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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
LEVINAS

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Emmanuel Levinas is now widely recognized alongside Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre as one of the most important Continental philosophers of the twentieth century. His abiding concern was the primacy of the ethical relation to the other person and his central thesis was that ethics is first philosophy. His work has also had a profound impact on a number of fields outside philosophy such as theology, Jewish studies, literature and cultural theory, psychotherapy, sociology, political theory, international relations theory and critical legal theory. This volume contains overviews of Levinas's contribution in a number of fields, and includes detailed discussions of his early and late work, his relation to Judaism and Talmudic commentary, and his contributions to aesthetics and the philosophy of religion.

New readers will find this the most convenient, accessible guide to Levinas currently available. Advanced students and specialists will find a detailed conspectus of recent developments in the interpretation of Levinas.

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The Cambridge Companion to
LEVINAS

Edited by Simon Critchley
University of Essex

and Robert Bernasconi
University of Memphis



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SIMON CRITCHLEY is Professor of Philosophy and Head of Department at the University of Essex, and Directeur de Programme at the Collège International de Philosophie, Paris. He is author of *The Ethics of Deconstruction* (1992), *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing* (1997), *Ethics–Politics–Subjectivity* (1999), *Continental Philosophy: a Very Short Introduction* (2001) and *On Humour* (2002).

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ABBREVIATIONS

AT	<i>Alterity and Transcendence</i>
BPW	<i>Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings</i>
BV	<i>Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures</i>
CP	<i>Collected Philosophical Papers</i>
DEH	<i>Discovering Existence with Husserl</i>
DF	<i>Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism</i>
EE	<i>Existence and Existents</i>
EN	<i>Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other</i>
EI	<i>Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo</i>
GCM	<i>Of God Who Comes to Mind</i>
GDT	<i>God, Death, and Time</i>
LR	<i>The Levinas Reader</i>
NTR	<i>Nine Talmudic Readings</i>
OB	<i>Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence</i>
OS	<i>Outside the Subject</i>
PM	'The Paradox of Morality' in <i>The Provocation of Levinas</i>
PN	<i>Proper Names</i>
TE	'Transcendence and Evil' in <i>Collected Philosophical Papers</i>
TI	<i>Totality and Infinity</i>
TIHP	<i>The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology</i>
TO	<i>Time and the Other</i>
TN	<i>In the Time of Nations</i>
TRO	'The Trace of the Other' in <i>Deconstruction in Context</i>
US	'Useless Suffering' in <i>The Provocation of Levinas</i>
WES	'What Would Eurydice Say? / Que dirait Euridice?'
WO	'Wholly Otherwise' in <i>Re-Reading Levinas</i>

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EMMANUEL LEVINAS:
 A DISPARATE INVENTORY

SIMON CRITCHLEY*

‘Cet inventaire disparate est une biographie.’
 Levinas, ‘Signature’ in *DF*

- 1906 On 12 January, born in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania (or, according to the Julian calendar used in the Russian empire at the time, on 30 December 1905). Eldest of three brothers: Boris (born in 1909) and Aminadab (born in 1913, whose name – probably coincidentally – was later the title of a novel by Maurice Blanchot); both were murdered by the Nazis. The Levinas family belonged to Kovno’s large and important Jewish community, where, as Levinas later recalled, ‘to be Jewish was as natural as having eyes and ears’. The first language Levinas learned to read was Hebrew, at home with a teacher, although Russian was his mother tongue, the language of his formal education and remained the language spoken at home throughout his life. Levinas’s parents spoke Yiddish. As a youth, Levinas read the great Russian writers, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Pushkin. The last was the most important influence, and it is these writers whom Levinas credits with the awakening of his philosophical interests. Shakespeare was also and would remain an influence on his thinking.

