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# **Small Goodness (*la petite bonté*) as Human Flourishing: Overcoming Structural Goodness through Ethical Transcendence**

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“Only an excess of beatitude will respond to the excess of  
evil.” -Philippe Nemo

**Abstract:** The ethical hermeneutics of Emmanuel Levinas is a provocation to be otherwise where the meaning of being is to be interrogated in the ethical event of asymmetry of a self-other ‘relationless relation’. Contemporary questions of human life and its meaning with regard to philosophy and its significance has to be investigated in the “miracle of exteriority.”<sup>1</sup> The idea of ‘small goodness’ as interpreted by Levinas from the insights of the novel *Life and Fate* remains the crux of the argument of this paper, i.e., the meaning of human existence – one’s relation to the other – is far beyond being, system and structure. A society that is completely dehumanised by the decay of all human values, failure of human relations, in such a social misery life seems unpredictable and worthless. There is a loss of human dignity

and value, lack of respect for one another, an absolute despair and desolation of all human aspirations for meaning and being. Engendered by the traditional practical and noetic totalisation philosophy remains a point of no consolation.

Keywords: Small Goodness, *La petite bonté*, Life and Fate, Levinas, Ethics, Humanism, Human Flourishing, Ethical Transcendence.

## Introduction

The ethical hermeneutics of Emmanuel Levinas is a provocation to be otherwise where the meaning of being is to be interrogated in the ethical event of asymmetry of a self-other ‘relationless relation’. Contemporary questions of human life and its meaning with regard to philosophy and its significance has to be investigated in the “miracle of exteriority.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this is not to be done from the stand point of the ‘self-sameness’ of the Western ‘autonomous thinking’ of the ontological meaning of being and life; rather, it must be sought after from the shore of the other, a ‘heteronomous thinking’, where the other remains a radical exteriority. We have found ourselves so conveniently complacent with the contextualised world where we miss the signification of the transcendence of this pure exposure of exteriority solicited through the other in proximity. For, the appeal of exteriority is truth (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, TI, 291). Overcoming one’s deafness to such musings of the excedence of exteriority is the way forward to the meaning of being. “Exteriority,” Levinas argues, “is not a negation, but a marvel” (TI, 292). The excellence of exteriority is this dimension of its height; its provocation and signification without submitting to ontological structures of being and power. This has to be attended at every walk of human life with patience and penury in being, where one heeds to the voice of the voiceless coming from the other shore of human existence in a world of cut-throat competition and manipulation transgressing all values and human Goodness and the humanity in the humans. Humanisation of social life, I argue, is made

possible in such an ethical awakening to the other as a ‘curvature of the intersubjective space’ that expresses the inter-human realm where the other is placed above and higher than the self. ‘The curvature of the intersubjective space’ is the most telling truth about the irreducibility of the other that permits the pluralism of the society (TI, 291).

This paper is an attempt at reversing the traditional understanding of the question of meaning and being attached to life in reference to the question of the other. In delineating the meaning of being, i.e., we discuss the meaning of subjectivity in re-discovering the ethical meaning of ‘meaning’ as presented in the ethical transcendence of Levinasian philosophy. In order to attain the scope of this paper I engage Levinas’s ethical appeal; he makes a polemical critique of the traditional Western understanding the subject. This is done from a critique of the Western philosophical tradition that assured the clarion call of reason; although Levinas distances from the traditional slumber of dogmatism, he does not do away with the insight of philosophy itself, rather he overcomes it by reinventing and reversing the terms of traditional ontological thinking from a heteronomous thinking over autonomous thinking. Levinas, in reversing the meaning of the traditional ways of philosophy, finds the sense and meaning of human existence beyond the traditional humanism that were not sufficiently human enough. In reconsidering humanism beyond its crisis Levinas comes to argue for an ethical humanism that speaks of a non-violent relation with the other, i.e., the other in proximity “arrests and paralyses my violence by his call, which does not do violence” (TI, 291). Encountering the other without allergy is a way of being beyond being (TI, 301); hence, for Levinas, “transcendence or goodness is produced as pluralism” (TI, 305). The ethical hermeneutics of Levinas explores on the ethical meaning of human sociality from the point of view of small Goodness as kindness towards other human beings encountered in everyday life which does not look for any logical approval. The solicitation of the good

is announced through the ethical encounter of the face to face relation beyond human cognition and comprehension.

