerian apologia worked out under the influence of arguments drawn from various sources, including Nietzsche's genealogy of responsibility. These critical arguments will be introduced at the appropriate moments of our investigation. They will function as a kind of foil for clarifying the manner in which Levinas arrives at his original

depiction of the ethical priority of responsibility which, until this point in the literature, has not yet been viewed from the developmental position of our study, a movement which we have tried to sketch in broad strokes in this first chapter.

In order to approach a critical questioning of Levinas' thought it is necessary to have as clear an idea as possible of the nature of that thought itself. As has already been indicated, the origin of Levinas' original philosophy and perhaps the most important context outside of which it is impossible to fully understand this philosophy, is located in the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Levinas' critical response to the work of this mentor to whom Levinas has continually returned throughout his philosophcial career. This is the subject matter of the following chapter to which we will now turn.

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3. Emmanuel Levinas, "Réfelxions sur la 'technique' phénoménologique," in DEHH, p. 112; all translations of this text are my own.

4. Emmanuel Levinas, "L'oeuvre d'Edmond Husserl," in DEHH, p. 8; my translation.

5. Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), III, A, 53, p. 180; hereafter 'C'.

6. Emmanuel Levinas, "Signature," ed. by Adreaan Peperzak, trans. M.E. Petrisko, Research in Phenomenology VIII (1978): 175.

7. François Poirié, Emmanuel Levinas: Qui etes-vous? (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1987), pp. 64-67; all translations my own.

8. EI, p. 23 / p. 13.

9. Poirié, p. 65.

10. Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 153. Quoted from James Joyce's Ulysses. Derrida: "But Levinas does not care for Ulysses...."

11. Poirié, p. 70.

12. Emmanuel Levinas, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas" in Face to Face With Levinas, ed. by Richard Cohen (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1986), p. 13.

13. EI, pp. 28-29 / pp. 19-20; see also, Poirié, pp. 73-76.

14. Edmund Husserl, Méditations Cartesiennes, trans. Gabrielle Peiffer and Emmanuel Levinas (Paris: Armand Coline, 1931; 2nd ed., Paris: J. Vrin, 1947).

15. Face to Face, pp. 16-17.

16. Face to Face, p. 17.

17. Ibid.

18. EE, p. 20 / pp. 20-21.

19. EE, p. 64 / p. 105.

20. EE, pp. 32ff / pp. 46ff.

21. EE, pp. 74ff / pp. 126ff.

22. EI, p. 51 / p. 41.

23. EE, p. 84 / p. 144.

24. EI, pp. 59-60 / p. 52.

25. TO, p. 41 / p. 19.

26. TO, pp. 76 ff / pp. 64ff.

27. EI, p. 56 / p. 48; "Diachrony and Representation," in TO, p. 112; "Diachronie et représentation," in University of Ottawa Quarterly, 55, 4, 1985.

28. TO, p. 89 / p. 82.

29. Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 312, n. 7.

30. EI, p. 41 / p. 32.

31. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode (Tubingen: Mohr, 1960); Truth and Method, trans. G. Barden and J. Cummings (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 432.

32. OB, pp. 37ff. / pp. 47ff.

33. OB, p. 47 / pp. 60-61.

34. OB, p. 96 / p. 123.

35. DDQV, Preface to 2nd ed., p. 5; all translations of this text are my own.

36. DDQV, pp. 104-05.

37. DDQV, p. 105.

38. DDQV, p. 124.