- 1915–16 During World War I, after the Germans occupied Kovno in September 1915, the Levinas family became refugees and moved to Kharkov in Ukraine, after being refused entry to Kiev. Levinas was one of very few Jews admitted to the Russian *Gymnasium*. The Levinas family experienced

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- the upheavals of the revolutions of February and October 1917.
- 1920 The Levinas family returned to Lithuania, where Levinas attended a Hebrew *Gymnasium* in Kovno.
- 1923 After initially considering studying in Germany, Levinas went to the University of Strasbourg in France. When asked why he chose France, Levinas replied 'Parce que c'est l'Europe!' Bizarrely enough, Strasbourg was apparently chosen because it was the French city closest to Lithuania. His subjects included classics, psychology and a good deal of sociology, though he soon came to concentrate on philosophy, studying Bergson and Husserl in particular. In autobiographical reflections, he mentioned Charles Blondel, Henri Carteron, Maurice Halbwachs and Maurice Pradines as the four professors who most influenced his thinking. What made a very strong impression on the young Levinas was the way in which Pradines, who would later be his thesis supervisor, used the example of the Dreyfus affair to illuminate the primacy of ethics over politics.
- 1926 Beginning of his lifelong friendship with Maurice Blanchot who arrived in Strasbourg as a student in 1926.
- 1927 Obtained his *Licence* in philosophy and thanks to Gabrielle Pfeiffer began a close study of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and eventually chose Husserl's theory of intuition as his dissertation topic.
- 1928–9 Spent the academic year in Freiburg, Germany, where he gave a presentation in Husserl's last seminar and attended Heidegger's first seminar as Husserl's successor. Levinas attended Heidegger's lecture course that has been published as *Einleitung in die Philosophie* [Introduction to Philosophy] (Klostermann, 1996). His time in Freiburg was marked by an intense reading of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) to which he was introduced by Jean Héring, Professor of Protestant Theology at Strasbourg and former student of Husserl. As Levinas puts it in an interview,

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'I went to Freiburg because of Husserl, but discovered Heidegger'.

- 1929 First publication, a review article on Husserl's *Ideas I* in *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Etranger*.

Attended the famous encounter between Heidegger and Cassirer at Davos that took place between 18 and 30 March, which was actually part of a wider Franco-German philosophical meeting attended by younger philosophers such as Jean Cavaillès, Maurice de Gandillac, Eugen Fink and Rudolf Carnap. At the end of two weeks of discussion, the Freiburg students organized a satirical *soirée* where they re-created the debate. Levinas assumed the role of Cassirer, allegedly with flour in his abundant black locks and repeating the words 'Humboldt Kultur, Humboldt Kultur'. Cassirer's wife was apparently offended, and Levinas later very much regretted this act of mockery. However, in another version of events, given in a late interview from 1992, Levinas says that he repeated the words 'I am a pacifist. I am a pacifist', and that this could be interpreted as some sort of response to Heidegger, who was present at the *soirée*.

Returned to Strasbourg, completed and defended his doctorate, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*. On 4 April 1930 it received a prize from the Institute of Philosophy and was published by Vrin in Paris later in 1930. It is this work which introduced Jean-Paul Sartre to phenomenology. As Levinas put it, with some wry humour, 'It was Sartre who guaranteed my place in eternity by stating in his famous obituary essay on Merleau-Ponty that he, Sartre "was introduced to phenomenology by Levinas".'

- 1930 Became a French citizen, and performed his military service in Paris. Married Raïssa Levi, whom he had known from schooldays in Kovno. Obtained a teaching position at the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris. Because Levinas did not have the *Agrégation* in philosophy he could not apply for a university position or indeed a teaching position in a *lycée*. In private conversation, Levinas admitted

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that his ignorance of Greek prevented him from sitting the *Agrégation*. The Alliance was established in France in 1860 by a group of Jews prominent in French life. They wished to promote the integration of Jews everywhere as full citizens within their states, with equal rights and freedom from persecution. The Alliance saw itself as having a civilizing mission through the education of Jews from the Mediterranean basin (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, Syria) who were not educated in the Western tradition.

- 1931 He co-translated Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* with a fellow Strasbourg student Gabrielle Pfeiffer. Levinas was responsible for the Fourth and Fifth Meditations, which contain Husserl's famous discussion of intersubjectivity.
- 1932 Began work on a book on Heidegger but abandoned it when Heidegger became committed to National Socialism. A fragment of the projected book was published as 'Martin Heidegger and Ontology' in 1932, the first article on Heidegger in French. Levinas wrote in a Talmudic reading from 1963, 'One can forgive many Germans, but there are some Germans it is difficult to forgive. It is difficult to forgive Heidegger.'
- 1931–2 Participated in the monthly philosophical Saturday evening *soirées* of Gabriel Marcel where he met Sartre and other members of the intellectual avant-garde.
- 1933 Intermittently attended Kojève's famous lectures on Hegel at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes (1933–7), and met Jean Hippolyte and others.
 Published his only extant original article in Lithuanian, an intriguing essay called 'The Notion of Spirituality in French and German Culture'.
- 1934 Levinas publishes a fascinating philosophical meditation on National Socialism, called 'Some Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism', in a special issue of *Esprit*, a newly founded French left Catholic journal. It was republished in 1997 with a study by Miguel Abensour (Paris: Payot-Rivages).

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- 1935 Birth of daughter, Simone, who later trained to become a doctor.
 Publication of Levinas's first original, thematic essay, 'De l'évasion', in *Recherches Philosophiques*, which represents his first understated attempt to break free from Heideggerian ontology. Reissued with an extensive commentary by Jacques Rolland with Fata Morgana publishers in 1982.

- 1939 Drafted into the French army, and served as an interpreter of Russian and German.

- 1940–5 Taken prisoner of war in Rennes with the Tenth French Army in June 1940 and held captive there in a *Frontstalag* for several months. Levinas was then transferred to a camp in Fallinpostel, close to Magdeburg in Northern Germany. Because Levinas was an officer in the French army, he was not sent to a concentration camp but to a military prisoners' camp, where he did forced labour in the forest. His camp had the number 1492, the date of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain! The Jewish prisoners were kept separately from the non-Jews and wore uniforms marked with the word 'JUD'. Most members of his family were murdered by the Nazis during the bloody pogroms that began in June 1940 with the active and enthusiastic collaboration of Lithuanian nationalists. Although it is not certain, it would appear that his brothers, mother and father were shot by Nazis close to Kovno. The names of close and more distant murdered family members are recalled in the Hebrew dedication to his second major philosophical work, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Raïssa and Simone Levinas were initially protected by a number of brave French friends, notably Suzanne Poirier, M. and Mme Verduron and Blanchot. It would appear that Levinas somehow got a message through to Blanchot from the prison camp in Rennes. Blanchot lent his apartment to Raïssa and Simone for some time before Simone received an extremely courageous offer of refuge from the sisters of a Vincentian convent outside Orléans. Raïssa Levinas was supported financially throughout the war by the Alliance

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Israélite Universelle. She stayed in hiding in Paris until 1943 when she joined her daughter, adopting the name 'Marguerite Bevos'. Raïssa's mother, Amélia Frieda Levi, who had been living with the Levinas family before the war, was deported from Paris and murdered. There exist *carnets de guerre* from this period, as yet unpublished. Levinas vowed never to set foot on German soil again.

- 1945 Levinas returned to Paris and rejoined his family. Thanks to the intervention of René Cassin, Levinas became Director of the École Normale Israélite Orientale (ENIO), the school established by the Alliance in Paris in 1867 to train teachers for its schools in the Mediterranean basin. As a former student of the ENIO points out in a memoir of Levinas as a teacher, the school was neither normal, nor truly Israeli nor completely oriental. The ENIO was located at 59 rue d'Auteuil and later on the rue Michel-Ange in the 16th *arrondissement*. The family lived above the school on the seventh floor, in an apartment in which they remained until 1980, when they moved to another apartment on the same street. It should be recalled that Levinas did not have a university position until 1964 when he was in his late fifties. Because of his professional position and his pedagogical commitments, he dedicated a number of essays to the problems facing Jewish education and the need for a renaissance of Jewish spirituality after the catastrophe of the *Shoah*. This also explains why in this period Levinas's growing importance in discussions of Jewish affairs was not matched by an equal prominence in philosophical circles. These interests are well reflected in his 1963 collection, *Difficult Freedom*. The ENIO corresponded to and fostered the vision of Judaism that Levinas would defend with increasing vigour in the post-war years: rigorously intellectual, rooted in textual study, rationalistic, anti-mystical, humanist and universalist. However, it should be recalled that most of Levinas's professional life was spent as a school administrator with extensive and rather routine responsibilities for the day-to-day welfare of ENIO students. Levinas took responsibility for Talmudic

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study in the ENIO and gave the famous public 'cours de Rachî' on Saturdays which were followed by smaller study groups where Levinas would as readily discuss Dostoevsky or an article in *Le Monde* as a Judaic theme.