## The Ethical Provocation

Postmodernity is a complex word having many meanings and layers of meaning and one must turn around to face the difference of the “miracle of exteriority” (FA 48). The turn to the other is quintessential turn of postmodernity itself. It is that turn, above all, that defines the intellectual as well as the ethical meaning of postmodernity.<sup>2</sup> In an age of complacencies one must turn around to face the other and, for Levinas, “transcendence is what turns its face toward us” (Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, EN, 34). The exteriority of the other is “the transcendence in the face of the other” (TI 24). The miracle of exteriority is that always which always solicits me, and draws me toward the other, yet the other doesn’t yield to possession, comprehension and assimilation. We have to rethink words such as “mutuality, reciprocity, equality, inclusivity, one-ness” to words such as “seperatness, asymmetry, difference, otherness, singularity, alterity” as “words of excess and beyond, of ‘excedence’ and ‘transcendence’ of *more than and other than*.”<sup>3</sup>

Levinas ethical appeal to the world does insist on the ethical transcendence of the radical exteriority of the other who comes to me in his/her face. He states it so brilliantly that no one can reduce it to a mere phenomenology of it. “The way in which the other presents himself,” writes Levinas, “*exceeding the idea of the other in me*, we here name face” (TI 50). The other always exceeds the self that thinks and the face is far more beyond appearance. No one ever could speak of it as an appearance for it does not give itself in appearance; and he says “that access to the face is straightaway ethical” (EI, 85). Levinas ethical hermeneutics opens vistas for re-thinking the meaning of subjectivity beyond the ontological structures of being and power founded in the idea of infinity (TI, 26).

## Overcoming Humanism, Not beyond Humans

Levinas develops a polemical critique of what he regards as the totalising<sup>4</sup> anti-humanistic ontology of Western philosophy, and in this he takes distance from his own masters, Husserl and Heidegger. This totalising move is explained in and through the theoretical structure of the ego that reduces the other to the same by appropriation and assimilation, and so does violence to the otherness of the other person (TI, 43). Levinas writes that “Greek ontology [...] expressed the strong sentiment that the last word is unity, the many becoming one, the truth as synthesis. [...] I am trying to work against this identification of the divine with unification or totality. Man’s relationship with the other is better as difference than as unity: sociality is better than fusion. The very value of love impossibility of reducing the other to myself, of coinciding in sameness” (FFL 22). This theoretical totalising of the other turns out to be aggressive and violent in practice, as one superimposes oneself over the other and claims to have higher significance by virtue of one’s racio-biological, or socio-cultural, or national status. Yet today’s avatars of violence on the basis of caste and religion are not so often related to biology alone; rather, they are varied and often in a kind of disguise, whether cultural, political, national, ethnic, or religious. Any such reduction and denial of the other, for Levinas, deprives the other of his or her irreducible transcendence.

In totalising relation to the other, there is no guaranteeing or appreciation of the otherness of the other as his/her difference, rather, it is a relationship in terms of reducing the otherness to his or her visibility. For Levinas “[y]ou turn yourself toward the Other as toward an object when you see a nose, eyes, a forehead, a chin, and you can describe them” (EI 85). Such an approach to the other in terms of knowledge and perception is unethical, and rather it is reductive. In noticing the color of the eyes and looking at the other in terms of the visibility is straightway a violent relation to the other. The other’s difference as his/her whoness cannot be assimilated into the same or of oneself, truly because, the other is different from the same due to the fact of

his/her alterity. What is the difference then: person *qua* persons are who's. In totalising relation, one misrecognises this whoness of someone in terms of what the other is. One can see that there is always an imperialist exclusion and elimination of the other, the outsider, at work in such relation.

Against this, Levinas argues that "the best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes! When one observes the colour of the eyes one is not in social relationship with the Other. The relation with the face can surely be dominated by perception..." (EI 85-86). In social relations, one is not driven by the fact of reducing the other, rather, is motivated by the ethico-social relations. But, