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Of Levinas and Shakespeare: "To See Another Thus"

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**Of Levinas and Shakespeare:
“To See Another Thus”**

“Together, the papers in this marvelous collection reveal the significance of Shakespeare for Levinas and the significance of Levinas for Shakespeare. At a time of keen interest in Shakespeare and philosophy, it will be welcomed by philosophers and literary critics alike.”

—Andrew Cutrofello, Professor of Philosophy,
Loyola University Chicago

“Coming upon the heels of the four-hundred-year anniversary of Shakespeare’s death, *Of Levinas and Shakespeare* offers a timely and ambitious addition to the growing body of work on Levinas as a writer in peculiar and often uncanny proximity to other writers. This collection explores the nuanced play of affinities between 20th-century ethical philosopher and Elizabethan dramatist/poet, and discloses ways in which Shakespeare might be used to open up Levinas and not merely the other (and more predictable) way around. If reading can be a way of inhabiting, a form of living space, then this volume offers ample satisfaction for the room it provides a range of audiences—scholars of Levinas and of Shakespeare, students of ethical criticism, dialogists of literature and philosophy—to dwell for a time ‘within.’”

—Adam Z. Newton, University Professor Emeritus,
Yeshiva University

“This valuable collection of essays responds to an observation Levinas made after the War—to wit, that ‘the whole of philosophy is only a meditation on Shakespeare.’ With this pithy remark, Levinas opened the work of the great bard to our contemporary condition, as a profoundly self-reflexive, indeed ethical, thinker. Through sustained cross-readings of Levinas and Shakespeare, the essays take up dwelling in the tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare, situating the ongoing renewal of the letter through new insights. What are these revitalizing insights into Shakespeare of which Levinas speaks? Above all, it is discerning, in the situations and characters of the playwright, a testimony to the human encounter as infinite, as unlimited by concepts and the ongoing drive to unfold a story and to interrupt it, holding it far from simple answers. Understood through Levinas’s eyes, Shakespeare dramatized what the philosopher recognized as human worlds peopled with figures, great and small, who are compelled by their respective others to respond and to seek justice. Students and teachers alike will find in this collection innovative and thought-provoking avenues toward

reframing Shakespeare studies, and impressive stagings and illustrations of Levinas's challenging thought."

–Bettina Bergo, Professor of Philosophy,
Université de Montréal

"These essays do not simply apply Levinasian concepts to Shakespeare, which in Levinas's terms would do violence to Shakespeare by bounding his work with a conceptual schema. Instead, these astute and sympathetic readings enable the Shakespearean literary world, which (as Hamlet suggests to Horatio) overflows the boundaries of philosophy's dream, to speak and listen to Levinas's philosophical world, which overflows the boundaries of the concept by rooting thought in ethics. This dialogue works hard to preserve the concrete humanity and ethical grounding of both worlds. Now more than ever, in an era that permits the reduction of the human to the tweet, we need this kind of reading."

–David P. Haney, President, Centenary University

Of Levinas and Shakespeare: “To See Another Thus”

Edited by

Moshe Gold and *Sandor Goodhart*

with

Kent Lehnhof

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“I should ev’n die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.”
—Lear in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (IV.vii. 52-53),
quoted by Levinas in *Humanism of the Other Man*, p. 3

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Foreword

Andrew Cutrofello

The great Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi famously wondered whether he was a man who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was a man. It is helpful to remember this anecdote when thinking about Levinas's suggestion that "the whole of philosophy is only a meditation of Shakespeare." As several contributors to this volume point out, the genitive "of" (*de* in French) is ambiguous: was Levinas saying that philosophy is a meditation *on* Shakespeare, or that philosophy is a meditation *by* Shakespeare? Perhaps, like Zhuangzi, he was wondering whether he was a philosopher dreaming he was Shakespeare, or Shakespeare dreaming he was a philosopher.

Like so many philosophers, Levinas was fascinated by Shakespeare. One passage that especially fascinated him was the remark that Banquo makes immediately after the witches vanish in Act 1, scene 3 of *Macbeth*: "The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, / And these are of them." (1.3.79-80) As Hilaire Kallendorf and Claire Katz point out in their essay, Levinas cites these words several times over the course of his career. In 1947 he compares being's insinuation in nothingness to "bubbles of the earth" (*les bulles de terre*) (*Existence and Existents*, 57), and in 1965 he uses the same phrase to describe the insinuation of the face into being. ("Phenomenon and Enigma," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 70) Finally, in a Talmudic reading published in 1977, he characterizes the sacred (*le sacré*) as "bubbles of Nothing in things." (*Nine Talmudic Readings*, 141)

What exactly are these bubbles of the earth, and how can they signify so many different things for Levinas? Let us briefly examine the series:

- (1) insinuation of being in nothing
- (2) insinuation of the face in being
- (3) insinuation of nothing in being

At first glance, (1) and (3) appear to be diametrically opposed. According to (1), Banquo's bubbles are bubbles of being: like the spawn of a spontaneous generation, they literally appear out of

nowhere. According to (3), however, the bubbles are bubbles of nothing that flicker in and out of being. Perhaps we can resolve this apparent contradiction by considering Banquo's comparison of bubbles of the earth to bubbles of the water. Bubbles of the water are made not of water but of air. Of what are bubbles of the earth made? Being? Nothing? Or something else?

Perhaps the correct answer is fire. This would be in keeping with the witches' chant, "Double, double, toil and trouble; / Fire burn and cauldron bubble." (4.1.10-11) It would also round out the series of metaphysical elements:

(bubbles of the) water: air

(bubbles of the) earth: fire

For Heraclitus, fire was the most basic of the four elements. Fire was also a symbol or principle of becoming. Bubbles made of fire would be in a state of perpetual becoming. As such, they would involve both the insinuation of being in nothing *and* the insinuation of nothing in being. Far from contradicting each other, senses (1) and (3) would coincide.

