

« Cosmopolitan Citizenship and the Ethics of Alterity in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas »

"المواطنة الكونية وإيتيقا الغيرية في فلسفة إيمانويل ليفيناس"

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Abstract:

This article offers a rigorous philosophical examination of Emmanuel Levinas's project, which reshaped Western thought by shifting its center from ontology to ethics and from the question of being to that of responsibility. Beginning with the existential and intellectual crisis produced by modernity, the study shows how Levinas redefined the human as a moral being grounded not in knowledge or freedom but in openness to Alterity—the Other who grants meaning to existence.

For "Levinas", responsibility is not a voluntary act but an urgent call preceding every choice, embodied in the notions of the face, hospitality, and justice as renewed structures of human life. Although his project encounters tensions between the ethical infinite and political limits, it remains a radical effort to rescue humanity from modern alienation and to restore philosophy as a responsible human endeavor in a world where meaning continues to erode, for contemporary philosophical and ethical reflection today.

Keywords: Ethics; Alterity; Responsibility; Face; Cosmic.

ملخص:

يقدم هذا المقال دراسة فلسفية وأكاديمية موسّعة لمشروع "إيمانويل ليفيناس"، الذي أحدث تحوّلًا عميقًا في مسار الفكر الغربي عبر نقله مركز البحث من الأنطولوجيا إلى الإيتيقا، ومن سؤال الوجود إلى سؤال المسؤولية. وينطلق التحليل من الأزمة الوجودية والفكرية التي خلّفتها الحداثة، ليُظهر كيف أعاد "ليفيناس" صياغة مفهوم الإنسان بوصفه كائنًا إيتيقيا يتحدّد من خلال انفتاحه على الغيرية، وليس عبر المعرفة أو الحرية فحسب. وتظهر المسؤولية في مشروعه كنداء سابق على كل فعل واختيار، متجسّدة في مفاهيم الوجه والضيافة والعدالة باعتبارها بنيات تؤسّس لعالم إنساني جديد.

ورغم ما يثيره هذا المشروع من توترات بين المطلق والإيتيقي وحدود الفعل السياسي، يظل محاولة راديكالية تهدف إلى تجاوز اغتراب الحداثة واستعادة الفلسفة كفاعلية إنسانية مسؤولة تمنح للوجود معناه الضروري في عالم يتعرّض فيه الإنسان لتآكل متواصل للقيم والمعاني.

كلمات مفتاحية: الإيتيقا، الغيرية، المسؤولية، الوجه، كوني.

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1. Introduction

The twentieth century is widely recognized as one of the most tumultuous centuries in the history of human thought, as a comprehensive crisis arose that affected the structure of Western consciousness itself. The modernist project's slogan of liberation by reason left man facing disastrous consequences for the same mind that had promised salvation. The two world wars, with their massacres and extermination camps, were not just political conflicts, but rather an expression of the decay of the foundation of modern European civilization. The mind, thought to be the gateway to enlightenment, has exposed a double principle: a potent technical capacity on the one hand, and a structural moral deficiency on the other. 'Rational man' became a man who legitimizes values and reproduces violence in his name.

The philosophy was deeply impacted by the crisis revealed by the wars. The concepts of modern thought, such as self, freedom, universality, and progress, have lost their internal harmony. The self-conscious self that has emerged in metaphysics, including « Descartes »(1596-1650), « Kant »(1724-1804), and « Hegel »(1770-1831), is the modern self, content with its ability to represent and control. The other can be denied by the self in the name of reason, as demonstrated by historical experience. Philosophy was asked to question its foundations: What kind of mind is responsible for barbarism? What is the universality that excludes the diverse?

As a result, the moral question has become the first question of philosophy, not just a field of thought. When thought loses its metaphysical certainty and existence becomes threatened with absurdity, the question of man advances not in terms of being a knowing self, but in terms of being a responsible being. Philosophy is unable to explain the world at this point because it requires justification. The need for a new basis for human relations has been revealed, one based not on abstract reason or individual will, but on what precedes it: the relationship with the other as a condition for the possibility of meaning itself.

The philosophical question will be redirected by « Emmanuel Levinas » (1906-1995) through this horizon. However, what is meant here is not to present his moral doctrine as much as it is to highlight the historical and spiritual moments that made his project possible: the moment Western thought became aware that traditional metaphysics, in its ontological tendency, had failed to establish man in his relationship with others. That moment when the boundaries between philosophy and religion, between politics and ethics, and between existence and meaning, collapsed.