- 1945–80 Although they met before the war in 1937, after the war Levinas developed a very close friendship with Henri Nerson, a doctor who lived near the Levinas family and with whom he had daily contact. It was Nerson who introduced Levinas to the enigmatic Monsieur Chouchani, his eventual teacher and *maître*, with whom he studied Talmud and who renewed his interest in Judaism. Nerson died in Israel in 1980 and in an interview from 1987, Levinas said 'I miss him every day'.
- 1946–7 Levinas was invited by his good friend and supporter Jean Wahl, Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne (the 1961 book *Totality and Infinity* was dedicated to Jean and Marcelle Wahl) to give four lectures at the Collège Philosophique. *Time and the Other* was published in 1948 in a collective volume and reappeared in 1979 as a separate volume with a revealing new preface. The initial publication was famously criticized by Simone de Beauvoir in the preface to *The Second Sex* for its understanding of the feminine as the other to the masculine. These lectures express many of the core ideas of Levinas's later work, the centrality of the other, and the claim that time determines the relation between the other and oneself.
- 1947–9 Studied Talmud, in its original languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, with Monsieur Chouchani, who is the 'master' whom Levinas frequently mentions in his Talmudic commentaries. Chouchani actually lived with the Levinas family in their apartment during this period and Emmanuel effectively stopped writing philosophy in order to concentrate on Talmudic study. One should not underestimate the great influence that Chouchani exerted over Levinas and the great affection that he inspired among his students, another of whom was Elie Wiesel. Chouchani died in South America in 1968 at the moment of the

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publication of *Quatres Lectures Talmudiques*, Levinas's first collection of Talmudic essays. The reader of Levinas's commentaries will realize that he does his own translations of the passages chosen for discussion.

- 1947 Publication of his first original book, *De l'existence à l'existant* [*Existence and Existents*] which had been written in captivity during the war. The book was published by Georges Blin in Editions de la Revue Fontaine after being refused by Gallimard. In contradistinction to the intellectual context of the *libération* dominated by the existentialism of Sartre and Camus, the book was published with a red banner around it with the words 'où il ne s'agit pas d'angoisse' ('where it is not a question of anxiety'). In 1946, Levinas had published a fragment of this book under the title 'Il y a', in the first issue of a new journal called *Deucalion* founded by Jean Wahl. The *il y a* is Levinas's name for the nocturnal horror of existence prior to the emergence of consciousness. Levinas later called the *il y a*, the 'morceau de résistance' in this book. The original publication appeared with the dedication P. A. E., which means 'Pour Andrée Eliane', the daughter born to the Levinases after the war who lived for just a few months.

- 1948 'Reality and its Shadow', Levinas's controversial critique of art, published in *Les Temps Modernes*, with a critical prefatory note, possibly written by Merleau-Ponty or Sartre.

Publication of *Discovering Existence with Husserl and Heidegger*, a collection of pre-war and unpublished pieces on phenomenology. It was reissued in a second edition in 1967 with a number of important new essays added, such as 'Language and Proximity'.

- 1949 Birth of son, Michaël, now a recognized composer, concert pianist and Professor of Musical Analysis at the Paris Conservatory.

- 1951 'Is Ontology Fundamental?' is published in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*. It is here, finally, that Levinas makes explicit his critique of Heidegger in ethical terms.