Another way to explain the connection between senses (1) and (3) has to do with sense (2)—the radically different notion that Banquo's bubbles involve the insinuation of the face in being. Beyond the ontological categories of being, nothing, and becoming, a face signifies the transcendence of the good. Its appearance within being—its transcendence within immanence—is essentially evanescent. It is, as Levinas says, "immediately reduced to nothing, breaking up like the 'bubbles of the earth.'" ("Phenomenon and Enigma," 70)

These bubbles are not made of fire. They are made of words. They *say* something, though what they say is immediately dispersed, leaving behind the residue of something *said*. Understood this way, the sense of Banquo's bubbles differs markedly from sense (3), the insinuation of nothing in being in the experience of the sacred. For Levinas, sacredness is fake transcendence. It is the sheen of the nothing that is the "obverse" of being: bubbles signifying nothing.

Bubbles of the sacred are made of fire. If they represent the insinuation of nothing in being, they can just as easily represent the insinuation of being in nothing. Once again, the difference between sense (1) and sense (3) turns out to be unimportant. This is confirmed by a passage from Levinas's *Prison Notebooks* in which he

remarks that Hamlet “suffers from the insinuation of nothingness within being or of being within nothingness.” (*Carnets de captivité*, 174) The word “or” (*ou*) suggests that the two alternatives are fundamentally interchangeable.

Had the poet Paul Celan translated *Macbeth* into German, as he did twenty-one of Shakespeare’s sonnets, he might have forged one of his characteristic compounds to render “The earth hath bubbles” as *Es gibt Erdblase*n: “There are earthbubbles.” In French this could be translated as *Il y a des bulles-terrestres*. As Peter Szondi points out, Celan’s composite words are generally ambiguous. (*Celan Studies*, 66) They are “equivocators” that “palter with us in a double sense.” (*Macbeth*, 5.8.20) This is true of “earthbubbles.”

On the one hand, the statement *Il y a des bulles-terrestres* names the condition of the *il y a*: the inescapability of existence, whether understood as the insinuation of being in nothing or the insinuation of nothing in being. On the other hand, *Il y a des bulles-terrestres* signifies signification: the opposite (or other) of a “tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.” (5.5.26-28) Banquo’s remark, “The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,” hovers between these two senses.

Earthbubbles of various sorts abound in *Of Levinas and Shakespeare: “To See Another Thus.”* In his inaugural essay, Richard Cohen notes that while other Shakespeare scholars have called attention to the “reality of Shakespeare’s world,” Levinas reveals “the even deeper link that binds the true to the good.” As several other contributors point out, this link is indirectly indicated by the way it goes missing in *King Lear*, the play from which this volume draws its subtitle.

For Sandor Goodhart, *Lear* is an old man suffering from *hysterica passio*, the “mother” swelling up toward his heart. Instead of welcoming the “gestation of the other” in himself, *Lear* protects himself from it, insisting that he is a man more sinned against than sinning. Ann Astell takes *Lear* to decline from an “unwise Solomon” to “another Job.” She distinguishes the play’s horizontal axis of narcissistic rivalry from its vertical axis of ethical transcendence. The two axes converge in the character of Edgar, the unaccommodated man whose exposure on the heath awakens *Lear*’s pity. For Kent

Lehnhof, Cordelia signifies ethical transcendence by “disincarnating” God: her acts are “holy” (*saint*) rather than sacred.

Just as Astell discerns two axes in *Lear*, so Geoffrey Baker distinguishes two trajectories in *The Merchant of Venice*: Exilic wandering and Odyssean circulation. Yet just as Goodhart shows that for Levinas the Exilic journey from self to other allows for a return to an expanded sense of self as being-for-another, so Baker explains how Shakespeare’s play calls into question conventional oppositions between Jews and Greeks, Jews and Christians, exchange and gift-giving, law and mercy.

Kallendorf and Katz, in addition to tracking Levinas’s earthbubbles, read the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* as “an allegory of the Other’s demand for recognition.” Thomas de Quincey famously argued that the knocking signifies the retreat of horror (“On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*,” *The London Magazine*, October 1823), but for Kallendorf and Katz it anticipates the call, expressed by Macduff, to “countenance” horror. Something similar could be said of the knocking in the final scene of *Othello*: Emilia’s cry at the door, “My lord, my lord! (5.2.84) signifies the entrance of the third party and the demand for justice.

Steven Shankman also deals with the passage from horror to responsibility, not least in his reference to Franz Rosenzweig’s invocation of the “word and fire’ of the celestial Chariot of Ezekiel’s vision.” (Here word and fire both belong to the order of signification.) Shankman shows that Levinas’s distinction between the “superfluxion of the superfluous” (*la superfluxion du superflu*) and the giving of bread “taken out of one’s own mouth” derives from *Lear*’s awakening to the suffering of others (“Poor naked wretches...”). He concludes that *Lear* dies of the mother that eventually reaches his heart.

Turning from drama to narrative poetry, Sean Lawrence reads *Venus and Adonis* as a cautionary tale about the possessiveness of concupiscent love. Because her love is violent, Venus can neither convince Adonis to procreate nor transform his dead body into something immortal, as Ovid’s Venus does. In a similar vein, Donald Wehrs shows how two of Shakespeare’s romances, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, distinguish types of affection whose difference had not been discernible in the world of *Titus Andronicus*. Tamora’s fierce love of kin reappears in Dionyza and the Queen, but it is contrasted

with the other-directed love of Marina and Imogen, the surrogate daughters they attempt to kill.

Tamora reappears in David Goldstein's startling comparison between the cannibal meal in *Titus* and the *plein air* banquet in *As You Like It*. As he explains in lines that I cannot resist quoting: "both [plays] attempt to deal with the invented problem of the *vagina dentata* by structuring a meal to defuse the threat. The difference between the tragedy and the comedy isn't the philosophical issues at stake, but rather the solutions to those issues. Cannibal banquet? No thanks, I'll have the fruit cup. But I'll eat it down here in my man cave."

Goldstein is referring to Orlando, who eventually learns to eat civilly with both men and women. At the end of *As You Like It*, it is the melancholy Jaques who heads back to his (or rather the Duke's) man cave. Moshe Gold compares Jaques' speech about the Seven Ages of Man to a Mishnah in the *Pirkei Avot* about the stages of religious education. Gold finds that Jaques misses an opportunity—both in the speech itself and in the blessings he offers each of the marrying couples—to teach his listeners how to learn from one another as they grow older together.