From this point, a set of philosophical problems arises that this study attempts to approach: How can the universal be rethought after it has lost its moral meaning? Can we restore the image of man without resorting to absolute relativism? Is morality the foundation of thinking, not the consequence? What is the process for transforming the relationship with the other from an ontological given to a universal principle of human belonging?

The aim of these issues is not only to reconstruct a moral theory, but also to raise a deeper question: How can we understand man after the collapse of modernity? Thinking about universal citizenship and the etymology of otherness is not only a political project, but also a philosophical necessity due to this question.

This research uses the analytical-interpretive (Analytic–Hermeneutic Approach) approach because it integrates both the philosophical conceptual dimension and the human value dimension. The analytical approach enables the deconstruction of central concepts such as otherness, the universal, and responsibility in light of their logical and intellectual structure, while the interpretive dimension allows reading these concepts in their historical and spiritual context to understand their profound implications in Levinas' philosophy, and link them to the problem of universal citizenship as a new moral horizon for contemporary thought.

1- From the enlightened mind to the dilemma of modern man in the context of the crisis :

Modernity's fundamental idea of reason could achieve human salvation was crystallized in the eighteenth century, a significant turning point in Western thinking. Enlightenment philosophers believe that reason is the light that lightens ignorance's darkness and the principle that gives human existence meaning and direction. The Enlightenment project's goal was to create a person who was free from the Church's authority and free from all supernatural powers. Kant emphasized the importance of lights in escaping from the deficiency they have imposed on themselves in his presentation of this project. With this declaration, the modern self was born, as a center of knowledge and legislation, and philosophy has since become about the question of awareness of the self and the world, that is, about the relationship between thought and existence (Habermas, 1998, pp :27-31).

The mind that declared freedom gradually became a new power. The divine and the spiritual were abolished by mankind when they made themselves the measure of everything, including themselves. As a result, the mind has changed from searching for truth to a tool for dominance and control. Every attempt to liberate man from the outside ends up subordinating him from within, and this fundamental paradox lies at the heart of the modernist project. The idea of liberating man from religious guardianship has transformed into a new guardianship authority based on science, method, and objectivity. Reason has taken the place of God and now legislates, judges, and measures without taking responsibility for itself.

With the Industrial Revolution and the flourishing of technology, this mind transformed into what « Horkheimer »(1895-1973) and « Adorno »(1903-1969) called the "instrumental mind," that is, the mind whose goal is no longer understanding but use; a mind that subjects everything to the logic of utility and production (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002,p :54-58). The 'lights' who wished to free mankind from myth created a new myth, the one of progress and effectiveness. The advancement of technology, considered the pinnacle of modern thought, did not result in freedom, but rather in subjugating humans to the laws of speed, quantity, and order. Humans have become arithmetic beings, measuring themselves by data, not values, and by their ability to act, not by their ability to mean.

The concept of man itself was profoundly impacted by this profound change in the structure of modern consciousness. Man was merely a conscious self, isolated from nature, the other, and metaphysics under this vision. The relational dimension was taken away from

human existence, and the human being was reduced to an 'I' that was superior to everything else. Hegel's philosophy saw the closure of the self to itself as a necessary moment in the development of self-awareness, starting with the Cartesian cogito. Others are not thought of as a radical difference, but as a mirror of the self. The establishment of symmetry logic resulted in the elimination of otherness and the emergence of identity, which would later lead to Levinas's critique of Western ontology.

The twentieth century's historical experience revealed that this mind, which appeared to be at its peak, was on its way to an internal collapse. The two world wars and their accompanying mass destruction and extermination camps were not only political events, but also a tragic moment when we became aware of the collapse of the modernist project. Europe's destruction caused not only physical devastation, but also a loss of meaning. The mind that was supposed to guarantee peace was turned into an instrument for organized killing, and the science that promised liberation was utilized to create death. The spirit of the times was present in 'Auschwitz', and its manifestation was consistent with its profound logic. Violence becomes a legitimate administrative matter when a person is reduced to a number and a job is reduced to a job.