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- 1952 First visit to Israel, where he later returned to give papers in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but where he was not really recognized as an original thinker.
- 1956 Elected *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*.
- 1957 'Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity' published in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*. This essay is the best overview of Levinas's work in the 1950s, anticipating many of the theses of *Totality and Infinity*, and developing Levinas's appropriation of the concept of infinity from Descartes.
 Co-founder of the *Colloque des intellectuels juifs de langue française*, which met annually and with which Levinas was closely involved until the early 1990s. The idea of this meeting was to reconstitute the French intellectual Jewish community after the war by identifying the links between contemporary social, political and philosophical issues and the Jewish tradition.
- 1960 Begins giving Talmudic commentaries as the concluding address of the yearly meetings of the *Colloque des intellectuels juifs de langue française*, a habit he continued until 1991. Far from being devotional exercises, these commentaries often see Levinas using the Talmud to discuss the intellectual and political events of the time. As well as exemplifying a highly rationalistic hermeneutic approach, inspired by Chouchani, the commentaries are also noteworthy for their informality and for their often wry humour. For example, his 1972 commentary, 'Et Dieu créa la femme', alludes to Roger Vadim's 1957 film, starring Brigitte Bardot.
- 1961 *Totality and Infinity* published in Holland by Martinus Nijhoff publishers as part of their famous *Phaenomenologica* series, under the patronage of the Husserl archives in Leuven and with the crucial support of Father Herman Leo Van Breda. Its principal thesis is described below in the introduction. With the encouragement and crucial support of Jean Wahl, Levinas presented this book as the main thesis for his *doctorat d'état*, while a collection of his

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previously published philosophical works was accepted as a complementary thesis. In addition to Wahl, Vladimir Jankélévitch, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Ricœur and Georges Blin were members of the jury, which was also due to include Merleau-Ponty, who died one month prior to the *soutenance*. Although this is not widely known, *Totality and Infinity* was not originally intended as a thesis, but as an independent book. Levinas had given up the idea of submitting a thesis and only renewed the idea at the prompting of Jean Wahl after the manuscript had been refused for publication by Brice Parain at Gallimard in 1960. An English translation of *Totality and Infinity* by Alphonso Lingis appeared in 1969.

- 1961–2 Publication of three texts by Blanchot in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* more or less directly inspired by *Totality and Infinity*: ‘Connaissance de l’inconnu’, ‘Tenir parole’ and ‘Être juif’.
- 1962 Shortly after the publication of *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas was invited by Jean Wahl to speak to the Société Française de Philosophie, where he presented ‘Transcendence and Height’, a very useful summary of the early arguments of the book from an epistemological perspective.
- 1963 Publication of *Difficult Freedom*, a very important collection of Levinas’s writings on Jewish topics, dedicated to Henri Nerson. Besides the essays on Jewish education, the volume contains a wide assortment of observations and polemics on contemporary issues and figures, and includes Levinas’s first Talmudic commentaries, which deal with messianic themes. It also contains ‘Signature’, Levinas’s elliptical but revealing autobiographical reflections.
- 1964 Appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Poitiers. His colleagues included Mikel Dufrenne, Roger Garaudy, Jacques D’Hondt and Jeanne Delhomme. Levinas remained Director of the ENIO until 1980 but delegated more and more of the administrative tasks. It is widely thought that Levinas was appointed to Poitiers in 1961, which is not true. He was also unsuccessful in a

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candidature for a professorship at the University of Lille because of the opposition of Eric Weil, who appointed Henri Birault instead of Levinas.

'Meaning and Sense' published in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, which, via an interesting debate with Merleau-Ponty and the question of decolonization, shows the beginnings of the philosophical transition from *Totality and Infinity* to *Otherwise than Being*. It is here that the notion of the trace and the critique of the idea of presence, so important for Jacques Derrida's work, makes its appearance in Levinas.

Publication of Derrida's 'Violence and Metaphysics' in two parts in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*. It was republished in a slightly revised form in the 1967 volume, *Writing and Difference*. It is worth pointing out that this essay – effectively a monograph – was one of Derrida's first essays, and would for a long time be the most extensive discussion of Levinas's work.

1965 Member of the committee of direction for 'l'Amitié Judéo-Christienne de France'. The topic of Jewish-Christian friendship would preoccupy Levinas in his later writings.