This observation is in keeping with Goldstein's representation of Jaques as a Montaignean skeptic with a "darker purpose." Unlike Levinas, for whom skepticism bespeaks inspiration, Jaques is a burster of bubbles. He is more inclined to scoff at the soldier "seeking the bubble reputation" (2.7.152) than he is to marvel at the equivocal words of three weird sisters. Levinas, like the child in Millais' painting *Bubbles*, was a marveler. If it sometimes seems to me that his entire philosophy is a meditation—or dream—of earthbubbles, this is why.

Together, the papers in this marvelous collection reveal the significance of Shakespeare for Levinas and the significance of Levinas for Shakespeare. At a time of keen interest in Shakespeare and philosophy, it will be welcomed by philosophers and literary critics alike.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Often a collection of essays by seasoned scholars gathered around the work of two important writers from different times and places constitutes a value of its own. Its assembly is designed to explore whatever interesting consequences and new insights may be garnered from examining their writing in this uncommon conjunction. And in this case, the bare fact that at the moment of our proposal to Purdue University Press (that we might produce a book on Levinas and Shakespeare) there were more than seventy-nine book-length publications already available with phrases like “Levinas and” in the title or subtitle but not a single tome linking Levinas to Shakespeare is probably reason enough for a collection of this kind.

But the importance of this volume for those of us who have worked on it is more than that. Levinas gets what Shakespeare is doing. And he gets it because what Shakespeare is doing is what he himself is doing in philosophy, which is to say, studying human relations and human subjectivity in all of its complexity and infinite variety. That may sound like a commonplace, but it’s not. Shakespeare and Levinas are working at two different ends of the same theoretical spectrum: namely, constituting a meditation on “the whole of philosophy.” “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (H 1.5.167-168) Hamlet remarks to his classmate, and we have to understand by that remark a reference at once to learning in general (beyond the confines of the study halls they may have attended at Wittenberg where theology and philosophy were discussed) and to the human capacity to think such thoughts in context of the full range of arenas in which ethical concerns for others (via faces, ghosts, and the responsibilities they command) come to the fore.

* * *

There is another more practical reason. The book has something of a fortuitous genesis. In 2014, I (Sandor) was invited by Kent

Lehnhof to submit a paper to a projected volume on Levinas and Shakespeare which I did (it remains substantially the one produced below). The volume was assembled and submitted to a press in the spring of 2015 and when the press returned it (for reasons perhaps related to the fact that it would close its doors less than a year later), Kent graciously offered the project to any of us willing to pursue it. Since I myself was well into the planning of a conference on Levinas at Purdue (a meeting of the North American Levinas Society in July of 2015) in which Ann Astell and Steven Shankman (who had written about both writers) were participants, and since I knew that Moshe Gold and Donald Wehrs were among the contributors Lehnhof had invited for his project, I saw an opportunity. I invited Ann Astell, Moshe Gold and Don Wehrs to deliver papers in a session on Shakespeare and Levinas that I moderated (and to which Steven Shankman responded) and the five of us—Astell, Shankman, Gold, Wehrs, and I—met for lunch at Hillel afterwards.

The current volume was born of that communion. We decided we would add papers of Astell and Shankman to the list of contributors to the volume among others (Richard Cohen's essay, that had pioneered philosophic thinking about the conjunction of the two writers, was also added), and that Gold and I would explore the potentials for the collection's publication. The prospect of publishing with Purdue University Press a volume involving at least two current or former Purdue faculty members seemed to me a natural (I remain a professor of English at Purdue and Ann Astell was a professor of English before moving to Notre Dame as a professor of theology). I approached Peter Froehlich and the rest, as they say, is history. Froehlich sent it out for review and when the letters that came back were positive, he decided to publish the volume and that it would be perfect for the book launch he was constructing. The book that follows is an extension of these efforts.

The serendipity of these circumstances seems telling. Whatever drew us individually as literary readers to the Levinas conference (and Levinas's understanding of the ethical) is probably not unrelated to whatever drew Levinas to Shakespeare to begin with, and to the profound literary critical ethical reading with which the English Elizabethan writer was already deeply engaged. One aim of this book is to explore more fully that engagement.

* * *

We are grateful to many people who have contributed in different ways to the production of this book. We thank Kent Lehnhof for his initial idea to gather together a collection of essays addressing Levinas and Shakespeare. We thank Peter Froehlich, the newly installed director of Purdue University Press who spotted the need for and value of a volume like this one in our very first conversation. His gathering of a staff of devoted workers—including Katherine Purple, Rebecca Corbin, Susan Wegener, Leah Pennywark, Lindsey Organ, Bryan Shaffer, and others who contributed to the production of this book behind the scenes—assisted our efforts in countless ways as did his personal enthusiasm for our work. We are grateful to the outside readers of the manuscript of this volume who had confidence in what they read and envisioned the value of seeing it in print. The final manuscript benefited immeasurably from their suggestions.

And we are grateful to others. Some of the material in this book appeared in prior publications and we thank the publishers, editors, and current owners of the rights to those publications for permission to use versions of the following material.

In particular, we thank Michael P. Burton, director of the University Press of New England, for permission to publish Richard A. Cohen's "Some Reflections on Levinas and Shakespeare" which appeared in his book *Levinasian Meditations. Ethics, Philosophy, and Religion*, published by Duquesne University Press (Pittsburgh, PA) in 2010 on pages 150-168; Gabriel Dotto, the director Michigan State University Press (East Lansing Michigan) for permission to reproduce the chart that Sandor Goodhart has used in his essay in this volume and which originally appeared in his earlier book, *The Prophetic Law: Essays in Judaism, Girardianism, Literary Studies, and the Ethical* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2014) on page 214; John Morgenstern, the director and executive editor of Clemson University Press, for permission to reproduce Geoffrey Baker's "Other Capital: Investment, Return, Alterity and *The Merchant of Venice*" which first was published in *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*, Volume 22 (2002), 21-36, by Clemson University Press; and George Leaman, Director of the

Philosophy Document Center (Charlottesville, VA), for permission to reproduce Steven Shankman's "From Solitude to Maternity: Levinas and Shakespeare" which was first published in the journal *Levinas Studies*, Volume 8, number 1, pages 67-79, by Duquesne University Press (Pittsburgh, PA) in 2013.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude and acknowledge others from whom we have been privileged to learn who are not mentioned above. "Much have I learned from my rabbis, even more have I learned from my colleagues," Rabbi Chanina says. "But from my students I have learned more than from anyone else" (Ta'anit 7a).