Thinkers came to the realization that the crisis was not only intellectual or political, but also a comprehensive spiritual crisis in this context. The moral horizon of human action has been removed by the disappearance of the transcendent dimension, and man has now fallen into an endless futility. Paul Ricoeur described this situation accurately when he said that modern man lives in a world that is technically complete, but empty from within, having lost touch with the sacred and the absolute (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 37). Under the instrumental mind, the world became a closed system with no meaning or presence for others but as an 'object', 'enemy', or 'tool'.

Philosophy had to review its metaphysical foundations after history revealed that 'Ontology', which glorifies existence and excludes the other, caused man to forget himself. The self made existence an object of knowledge, making the other human being a measurable entity. Levinas explains the origin of Western tragedy as the 'forgetting of the other'. When thought lost faith in metaphysical universals, it began to search for meaning in relationships instead of in essence, which led to the roots of this ethical transformation.

In the midst of this collapse, philosophy cannot continue to interpret the world as « Marx » (1818-1883) wanted, or contemplate existence as « Heidegger » (1889-1976) wanted. In order to justify man's existence in a world that has become meaningless, it must question itself. Without going back to theology, how can we restore the moral dimension? Can a new universe be established after the collapse of the reason universe? The rethinking of the position of the 'other' in the structure of consciousness and the relationship between self and responsibility will be facilitated by these questions.

The modern crisis is a man-centered crisis, not a thought-based one. If someone is only self-aware, they lose the opportunity to connect with others and become isolated. Postwar philosophy will show that it's time for men to be redefined as beings in relationships, responsible before they are free, and open before they are aware. Philosophy begins to transform from a pursuit of truth to a pursuit of justice, and from the ontology of

being to the concept of otherness. The problem that makes this part the heart of the research project emerges from this turning point.

2-For the advancement of linguistics in modern philosophy :

The Aetian shift in modern thought was not a sudden break with conventional metaphysics, but rather a consequence of a lengthy development of Western self-awareness and its challenges. After achieving the highest levels of abstraction in the ontology of existence, philosophy was faced with the necessity of going back to what preceded existence itself: man as he is in relationships. The question of being no longer matters, but rather of responsibility. Western thinking began to reevaluate the order of philosophical priorities, which were from existence to meaning, from truth to justice, and from knowledge to morality (Ricoeur, 1992, pp :108-182).

A new understanding of thought was revealed as philosophy became a practice of listening to otherness that disrupts the self's centrality, instead of seeking absolute essence. Modern thinkers now see that isolating existence is a kind of metaphysical blindness. By equating being with power and making the self the measure of all value, Western culture reached its peak of alienation. A rupture that was necessary compelled thought to focus on what is beyond it and cannot be contained within a closed conceptual framework.

This horizon was opened up by Phenomenology. The concept of intentionality, coined by « Edmund Husserl »(1859-1938), led to the possibility of transcending the duality of subject and object, which demonstrates that consciousness is not a closed essence but is always open to the world. In Husserl's opinion, this openness remained a cognitive openness, which means it has a relationship to meaning from the perspective of the knowing self. Heidegger took thought to a new level: the question was no longer 'How do we recognize existence?' but 'What does it mean to be?' Despite its depth, Heidegger's project remained restricted to the circle of ontology because for him, existence is the horizon of every meaning, and everything else lies within it. *Mitsein* explains that being with (*Mitsein*) is less about moral responsibility and more about the ontological structure of being (Heidegger, 1962, pp :163-168).

Western thinking began to feel the urgent need to move beyond ontology and towards *ithaca* at this point. Man's significance as a being in a relationship diminishes when existence ends. The transformation was not a result of emotions in response to the atrocities of the twentieth century, but rather a philosophical outcome of the experience of modernity itself. Human meaning was denied at the close of the century that saw man as the center of meaning. After the war, postwar philosophers, such as « Paul Ricoeur »(1913-2005), « Gabriel Marcel »(1889-1973), and « Hanna Arendt »(1906-1975), began to reinvent philosophical thought by focusing on responsibility rather than sovereignty and on dialogue rather than control. According to Lovinas, the self is no longer just a principle of knowledge but rather a hostage to the other.

This transformation's origins can also be seen in the interaction between philosophy and religion. The spiritual dimension of thought is being restored by contemporary thinkers without falling into theology after centuries of rupture between reason and faith. Faith is no longer the only way to understand the sacred, but rather as a horizon of human meaning.