1967 Appointed Professor of Philosophy at the newly established University of Paris-Nanterre, where his colleagues included Dufrenne, Paul Ricœur and Jean-François Lyotard in philosophy and Alain Touraine, Henri Lefebvre and the young Jean Baudrillard in sociology.

'Substitution' given as one of two lectures in Brussels in November and published in the *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* in 1968. The text expresses the core idea of *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, namely the idea of the subject as hostage, where responsibility to the other is seen as something interior to the self. The original version, contained in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, is easier to follow than the more developed version published in the 1974 book.

1968 *Quatre lectures talmudiques* (contained in *Nine Talmudic Readings* in English) published by Jérôme Lindon in

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Editions de Minuit, as were all of Levinas's subsequent 'confessional' writings.

Although Levinas distanced himself from the events of 1968, where his friend Ricœur, at that point Dean of Faculty at Nanterre, was obliged to bring in the police to protect the campus in 1969, Levinas responded philosophically to the events of 1968 and to the anti-humanism of structuralist and post-structuralist thought in 'Humanism and Anarchy' (1968) and 'No Identity' (1970), both contained in *Collected Philosophical Papers*. A fascinating Talmudic response to Marxism and student radicalism can be found in 'Judaism and revolution' (1969), contained in *Nine Talmudic Readings*.

- 1970 Awarded an honorary doctorate at Loyola University of Chicago, on the same day as Hannah Arendt, which was the only time they met, and where Levinas was somewhat perplexed by the enthusiasm with which Arendt joined in the singing of the American national anthem. Honorary doctorates followed from the universities of Leiden, Holland (1975), Leuven, Belgium (1976), Fribourg, Switzerland (1980) and Bar-Ilan, Israel (1981).

Appointed to a visiting professorship at the University of Fribourg, where he taught for short periods for many years.

- 1971 Awarded the Albert Schweitzer philosophy prize.
- 1972 *Humanisme de l'autre homme*.
- 1973 Appointed Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne (Paris IV) and became honorary professor after his retirement in 1976. He continued his seminar at the Sorbonne until 1980. His colleagues included Ferdinand Alquié, Henri Birault, Pierre Aubenque and Jacques Rivelaygue.
- 1974 *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* published by Nijhoff. English translation by Alphonso Lingis in 1981. Its principal innovations are discussed below in the introduction. Many commentators claim that this is Levinas's most important philosophical work; it is certainly his most difficult.

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Publication of first book-length study of Levinas in English, by Edith Wyschogrod: *Emmanuel Levinas: the Problem of Ethical Metaphysics* (The Hague: Nijhoff).

Elected *Officier de l'ordre national du Mérite* in November.

1975 *Sur Maurice Blanchot*, a collection of three articles and a conversation about his great friend.

1976 *Proper Names*, a very interesting and accessible collection of short articles on Agnon, Buber, Celan, Delhomme, Derrida, Jabès, Lacroix, Laporte, Picard, Proust, van Breda and Wahl.

1977 *Du sacré au saint. Cinq nouvelles lectures talmudiques* (contained in *Nine Talmudic Readings* in English).

1980 *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas* published (Paris: Jean-Michel Place), with important contributions by Blanchot, Derrida, Edmond Jabès, Jean-François Lyotard, Paul Ricœur and others.

Levinas met Jean-Paul II, during the Pope's visit to Paris in May. The Pope (Karol Wojtyła) wrote a thesis on the phenomenologist Max Scheler in 1959 and had strong interests in the relation of phenomenological ethics to Christian metaphysics. In 1980, Levinas wrote an article on 'The Philosophical Thought of Cardinal Wojtyła'. Along with other philosophers, Levinas took part in conferences at Castel Gandolfo, the Papal summer residence, at which the Pope presided, in 1983 and 1985, giving the paper 'Transcendence and Intelligibility' on the occasion of the second conference.

1982 *Beyond the Verse*, a collection of five Talmudic commentaries and a very interesting series of texts on Judaism, Zionism and politics.