20 October 2017 / 30th Tishrei 5778

Sandor Goodhart and
Moshe Gold

Abbreviations

References to the following works by Levinas are cited parenthetically, using the following abbreviations. References to other works by Levinas are treated individually.

- AT *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- BPW *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).
- BV *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, trans. Gary D. Mole (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- CC *Œuvres Complètes Tome I: Carnets de captivité et autres inédits* (Paris: Grasset, 2009).
- CPP *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987).
- DF *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seàn Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).
- EE *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001).
- EI *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985).
- EN *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
- HO *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005).
- LR *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seàn Hand (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).
- NT *Nine Talmudic Readings*, trans. Annette Aronowicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- OB *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1981).

- PN *Proper Names*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).
- RB *Is it Righteous to Be?*: *Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*. Edited by Jill Robbins, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).
- TA *Le Temps et l'Autre* (Paris: Fata Morgana, 1979).
- TI *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).
- TO *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987).
- TTI *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* trans. Andre Orianne (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995).

References to the following works by Shakespeare are cited parenthetically, using the following abbreviations. References to specific editions of Shakespeare's works are treated individually.

- AC *Antony and Cleopatra*
- AL *As You Like It*
- CY *Cymbeline*
- H *Hamlet*
- KL *King Lear*
- M *Macbeth*
- MA *Much Ado About Nothing*
- MND *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- MV *The Merchant of Venice*
- P *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*
- R2 *Richard II*
- TAN *Titus Andronicus*
- VA *Venus and Adonis*

Introduction

Moshe Gold and Sandor Goodhart

And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
—Shakespeare (MND 5.1.14-17).¹

but whate'er I be,
Nor I nor any man that but man is
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
With being nothing
—Shakespeare (R2 5.5.38-41)

Shakespearean tragedy is above all the contact of man and nothingness, of nothingness in its ambiguity [*son équivoque*], in its diabolical form Shakespeare is the fabricator of nothingness; he who gives to nothingness the appearances of being
—Levinas (CC 174)²

“[I]t sometimes seems to me,” Emmanuel Levinas writes, in one of the first books he publishes after the war, “that the whole of philosophy is only a meditation of Shakespeare” (TO 72).³ “The whole of philosophy.” For Levinas, that phrase includes, among other writers, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson, Husserl, and Heidegger; but also, of course, the ancients—Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. Levinas’s wording here is key. The entirety of philosophy for him is “a meditation of Shakespeare” (*une méditation de Shakespeare*), which is to say, not “about” Shakespeare but “of” Shakespeare, “from” Shakespeare, a part of Shakespeare’s subject matter, his work—his plays, his poems. As if, for all of our critical acumen, we remain already lodged entirely within Shakespeare’s writing, as figments of his dramas, of his thinking about us.

What astounding humility! As if everything that I (Levinas) am attempting to do, my entire phenomenological project—the

reconstitution of European subjectivity on an ethical foundation—were already within Shakespeare’s own philosophic reach. Have other philosophers thought the same? Is not Shakespeare customarily relegated within philosophic writing—metaphysical and phenomenological alike—to the category of aesthetics, and from aesthetics, to dramatic literature and dramatic representation? Do other philosophers really think their own thoughts were already Shakespeare’s four hundred years ago?

What about literary critics—scholars or theoreticians of Shakespeare, for example? Do they see Shakespeare as groundbreaking in the same way they see themselves (especially in the romantic era)? Or rather, in praise of Shakespeare’s iconoclasm and “infinite variety,” have they not ironically constructed an elaborate matrix of inclusions and exclusions effectively “sacrificing” the critical commentary his writing offers us?⁴ The formal tradition of Shakespeare criticism, from Pope, Johnson, and Dryden, through Wordsworth and Coleridge, through Arnold, Bradley, Eliot, Leavis, Lewis, and countless others, seems largely to have ignored the possibility that Shakespeare’s writing is self-reflexive.⁵ Not challenging it, necessarily, but putting it aside in pursuit of other more legitimate ends. Formal and historical considerations have often superseded discussion of Shakespeare as a critical thinker. Even considerations gathered from psychoanalytic and, on occasion, religious studies are deemed permissible ahead of regarding Shakespeare as a bonafide commentator on his own writing so long as such considerations are couched in the appropriate cultural studies garb. Moral approaches as well remain acceptable only so long as they echo the approaches of Kantian and Hegelian philosophers who read in accord with the categorical imperative or the end of history and the birth of modern secularism.

The European humanist perspective, in short, the primacy of the subject of consciousness before objects of knowledge, would seem the order of the day in both literary and philosophic study. In that context, the idea that Shakespeare could be writing about us—about the dramas in which we continue to live and work—would seem, for the mainstream of critical thinking about Shakespeare (whether within philosophy or literary study), not a little outrageous.