After war, the measurement of existence is no longer based on knowledge but on the ability to recognize the other as a transcending face that transcends being. In this sense, contemporary thought has begun to intersect with the religious dimension of morality, not to adopt it, but to reveal a common human origin between religious experience and moral experience: both are based on the idea of absolute responsibility.

Through his book *Oneself as Another* (1992), « Paul Ricoeur » demonstrated that the self can only comprehend itself through others. Identity is not a correlation, but rather a story, in which a person constructs themselves in a storyline where their subjective experience intersects with that of others. From this point forward, the 'other' is not just a counterpart to the self, but a prerequisite for its possibility. The self that doesn't confront the other doesn't know itself, as it's only tested in openness. Consequently, altruism went from an ontological concept to an interpretive and moral principle simultaneously.

« Habermas »(1929) reconstructed the concept of the 'cosmic' using communication instead of abstract reasoning. In *The Inclusion of the Other* (1998), he proposes a concept of a 'communicative mind' based on dialogue and mutual recognition, rather than the logic of dominance. Moral and political legitimacy is achieved through consensus between individuals through open, rational debate, not from higher authority. Although it has value, Habermas's project is essentially rational due to the relationship with the other being confined to linguistic understanding, not to an existential appeal that transcends language. Levinas disagrees with this. He prefers a call that takes precedence over all words and laws when it comes to relationships with others instead of an exchange of discourse.

Philosophy was redefined from its foundations by this new horizon, which was born from tragedy's heart. Philosophy has evolved from a contemplative practice to merely being an etiquette for men. Instead of attempting to control the world, it has begun to listen to others' calls. The question of truth has been replaced by the question of responsibility, and the question of freedom has been replaced by the question of justice. Thus, thought was prepared to receive the most radical moral project of the twentieth century: the philosophy of Levinas, which would turn the classical equation upside down when it declared that morality precedes existence, and that the relationship to the other is the origin on which all thought and all humanity are founded .

The change was not simply a new trend in philosophy, but rather a change in the structure of Western consciousness itself. The contemplation that began with the Cartesian cogito, 'I think, I exist,' concluded with the acknowledgement that 'I am responsible, I am human.' Thought is no longer about owning something, but about responding to it. Philosophy is emerging from the realm of abstraction into the arena of moral life, and from the metaphysics of power to the metaphysics of human weakness.

The philosophical problem that will shape the rest of the research is born from the heart of this transformation.

Is metaphysics either at an end or being renewed from within if thought has moved from ontology to itica? Is morality, which has become a primary condition for thinking, capable of producing a new universality that is not based on similarity but on responsibility towards others?

3-Emmanuel Levinas's Alterity: From Self to Responsibility :

«Emmanuel Lovinas »philosophy is notable for its radical shift from ontology to ethics, from existence to relationships, and from thought to responsibility in contemporary philosophy. What distinguishes Lovinas, however, is not simply his critique of the self-centered Western mind, but the roots of his moral and religious project, which stem from a dual experience: that of the philosopher who lived through the horrors of the twentieth century, and that of the Jew who saw in the biblical word a call that transcends thought toward action. The authentic meaning of man is revealed when both voices coexist within his philosophy: the voice of the modern philosopher and the voice of the ancient prophet.

Lovinas believed that Western metaphysics, from Plato to Hegel, relied on the principle of identity. In its quest for knowledge, the mind consistently tries to bring the other into its system; that is, to make the different into the similar. Thought becomes a movement that is owned rather than listened to due to a totalitarian tendency. Hence, his project was based on breaking this closed circle of consciousness, by opening philosophy to what is outside it: to the other that cannot be comprehended, that is not known but is answered (Levinas, 1969, pp :33-35).

According to « Lovinas », the foundation of all human meaning is based on relationships with others. The self encounters the other in a face-to-face encounter that goes beyond knowledge and leads to a call, not through discovery like with a subject. The face to him is not a physical appearance, it is a moral event. It is a presence that goes beyond representation, as it cannot be perceived or owned without revealing itself. The self recognizes its fragility when it meets the face and realizes that it is indebted before being free and responsible before being effective. The face says — without words — 'Don't kill me', a sentence that summarizes Lovinas' new metaphysics: a metaphysics based on moral prohibition before rational law, and on relationship before identity.

