

**T O   T H E  
O T H E R**

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**TO THE  
OTHER**

An Introduction to  
the Philosophy of  
Emmanuel Levinas

Adriaan Peperzak



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In memory of  
my parents

Margareta Catharina Teppema  
and  
Adriaan Peperzak



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Since 1961 the work of Emmanuel Levinas has slowly acquired a pivotal position in the world of philosophy. Notwithstanding a sort of radical simplicity, its textual difficulty resists any quick or facile understanding. Having taught several courses on Levinas's thought in various schools of Europe and America, I wrote this book in order to facilitate a fruitful reading of his main philosophical texts. Although even the greatest thinkers have elicited criticisms from their students—and are not the best students, like Aristotle, Spinoza, or Hegel, the sharpest critics of their masters?—in this book I have not tried to follow the example of their attempts to transform what they received from their masters into a new, original philosophy but restricted my commentary, as much as possible, to an explanation of the position, the main perspectives, the background and the structure of Levinas's central texts.

In the hope that this introduction, thus, will be able to open doors to a thought that must be heard and meditated upon, I want to thank all those who collaborated in the process of its coming-to-be, especially Joe Flay, David Gandolfo, and Matthew Pacholec, who refined my English; Peter Rijnhart, who indefatigably typed the different versions of my manuscript; Margaret Hunt, who edited it with great care and skill; and Anita Noble, who gave my book its handsome appearance.

Some parts of this book are translations, revisions, or new versions of former articles. Permissions to (re)print were graciously extended by Kluwer Academic Publishers for permission to reprint "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity" (from Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, © 1987 by Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: 47–60) with some slight changes, and my article "The One for the Other," *Man and World* 24 (1991): 427–59,

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Chicago, May 1, 1992

L I S T O F |  
ABBREVIATIONS |

| Works of Levinas

- AE** *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*, Phaenomenologica, vol. 54 (The Hague-Boston: Nijhoff, 1979<sup>2</sup>) (see *OB*).
- CPP** *Collected Philosophical Papers*, Phaenomenologica, vol. 100, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht-Boston: Nijhoff 1987).
- DDVI** *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée* (Paris: Vrin 1982).
- DL** *Difficile Liberté: Essais sur le judaïsme* (Paris: Albin Michel 1976<sup>2</sup>).
- EDHH** *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris: Vrin, 1974<sup>2</sup>).
- EE** *De l'existence à l'existant* (Paris: Vrin 1978<sup>2</sup>) / *Existence and Existents* (translation by Alphonso Lingis) (The Hague-Boston: Nijhoff, 1978).
- EI** *Ethique et Infini: Dialogues avec Philippe Nemo* (Paris: Fayard, 1982).
- HAH** *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1979<sup>2</sup>).
- OB** *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* (translation of AE by Alphonso Lingis) (The Hague-Boston: Nijhoff, 1981).
- PhII** "La philosophie et l'idée de l'Infini," *EDHH* 165–78; *CPP* 47–60.

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- TA** *Le temps et l'autre* (Paris: Quadrige-PUF, 1983<sup>2</sup>).
- TH** “Transcendance et hauteur,” in *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* 56/3 (1962): 89–101.
- TI** *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l'exteriorité*, Phaenomenologica, vol. 8 (The Hague-Boston: Nijhoff, 1961<sup>1</sup>, 1974<sup>5</sup>) / *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exeriority* (translation by Alphonso Lingis) (The Hague-Boston: Nijhoff, 1979<sup>2</sup>)

| Works of Other Authors

- Ak** Kant's gesammelte Schriften, herausgegeben von der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, 1910ff.).
- AT** Œuvres de Descartes publiées par Ch. Adam & P. Tannery, Paris, nouvelle présentation (Paris: Vrin, 1973ff.).
- GA** Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt/M: Klostermann, 1975ff.).
- GW** Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Gesammelte Werke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968ff.).