What if, in following Levinas’s post-war model, we take a critical leap? Levinas distinguishes between the act of saying something and

its reproduction some moments later as something said, between *le dire* (the “to say” or “saying”) and *le dit* (the “said”).⁶ What if we read Levinas’s claim as a challenge addressed to philosophers and literary critics alike? Is the literary criticism of Shakespeare that we consider “ethical” to be regarded henceforth exclusively as a meditation on what Shakespeare has already said, or can it be a meditation on what he continues so powerfully to say to us in our current circumstances? Books on Levinas and more general philosophical topics deriving from his work abound. Scholars have been able to identify at least seventy-nine English language book titles (or subtitles) with the words “Levinas and” or “and Levinas” followed (or preceded) by the name of another writer or academic field. It is at least surprising, given Shakespeare’s significant and positive influence on Levinas’s corpus, that no single volume has yet appeared on the import of his explicitly identified English literary predecessor upon the Jewish philosophical thinker, or of these two writers upon each other.⁷ Although a handful of scholars have juxtaposed these authors in isolated essays, there exists as yet no monograph or collection devoted to pursuing the implications for philosophy, religious studies, and literary criticism of the intricate and manifold relationships between these two towering iconic figures of our Western intellectual tradition.⁸

One function of the current volume is to address that gap. But the omission is odd in other ways. Wider nets have been cast. One recent volume combines Shakespeare with discussion of Levinas and some fifteen other philosophic thinkers—“celebrated authors in Shakespeare studies and in continental philosophy” one notable publisher’s blurb proclaims, a book that successfully “brings the two fields into dialogue with each other.”⁹

One brief essay on Levinas and Shakespeare, however, does not a book-length volume make.¹⁰ Upon the heels of the quadricentennial anniversary of Shakespeare’s death, perhaps the ghost of one of Europe’s most revered literary writers can startle us from our familiar competencies, our literary and critical complacencies, and confront us with the obligations and responsibilities of a new ethical criticism. Perhaps it is time for us, with Levinas, to say of Shakespeare what Hamlet says of the ghost Shakespeare may himself have once played on the Elizabethan stage, “O my prophetic soul!” and “Meet it is I set it down” (H 1.5.41, H 1.5.108).

In seeking to foster an ongoing dialogue between Shakespeare and Levinas, the contributors to the current collection remain acutely aware of the risks involved in their enterprise: the temptation to repeat familiar readings of one or another writer rather than engage their thought directly, the danger of reducing nuanced complexities to a few aphorisms or paraphrases, the pitfalls of failing to know enough scholarship within multiple fields of inquiry.

And then there are the risks associated with the genre of criticism itself. Rather than attempt to apply some kind of “Levinasian” literary critical methodology to Shakespeare, or concomitantly endeavor to affirm that Shakespeare has already engaged all that Levinas would later discover in his philosophic or religious studies writing, the writers in the current collection place Levinas and Shakespeare side by side in asymptotic relationships with each other. For all their different emphases, these essays collectively suggest that the proximity of one author to the other exposes respectively the discourses of philosophy, literary studies, and religious studies (by which we have traditionally understood them) to their deepest ethical dimensions in ways that are both inspiring and precarious, ways that if pursued more deeply or more distantly could turn out to have tragic and comic potentials of their own. Indeed, the care shown in this volume to both Shakespeare’s works and those of Levinas demonstrates the potential for vibrant new scholarship to rethink in its entirety the generic relation of tragedy to comedy.

The collection includes three previously published essays and nine essays written specifically for this volume by a range of scholars, each of which sheds new light on the intriguing interrelation of Shakespeare to Levinas and Levinas to Shakespeare. Some of these essays discuss Levinas’s ideas in order to rethink early modern genre theory. Others read Levinas to open up previously unexplored aspects of individual plays. Still others contend that bringing to bear upon Shakespearean and Levinasian scholarship the largely unacknowledged discourse of religious studies intensifies and enriches any venture into ethical criticism. All promise to deepen our understanding of Shakespeare while demonstrating at the same time how fruitful Levinas’s ideas can be in the study of literature.

Levinas can, for example, give us a better sense of what is at stake in Shakespearean drama and can supply us with a rich vocabulary

and sophisticated theoretical framework for describing its operation and effects. Concomitantly, Shakespeare's art can do much to clarify the radical quality of Levinas's philosophic thought. Unlike more domesticated versions of ethical criticism, Levinas's writing does more than merely urge us in the direction of tolerance or acceptance: it challenges and rebuilds the very framework of subjectivity from which such ethical claims proceed. Similarly, Shakespeare's plays and poetry, focusing as such writing often does upon the necessity and difficulty of responding to the demands of another person in comic, tragic, historical, and romantic contexts, gains clarity from Levinas's untangling of our infinite responsibility for the other individual, for the other person or neighbor standing there alongside of me, as opposed to the abstract idea of the other we commonly invoke. The arresting singularity of Shakespeare's humanized characters, the vivid particularity of his humanly imagined worlds, constitutes technical innovations whose aesthetic virtuosity is energized by its ethical urgency.

Nor do the essayists in this collection shy away from the glaring and familiar problem of introducing Levinas in context of the discussion of any work of literature. On the one hand, it is a commonplace of Levinas studies that Levinas distrusted art as an escape or evasion. Inasmuch as art provides us with selfish pleasures and enables our escape from the real world, it offers us a kind of false transcendence. In this respect, art remains but an idol: a lifeless object put in place of the living Other. On the other hand, Levinas readily admitted his philosophical debts to specific authors and referred often to their literary works in his own writings (Shakespeare being for him among the most prominent). The best authors, for Levinas, not only recognize and resist art's idolatrous potential but also wrestle with the core philosophical and religious questions that it raises. If we take seriously a question Levinas asks—"is not reading a way of inhabiting? The volume of the book as a form of living space!"—then inhabiting the living spaces of Shakespeare and Levinas can contribute to contemporary debates concerning art's ability (or inability) to show us the way out of Being, engaging us in the difficulties of freeing ourselves from the ontological constraints in which we all of necessity reside (BV 128). Reading and performing great art together in the company of profound ethical

criticism and philosophic writing—might not such an “inhabiting” form a kind of ethical discourse that continually interrupts itself and calls itself into question? Shakespeare’s art, it would seem, does as much in spades. His works continue to surprise, bewilder, and evade us, compelling us to make a response, and then examine that response in advance.

What about scriptural writing, which is often the mainstay of Levinas’s religious studies subject matter? The bringing together of the ethical and the literary also brings the literary into dialogue with religious concerns and so in scholarship with religious studies. Not surprisingly, Levinas insists that the task of the commentator on scripture and writing about scripture is not to solve, settle, or decipher the text but to renew it. The “life of the Talmudist,” Levinas writes, “is nothing but the permanent renewal of the letter through the intelligence” (NT 79). Taking this comment beyond the Talmud to apply to literary writing at large and Shakespeare’s writing in particular, this volume claims that no amount of erudition, historical contextualization, or critical knowledge of Shakespeare can substitute for the unceasing work of asking questions of the text (and listening to the questions the text poses to us). Anything but its incessant questioning threatens to turn the text into a dead letter, an academic artifact containing obscurities of no interest to students, scholars, or any other popular or high brow readers.