In this sense, for « Lovinas », ethics is not just a branch of philosophy, but rather its very origin. It is referred to as the first metaphysics because it redefines the relationship between human existence. The relationship with another becomes what gives existence its meaning instead of it being determined by existence. The ego is not a principle of knowledge, but a response to a call; it is not a transcendent self, but rather a hostage of the other (Levinas, 1998, pp :199-201). He refers to this as 'infinite responsibility', a responsibility that is not based on a social contract or a universal law, but on an unconditional openness to the weaknesses of the other.

The Jewish background of Lovinas' thought is evident here. Despite his knowledge of European phenomenology, he draws inspiration from Talmudic and biblical traditions to explain the meaning of responsibility as a response to God's call. Lovinas was raised on the Hebrew text where man is addressed before he thinks and commanded before he knows. Moral action is what precedes all knowledge for him, much like 'Listen, O Israel' precedes all 'I think' Cartesian. In the Torah, as in Lovinas' philosophy, man is not complete except by responsibility for the other; “Do not kill” is not a legal rule, but rather an existential call that stems from the presence of the face. That is why he believes that the meaning of God is not perceived through contemplation, but rather through the moral relationship with others; God

passes “through the face of man”, not in metaphysics but in hospitality, not in prayer but in justice.

Levinas's evocation of the Jewish experience is not a turn toward theology in its narrow religious sense, but a symbolic use of the sacred to broaden the scope of philosophy. The encounter with the Other is a new way to reveal human nature, where the Absolute is revealed through proximity rather than thought. The Holy is not a distant transcendence, but rather a transcendence that transcends the suffering of others. As a result, his assertion that a person is accountable to others, even if it means dying for them. Existentialism and a philosophical horizon that makes ethics the foundation of existence make the religious tradition's concept of 'love of neighbor' existential.

It is apparent from this that Levinas' thoughts are not only a critique of modernity, but also a radical transformation of European philosophy from within. Reason is not rejected, but instead reestablished through listening, not control, and the relationship of responsibility, not knowledge. Western thought has come to the conclusion that true existence is not measured by what we have, but by what we give, not by what we know, but by who we bear pain for. Thus, Alterity becomes a new ontological principle that makes man exist to the extent of his openness to others, not to the extent of his self-awareness. The three central concepts of ethics Alterity are face, responsibility, and hospitality.

The face serves as a greeting, responsibility is a reply, and hospitality is the action that represents this relationship. The other is not welcomed as a stranger, but as a part of me, a companion in my life. Hospitality, according to Levinas, is not just a social behavior, but rather the ontological structure of man: to be a man means to leave a place for others, to allow others to reside in it, to give up their position. Freedom is achieved in this way because it's not just about making choices, it's also about being able to compromise.

The idea of the 'moral universal' replacing the idea of the 'mental universal' may be what gives Levinas' philosophy its strength. Universality is not a result of similarity between minds, it is a result of the meeting between faces. This universality is not rooted in law, but rather in hospitality; not in rights, but in duties. Responsibility is unconditional and non-reciprocal, as it is universal and non-reciprocal. The self does not tolerate the other due to the law, but rather because it recognizes that its humanity is incomplete without him. Considering universal citizenship from Levinas' perspective, which is a responsibility that transcends political boundaries, will be paved by this moral universality in the next chapter.

It becomes apparent from this analysis that Alterity Ethics is both a philosophy of the other and a theology of man. It is a project that restores the moral dimension of existence, the human dimension of thought, and the philosophical dimension of religion. Religious experience is transformed into a universal philosophical experience, and philosophy is transformed into a spiritual call that transcends all systems. The philosophy was the one that brought man back to life at a time when humanity was on the brink of extinction.

4-Emmanuel Levinas' Ethics of Alterity as a lens through which to view Universal Citizenship :

The concept of universal citizenship constitutes one of the most problematic concepts in contemporary thought, as it presents philosophy with a double challenge: How can a

human belonging be established that transcends political and cultural boundaries without turning into moral abstraction or new hegemony in the name of the universal? Modern philosophy, since Kant, has expressed this ambition to build a permanent peace based on a common universal mind, but historical experience has proven that this mind can turn into a tool of exclusion in the name of totalitarianism. A mind that unites may exclude those who are different, and a mind that promises equality may conceal a secret desire for superiority. Therefore, it is necessary to revisit universal citizenship, not from the standpoint of law or government, but from the standpoint of ethics; that is, from the standpoint of the relationship with others.