Of God Who Comes to Mind published by Vrin, an important collection of essays, which makes explicit the more theological orientation of Levinas's later work. This can best be seen in 'God and Philosophy', from 1975, which is a wide-ranging essay that better than any other provides a powerful summary of Levinas's mature

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thought. The book was awarded the Charles-Lévêque prize.

Ethics and Infinity, a series of conversations with Philippe Nemo, originally broadcast on French radio. Highly illuminating, they provide an excellent review and entry point to Levinas's work.

1983 Awarded the Karl Jaspers prize in Heidelberg which Michaël Levinas accepted on his father's behalf because of Levinas's vow never to enter Germany after the war.

1984 'Transcendence and Intelligibility' published, providing a concise and useful summary of Levinas's later thinking. It can profitably be read alongside his other attempts to provide an overview and a point of entry to his thinking.

1985 Elected *Commandeur des Arts et Lettres* in April.

1986 A ten-day conference or 'decade' at Cerisy-la-Salle, organized by Jean Greisch and Jacques Rolland, published by Editions du Cerf in 1993.

Face to Face with Levinas, edited by Richard A. Cohen, an important collection of articles on Levinas, with many useful translations.

1987 *Collected Philosophical Papers* published in English, translated and introduced by Alphonso Lingis.

At the invitation of Miguel Abensour, President of the Collège International de Philosophie, Levinas presents 'Dying For'. This is a wonderfully measured paper on Heidegger given at the hysterical height of the Heidegger affair in Paris, when many intellectuals were caught up in the scandal over Heidegger's political commitment to National Socialism. Derrida presented an early version of his *Of Spirit* at the same meeting. This was only the second time that Levinas had given a public lecture on Heidegger, the first being at Jean Wahl's seminar at the Sorbonne early in 1940.

Outside the Subject, a late collection of philosophical papers, with interesting pieces on Husserl.

1988 *The Hour of Nations* published, in a similar format to *Beyond the Verse*, with five Talmudic readings, and a

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series of theological writings touching in particular on the relation of Judaism to Christianity and essays on Moses Mendelssohn and Franz Rosenzweig.

1991 *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other* published, a collection of Levinas's papers and interviews with some very important early pieces such as 'Is Ontology Fundamental?' and 'Ego and Totality'.

Publication of the *Cahier de l'Herne*, on Levinas, edited by Catherine Chali  r and Miguel Abensour. In addition to important studies of Levinas's work, it contains unpublished original texts by Levinas, and the transcription by Jacques Rolland of his final lecture course at the Sorbonne, 'Dieu, la mort et le temps'.

Elected *Officier de la L  gion d'honneur*.

1994 *Les impr  vus de l'histoire* published, a collection of previously published journal articles, including important pieces such as Levinas's first publications on Husserl, and his critique of art, 'Reality and its Shadow'.

1995 *Alterity and Transcendence* published, a collection of occasional texts, encyclopaedia entries and interviews.

Night of 24–5 December, death in Paris after a long struggle with illness. The funeral oration, 'Adieu', was given by Jacques Derrida at the interment on 28 December.

1996 *New Talmudic Readings* published just a few weeks after Levinas's death, containing three Talmudic readings, from 1974, 1988 and 1989.

Basic Philosophical Writings published.

December, *Hommage* to Levinas, organized by Danielle Cohen-Levinas and the Coll  ge International de Philosophie in the Amphith   tre Richelieu at the Sorbonne.

NOTE

* I would like to thank Micha  l Levinas, Catherine Chali  r, Miguel Abensour and Robert Bernasconi for their help in confirming and adding facts to this chronological table. Certain facts have been taken from a number of sources: Adriaan Peperzak's preface to *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, Anette Aronowicz's introduction to

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Nine Talmudic Readings, Marie-Anne Lescourret's *Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Flammarion 1994), François Poirié's *Emmanuel Levinas* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1996 [1987]), *L'arche. Le mensuel du judaïsme français*, 459 (February 1996), *Emmanuel Levinas. Philosophe et pédagogue* (Paris: Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1998) and Roger Burggraeve's *Emmanuel Levinas. Une bibliographie primaire et secondaire (1929–1985)* (Leuven: Peeters, 1986).