In the present collection, then, we turn to these two great writers in an attempt to bring some measure of “renewal” to Shakespeare’s and Levinas’s works through our approach to them. It is our hope that the essays contained herein perform the kind of responsible questioning that ought to provoke a new and viable ethical criticism, a critical writing that engages at the deepest level what it means to be a subject for whom ethical considerations are a part of the very air one breathes. As a volume with interests in philosophy, religious studies, and literary criticism, among other fields, it should be of interest to scholars and graduate students working in various areas of modern philosophy and contemporary religious thought, as well as those engaged in Shakespeare and Early Modern Studies, and, more generally, in literary criticism and theory. The collection endeavors to offer seasoned experts across the disciplines it engages fresh and compelling arguments while offering beginning graduate

students and advanced undergraduates accessible orientation to scholarly study of Levinas, Shakespeare, and the issues their implied dialogue opens up.

* * *

In “A Meditation,” which was originally titled “Some Reflections on Levinas on Shakespeare,” Richard A. Cohen opens the door to the discussion we would follow in this collection. Examining carefully what appears to be every known reference in Levinas to Shakespeare in the published works of the philosopher, Cohen makes the case in full for the centrality of Shakespeare to Levinas’s critical project. As such, his essay remains a tribute to the richness of both writers, and we have duly chosen to reproduce his contribution as the rightful progenitor of this field of joint inquiry, a tribute echoed in numerous essays within this collection.

Within the essay, Cohen begins by unpacking Levinas’s declaration (cited above) “that the whole of philosophy is but a meditation of Shakespeare.” Noting the philosopher’s striking use of the possessive “of” in relating philosophy to Shakespeare, the author argues that this phrasing suggests “not that all of philosophy is a meditation about Shakespeare . . . but rather that the whole of philosophy is a meditation *by* Shakespeare, Shakespeare’s meditation,” Shakespeare meditating on philosophy.¹¹ Cohen explores the degree to which Shakespeare’s world reverberates with various forms of moral exigency, religious rigor, the call to justice, and the demands of other great literature. Attending to “the elevating exigencies of an ethical metaphysics [that] find their full expression in a Shakespeare as they can find their proper articulation in all the world’s great literatures,” Cohen surmises that Shakespeare dramatizes what Levinas would recognize as human worlds with human characters driven to the heights of justice and morality. The Bard in this reading is not a moralist with flavorful maxims to distribute, but rather, his writings give “testimony to the Infinite” (EI 116). As such, Cohen’s clear survey of Levinas on Shakespeare has indeed offered many readers a way into the rigors of ethical exegesis.

But since the publication of Cohen’s essay in 2001, Levinas’s prison notebooks have been found and published. These are writings he composed while imprisoned during the Second World War. These notebooks reveal a striking correlation with both the philosopher’s

earlier ideas (written in the thirties) and his later ideas as expressed in *Existence and Existents*, *Time and the Other*, and other texts. This correlation is especially evident in his comments about Shakespeare and in particular the tragedies. Here for example is a sample of his comments about Shakespeare as the “fabricator of nothingness”:

Shakespearean tragedy is above all the contact of man and nothingness, of nothingness in its ambiguity [*son équivoque*], in its diabolical form. Lie (*King Lear*, *Othello*), the ambiguity [*équivoque*] of the witches (*Macbeth*), the ghost (*Hamlet*). And from it derives the essential role in most Shakespearean tragedies of the liar and the traitor. Shakespeare is the fabricator of nothingness; he who gives to nothingness the appearances of being.

The character Hamlet is particularly profound [in this regard], for there man has pierced ambiguity or rather he has made of this ambiguity the very theme of suffering. Hamlet is the reflection upon Shakespearean tragedy itself. He suffers from the insinuation of nothingness within being or of being within nothingness. To be or not to be—everything is there.

I take up again the theme of death: the fact that death equals the loss of the capacity to play shows that death is not as strong as being. Even if it concludes being, it does not exhaust all that being has done. Therefore, even within the hypothesis of *Macbeth*, it is neither an end nor within

Macbeth too, like Hamlet, is frightened by the fact that death perhaps does not exist—that it resolves nothing. His fright in seeing Banquo is in this sense the culminating point of the tragedy. It is starting from this moment moreover that he is without fear in the crime and that these scruples against which Lady Macbeth had fought no longer exist for him. Why? Despair (CC 174, 195-196).¹²

As Richard Cohen argued before the prison notebooks were published, and as Howard Caygill remarked more recently upon the publication of the *Carnets* material, these writings are invaluable for acknowledging and responding to “the importance of Shakespeare for Levinas’s philosophizing.”¹³

Cohen's essay is followed here by three essays on one of the tragedies, *King Lear*. In "Lear's 'Darker Purpose,'" Sandor Goodhart takes a distinctly counter-redemptive view. He suggests that the play stages what might be characterized, echoing the king's own language, as Lear's "darker purpose." "No rescue? What, a prisoner?" (4.6.191) Lear exclaims at one point, when he awakens on the heath, a sick, frail, and dying old man in the long central storm scenes, as if the whole maneuver of dividing up the kingdom has been explicitly undertaken in the expectation of a fairy-tale ending, the kind of happy conclusion or "promised end" that indeed the story on which the play is based encouraged. In Shakespeare's assessment of the world, Goodhart argues, Lear dies holding his dead daughter Cordelia in his arms, a lurid testimony only to his inability to distinguish a live human being from a deceased one ("I know when one is dead, and when one lives," he says (5.3.261)), projective fantasies from real human relations. Levinas clarifies in Goodhart's view the perspective that Lear fails to read (*lire*, in French), and which constitutes one of the sources of his delirium: namely, infinite responsibility for the other individual, the other human being, the neighbor.

Ann Astell offers a second essay on *Lear*. After highlighting their mutual interest in Shakespearean drama, Bible, and law, Astell imagines Levinas and theorist René Girard as "Readers of *King Lear*." She speculates that Levinas would foreground the bonds of filial and parental piety that establish "vertical" relationships between characters, whereas Girard would focus on the "horizontal" relationships of sibling rivalry. These complementary critical axiologies meet, in Astell's analysis, at the play's center, in the violence of the storm on the heath, where Girard's scapegoated outcast encounters Levinas's needy orphan. This encounter, in turn, serves to transform the disguised Edgar into an apocalyptic figure whose self-revelation at the play's conclusion renews the revelation of commandment itself.

In a third essay on *Lear*, "Theology, Phenomenology, and the Divine in *King Lear*," Kent R. Lehnhof observes that Cordelia figures into Shakespeare's *King Lear* much as *l'autrui* figures into Levinas's philosophy. The one who overawes, obsesses, and afflicts Lear, Cordelia is also in his view the one who summons and solicits

him from “beyond being.” She “disincarnates” the divine in the play in a non-systematic and non-thematizable way. This is not to say, in his view, that *Lear* is finally and simply a Levinasian fable of some kind. Rather, it is to suggest that Shakespeare was as invested in interpersonal relationships as was Levinas and appears to have entertained some similar ideas about them, including the idea that transcendence is not an effect of ecstasy or apotheosis but of interrelation.

In “Investment, Return, Alterity, and *The Merchant of Venice*,” Geoffrey Baker uses the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, in particular the overlooked leitmotif of circulation, in order to re-assess the location of social critique in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. Levinas’s understanding of circulation and giving can be understood, respectively, as forms of return and non-return. Read in this way, *The Merchant of Venice* produces and negotiates several key binaries, familiar to even more traditional readings of the play, as effects of circulation or giving, including Judaism and Christianity, justice and mercy, outbound and homeward journeys, investments returned and investments lost, taking and giving. A Levinas-based reading of these structures and their prominent role in Shakespeare’s play demonstrates to what great extent they are all interwoven and invested in each other, and in what manner rampant venture capital, simultaneously the pride and fall of Venice, is implicated at every step. Focused as Baker is upon the structures of meaning that enable and limit ethical relations in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare in his view emerges as a social critic more interested in interrogating the epistemological foundations than the mere social forces of economic relations.

In their jointly authored paper, “Traces, Faces, and Ghosts,” Hilaire Kallendorf and Claire Katz approach the relationship between Levinas and Shakespeare by examining an under theorized theme—the role of the ghost in the works of both authors. In his 1946/7 lecture course, *Time and the Other*, Levinas forges both explicit and implicit connections among several of his central themes—the trace, the face, alterity, the ethical—connecting these themes to the ghost through his reference to a “visitation.” This essay examines the relationship between the face and the trace, using the

ghostly apparition, especially in *Macbeth*, as a way to connect these tropes in Levinas's work.

In "From Horror to Solitude to Maternity," Steven Shankman reflects upon the way Shakespeare figures in Levinas's philosophical development from the time of the appearance of *Existence and Existents* and *Time and Other*, both published just after the Second World War, through *Humanism of the Other* and *Otherwise than Being* in the early 1970s; and secondly, he considers how Levinas's thought can, in turn, open up the ethical dimension of *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, three plays that Levinas particularly admired. His essay thus places Shakespeare's three greatest tragedies (*Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Lear*) in the context of Levinas's developing ideas as a philosopher, and it suggests how, if we read these plays with Levinas's thought in mind, we can see in them as yet unrevealed ethical depths.

In "The Frustration of Desire and the Weakness of Power in *Venus and Adonis*," Sean Lawrence brings Levinas's critique of representation and his description of the erotic relationship to bear on "Venus and Adonis," one of Shakespeare's little-studied narrative poems. The recalcitrance of the Other to power explains not only why Venus fails to win the love of Adonis, but also why she must fail, inevitably. Where recent critics have tended to understand most relations as relations of power, a Levinasian reading allows us to see how Shakespeare dramatizes the failure of power in the frustration of Venus's desire.

In "Ethical Ambiguity of the Maternal in Shakespeare's First Romances," Donald Wehrs argues that within Shakespeare's England, the propensity of social affection to emerge from and resolve itself back into self-centered concerns was identified with original sin, but his romances challenge philosophical and theological accounts of self-love's primacy. *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* delineate how the opening of the body to affect opens patriarchal cultural orders to the corrective authority of feminine voices (both actual women and maternal nature) and the soul to the regenerative effects of forgiveness. What Shakespeare dramatizes resembles and may be illuminated by Levinas's analogous tracing of how felt experience of the ethical enables the self to recover, in a romance-like way, vital, redemptive parts of itself that, like daughters and wives in

Shakespearean romance, tend to be occluded, lost, or forfeited, but may, wondrously, be reclaimed and affirmed.

In “Culinary Skepticism in *As You Like It* and Montaigne’s ‘Of Experience,’” David B. Goldstein argues that both Michel de Montaigne and Shakespeare anticipate Emmanuel Levinas’s argument that eating forms a material basis for skeptical inquiry. Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* uses eating as a tool to explore and articulate skeptical approaches to knowledge. Its approach mirrors that of Montaigne’s own brand of culinary skepticism, expressed most clearly in the last of his *Essais*, “Of Experience,” which documents human materiality (especially through practices of eating and defecating, since these actions expose us at our most material), in order to resist the ideology of abstract perfection that Montaigne and Shakespeare both find so societally destructive. In one context, we find a skeptical and anti-ethical phenomenon, in which eating is a form of devourment, an exercise of power, a skeptical tearing apart of boundaries. In another context, eating functions commensally and performatively, helping to form ethically stable communities.

Finally, in “Staging Humanity in *As You Like It* and *Pirkei Avot*,” Moshe Gold stages a reading and thinking together of Levinas and Shakespeare’s comedy by way of the transmission of commentaries in Rabbinic thought on a specific Mishnah in *Pirkei Avot*, one that catalogues distinct educational life stages. Rethinking the dramatic, and pedagogical, encounters between Jaques and Rosalind, on the one hand, and the Seven Ages speech and a Rabbinic staging of ages on the other, Gold argues that to better understand the ramifications of a Levinasian Other as a teacher, we might constructively consult what Levinas himself wrote in a note from 1946: “My philosophy—is a philosophy of the face-to-face. Relation to the other, without intermediary. It is that of Judaism.”¹⁴ Blowing on the coals of Rabbinic traditions that transmit commentaries on one’s ethical/educational development, Gold helps Shakespeareans and Levinasians better understand how Shakespeare stages and performs ethical behavior via particular responses to Jaques’s pessimistic and static Seven Ages speech. In so doing, he argues for a revision of critical methodology to move beyond thematic religious explorations of a Shakespearean text to include Jewish thought as challenging standard receptions of the play, Shakespeare

studies, and Levinasian philosophy. In this manner, Gold commemorates a Jewish sermon given on the Tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare in which the speaker, talking about “Shakespeare and Rabbinic Thought,” refers to the great playwright as, among other designations, “a teacher of ethics.”¹⁵

* * *

The essays that follow are far from the only essays that could have been written to engage Levinas with Shakespeare and Shakespeare with Levinas. But our hope remains that they will offer a first step, a gateway to a future encounter between two powerful writers and critical thinkers that will endure and prove beneficial for all concerned, an opening into which other authors will engage other plays or poems or philosophic tracts and thereby pursue other avenues along which critical thinking and the ethical will find themselves irretrievably entangled.

Notes

¹William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1 See Stephen Greenblatt, ed. *The Norton Shakespeare* (2008).

²“La tragédie shakespearienne est avant tout le contact de l'homme et du néant, du néant dans son équivoque, dans sa forme diabolique . . . Il [Shakespeare] est le fabricant du néant. Celui qui donne au néant les apparences de l'être.” See Emmanuel Levinas, *Œuvres Complètes Tome I: Carnets de captivité et autres inédits* (Paris: Grasset, 2009), 174; hereafter cited as CC.

³“Mais il me semble parfois que toute la philosophie n'est qu'une méditation de Shakespeare” (TO 72 / TA 60). Richard A. Cohen takes this sentence as the foundation for his ground-breaking essay. See below. One thinks of Hamlet's remark: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (1.5.167-168).

⁴Sandor Goodhart has written extensively about this question. See for example *Sacrificing Commentary: Reading the End of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), especially 245-288.

⁵Which is to say, reflective at minimum of both itself and its subsequent reception in historical criticism.

⁶See, for example, OB 5-7.

⁷In his interview with Philippe Nemo, Levinas professes his indebtedness to “the great writers of Western Europe, notably Shakespeare, much admired in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*” (EI 22). Levinas also, of course, opens *Otherwise than Being* with a reference to Shakespeare, alluding to both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* on the first page.

⁸The gap is notable. Books treating Levinas and a variety of other writers, works, fields, and historical periods are plentiful. *Levinas and Henry James*, *Levinas and Ancient Philosophy*, *Levinas and Theology*, *Levinas and the 18th Century*, and *Levinas and the 19th Century* are among the most well known. Levinas would seem to have been identified as a writer whose work opens doors to a plethora of scholarly concerns. And yet, strangely enough, nothing of the kind exists *vis-à-vis* Levinas and Shakespeare.

⁹See Jennifer Ann Bates and Richard Wilson, *Shakespeare and Continental Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014). Aside from Levinas, chapters include discussions of Shakespeare and Aristotle, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Luc Marion, Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, Arendt, Agamben, Foucault, Lacan, Lyotard, and Derrida among others.

¹⁰See Howard Caygill, "Levinas and Shakespeare," in Bates and Wilson 2014, 145-151.

¹¹Cohen's work, we must acknowledge, is one inspirational source for the current volume you are now reading.

¹²La tragédie shakespearienne est avant tout le contact de l'homme et du néant, du néant dans son équivoque, dans sa forme diabolique. Le mensonge (*Le roi Lear*, *Othello*), l'équivoque des sorcières (*Macbeth*); le fantôme (*Hamlet*). D'où le rôle essentiel dans la pluparts des tragédies shakespearienne du menteur et du traître. Il est le fabricant du néant. Celui <p. 9> qui donne au néant les apparences de l'être. / Hamlet est particulièrement profond, car là l'homme a percé l'équivoque ou plutôt il a fait de cette équivoque le thème même de la souffrance. Hamlet c'est la réflexion sur la tragédie shakespearienne. Il souffre de l'insinuation du néant dans l'être ou de l'être dans le néant. Être ou ne pas être—tout est là . . . Je reprends le thème de la mort : Le fait que la mort = jeu perdu prouve que la mort n'est pas aussi forte que l'être. Même si elle finit l'être elle n'épuise <p. 10> pas tout ce qu'il a fait. Donc même dans l'hypothèse de Macbeth (1) elle n'est pas une fin ni dans (3) (CC 174) . . . <p. 15> Macbeth—lui aussi comme Hamlet est effrayé du fait que la mort n'existe peut-être pas—qu'elle ne résout rien. Son effroi en voyant Banquo est dans ce sens le point culminant de la tragédie. C'est à partir de ce moment d'ailleurs qu'il est sans crainte dans le crime et que ses scrupules contre lesquelles lady Macbeth avait à lutter n'existent plus. Pourquoi? Désespoir. (CC 195-196)

¹³See Howard Caygill, "Levinas's Prison Notebooks," *Radical Philosophy*, 160 (March/April 2010), pp. 27-35.

¹⁴The note appears in Levinas's *Carnets de captivité* (186), and is quoted in both Caygill's "Levinas's Prison Notebooks" (35) and in Caygill's "Levinas and Shakespeare" (149).

¹⁵See Gollancz, The Rev. Professor Harmann. "Shakespeare and Rabbinic Thought: Sermon Delivered at the Bayswater Synagogue, London, On Sabbath, April 29th, 1916." London: Wertheimer, Lea & Co., Clifton House, Worship Street. E. C., 1916.