« Lovinas » believes that symmetry is not sufficient for any cosmic project since it eliminates alterity, which is the condition of human meaning. If we think that humans are alike, we neglect the fact that humanity lies in their differences. Lovinas' proposal of universalism is actually centered on responsibility instead of homogeneity. Opening up to others unconditionally is not the same as generalizing oneself. Citizenship, in light of this perception, is not a political or legal affiliation, but rather a moral practice: to be a citizen of the world means to bear responsibility for others in the world (Levinas, 1969, pp :212-215).

The man's roots are redefined by this perception. Instead of being the political being as Aristotle does, or the legislative self as « Kant » does, according to Lovinas, man becomes a hospitable being; that is, a being who creates the world through his ability to receive others. The first policy is hospitality, as it makes the relationship with others a prerequisite for human society. In this context, Lovinas says that justice does not arise from the law, but from the encounter with the face; because it is the face that makes me responsible, and responsibility is what makes the law possible. Alterity Ethics is a new basis for politics, one that isn't centered around power, but rather on hospitality and justice (Levinas, 1998, pp :100-105).

Universal citizenship is transformed from a legal concept to an existential concept. « Lovinas » believes that universality is a matter of conscience and listening, not institutional or treaty decisions. The universality lies in starting from proximity instead of distance, from the face instead of the state. Being part of a world order does not make one universal, but rather listening to the call of others. Universality here is not a horizon imposed from the outside, but rather a call that stems from the human interior, from the moral conscience that sees in every human face a manifestation of what goes beyond existence itself.

The principle of general will is the basis of morality in Kantian universalism, which is radically different from this conception. Fluvinas is not founded on a rational principle, but rather on the lived experiences of others. He believes that reason is equal to symmetry, while ethics is equal to openness. In other words, Lovinas' universality is not a new metaphysics, but rather a reconstruction of the past metaphysics that limited man to the thinking self. There is no center or sovereignty in this universe, as it always centers on the other. Disparities are not eliminated, but rather kept alive as a prerequisite for justice. According to Lovinas, true justice is not about equality, but rather about recognizing the uniqueness of each person's face (Cohen , 2001, pp : 113-114).

Alterity Ethics is poised to become a new metaphysics of humanity in the near future. The human world's ontological structure is not only a moral duty, but also a relationship with others. The existence of the world is dependent on its openness to others. When there's closure, there's violence, and when there's openness, there's a new beginning for humanity. The idea of universal citizenship takes on the form of 'universal hospitality', where every human being is obligated to act as a home for others and take responsibility for their own suffering.

Ethics Alterity's dual critique of modernity and globalization is made possible by this vision. Modernity is criticized by her for creating an abstract, rational universe that has marginalized the moral dimension, and globalization is criticized for turning the universe into an economy without responsibility. « Levinas » believes that universality is not a network of markets, but a network of faces. It's not about goods, but about mercy. Globalization that lacks ethics turns into a new form of colonization, while true universality is founded on mutual listening, where men become the conscience of the world, not just its consumer.

« Levinas » believes that universal citizenship is based on three fundamental pillars. My humanity is achieved by being responsible for others without expecting anything in return, which is known as non-reciprocal responsibility. Justice is not based solely on the law, but rather on receiving the other within myself, acknowledging their weakness as a prerequisite for my existence. The key to citizenship is not being part of a comprehensive system, but rather being able to be close and attentive to others. (Levinas, 1969, pp : 245–247).

The meaning of humanity itself is reframed by Ethics Alterity in this sense. Man's existence is based on his readiness for others, not his individuality. Being a citizen is a political right, but also a spiritual and moral obligation. Hence, the Louvain project not only presents a new vision of politics, but also a revolution in the meaning of the universal itself: the universal does not mean that we become alike, but that we become responsible for one another.

This philosophy, which draws its roots from the Jewish religious heritage and from the phenomenological critique of ontology, opens up a new possibility for human thought: for universality to be understood not as a system of laws, but as a relationship of responsibilities. Before becoming a politician or a citizen, the universal human being must first be a moral person and responsible.

The philosophical position is summarized by the concluding problem, which can be raised from this perspective: Can egalitarianism be the foundation of true universal citizenship without turning into abstract idealism? What can be done to translate infinite moral responsibility into institutional and political frameworks that preserve the purity of this human call without sacrificing its essence?

4-Was Levinas' ethical project genuinely humanistic or was there a dimension of exclusion?:

The profound transformative value of Emmanuel Levinas's project has not gone unnoticed by philosophical critics on multiple levels. The question of whether philosophy

can be based on irrational appeal is raised when ethics becomes Alterity's First Philosophy, and ontology is replaced by responsibility. Can responsibility be non-reciprocal without becoming an existential burden that eliminates the self itself? Here the limits of the Louvain project are revealed, between its ambition to establish a new humanity, and the dangers of its transcendence of the structure of rational thought that has constituted the essence of philosophy since its beginning.

Lovinas' excessive transcendence of ontology is the first critique directed at him. He aspired to create a connection with the other as the basis of his existence, but this reversal raises an issue: How can a person be responsible for another before they even appear? Erasing ontology in favor of Ethics leads to a reversal of the philosophical path such that existence is built on morality and not the other way around, making the moral relationship lose the basis that gives it effectiveness. The self being self-aware and capable of action is necessary for it to respond to the call of others. Lovinas seems to make morality an absolute metaphysical event, but he ignores the need for morality to be embodied in the world, instead of simply being a pure, paradoxical consciousness.

Concerning the concept of 'infinite responsibility', the second criticism is addressed. While « Lovinas » wanted to express absolute human generosity through it, in the eyes of many it leads to a paradox: how can the self be responsible for the other “without limit”, without losing its independence and right to exist? When one holds absolute responsibility, it puts them in an unbalanced position, where the other person becomes self-absorbed and the relationship becomes unequal in moral terms. Justice itself is threatened by this metaphysical bias towards others, as justice demands a balance between ourselves instead of unilateral submission. If moral responsibility is lost, it will lead to spiritual slavery, not an equal human relationship.

Moreover, the face concept, despite its symbolic beauty, is subject to a deep ambiguity in interpretation. Lovinas considers the face to be a transcendent presence, but every encounter is mediated through body, gaze, and language. How can the face be the main focus of every moral experience even though it is not part of it? The concept is transformed from a real event into a metaphysical metaphor by Lovinas, resulting in confusion between religious metaphor and phenomenological description. The project loses some of the empirical accuracy it inherited from phenomenology and approaches a discourse that is more closely aligned with theology than philosophy.

Lovinas's thought is criticised from a political perspective because of the difficulty of translating Alterity Ethics into a practical project of universal citizenship. How can institutions of justice or law be constructed on a moral relationship that is individual and non-reciprocal? The concept of infinite responsibility is beautiful as a spiritual principle, but it is not applicable in a political arena that requires a balance between rights and duties. Societies are not run on the basis of moral purity, but on the basis of fairness, and fairness presupposes trade and equality. Consequently, attempting to translate Lovinas' morals into politics could result in an idealism that cannot confront reality.

The universality of Lovinas' thought is questioned due to its religious references. While he refuses to let Ethics be part of a particular theology, his language is saturated with

biblical symbols, making his moral project rooted in a particular religious experience that is difficult to generalize to all cultures. Levinas believes that man is only revealed through a face that evokes a divine call, which makes the relationship with others dependent on a spiritual experience that may not be shared by all. His philosophy seems to be non-universal because it expresses a particular religious sensibility.

In addition, in his attempt to save man from Western subjectivity, Levinas slides into a reversed subjectivity, where consciousness is re-established not on the ego but on the other, but the other itself becomes a new center. The axis' heart is what matters, not its exit from it. Levinas reproduces thought from metaphysics through new concepts, such as the face, the call, and the infinite, which are symbols that refer to beyond existence. His project is still restricted to the same structure he attempted to transcend, albeit with a new moral face.

Although these criticisms are valid, they don't take away from the revolutionary value of his ideas. The moral dimension was restored to philosophy by Levinas as a condition of human meaning, a dimension that was lost centuries ago. However, his problem lies in the fact that he wanted to base morality on the absolute in a world that no longer believed in the absolute, and to make man a hostage to others at a time when man was demanding his freedom. He continues to advocate for his project as a noble cause, but is confronted with its own contradictions: a call to save humanity by restricting it, and to liberate thought by giving it to others.

Ultimately, it can be said that Levinas's philosophy represents a major intellectual paradox: it declares the end of ontology in the name of Ethics, but it needs an ontology to exist; it preaches the universality of responsibility, but is unable to translate it into political justice; it calls on the divine to transcend humanity, but in doing so, it returns man to the limits of the theology it sought to transcend. However, this paradox remains the secret of its depth and magic: because it makes us rethink the question with which Levinas began his philosophical career — How can we be human in a world that no longer knows the meaning of man?

5- In the universal proposition he proposed, was Levinas universal or exclusionary?

Emmanuel Levinas's view on the Palestinian issue is a significant paradox in contemporary moral thought, and shows a deep conflict between his philosophical project in the ethics of altruism and his actual political bias. The philosopher, who made the "other" the focus of existence and unconditional responsibility the basis of humanity, seemed in his political positions — especially while talking about the Arab –Israeli— conflict as if he was excluding the Palestinian from this Ethical horizon that he viewed.

In his interviews and speeches, especially after the 1967 war, Levinas expressed a clear bias towards Israel, and at one point even went so far as to say that “the real other” is the Jew, while the Arab —in this context — symbolizes “the threat to the face” and not its manifestation. The metaphysical definition of otherness, which is believed to be universal, turns out to be selective in actuality. The 'other' here is not a human being, but rather an entity that has a cultural and religious definition, a 'within' identity, not a 'external' one.

From a critical perspective, it can be said that Levinas fell into an ethno-

metaphysical bias: he transformed the Jewish experience into a universal standard of suffering and responsibility, thus excluding Palestinian suffering from the logic of the "face". During political testing, he was unsuccessful in expanding his intellectual trajectory to include others who do not share the Jewish experience or clash with it. Morality, which should be pre-political, is broken at the borders of religious and national affiliation, resulting in a sharp contradiction.

The position raises a crucial question: Can a philosophy of otherness remain neutral once it is tied to identity? Levinas cautioned against reducing the universal to the particular, but he switched to an inverted Hegelian stance by allowing the self to determine which others should be recognized. Politics and religion are placed above morality in this move, which contradicts Levinas' fundamental claim that 'morality precedes existence'.

6-Conclusion

The history of contemporary philosophical consciousness is marked by the defining moment in Emmanuel Levinas' thought, which is filled with tensions and depth. From the heart of the devastation left by modernity, he tried to restore thought to its human meaning through ethics, which makes the relationship with the other not a result of thought, but a condition for its possibility. He held the belief that philosophy could not remain self-sufficient after a man became a stranger in a world he had created himself. Therefore, his appeal to the radical heart of the metaphysical journey is to substitute the question 'What is existence?' with a question 'Who am I accountable for?'

Although his project appeared idealistic or transcendent of reality at times, it restored the moral dimension to philosophy that it had been deprived of by technology and the instrumental mind. Levinas did not propose a new system so much as he directed the conscience of thought towards what he had forgotten: the fragility of man, the duty to listen to others, and the search for justice outside of authority. He presented a philosophy of weakness, where man is measured not by his possessions but by what he provides, in contrast to the philosophies of power, meaning, and identity.

Alterity Ethics is not a definitive solution to contemporary crises, but it reinterprets the notion of humanity at a time when progress itself is posing a threat to the meaning of humanity. A feeling of isolation and indifference is becoming more prevalent as the world accelerates towards greater technological globalization. Universality has changed from a moral dream to a network of interests, and humans have lost their ability to hear the call that transcends it. Here, « the Levinas Project » appears to be an urgent call to restore the meaning of human encounter in a world emptied of its face by technology, and to build a universal citizenship based not on similarity, but on mutual responsibility.

Is it feasible to establish a unified world in a time of dispersion through Alterity Ethics, which is based on subjective and spiritual experience? Will Levinas' vision of a new humanity only exist within the realm of individual appeal, without ever becoming a reality in politics and institutions? How this question is answered has a significant impact on the future of philosophy and humanity itself. Is it possible for humans to build their future civilization on responsibility instead of control, on the face instead of the image, and on proximity instead of distance? Or is humanity, hostage to its own technical self, heading towards a time when Ethics becomes without a human being, and Alterity becomes without another?

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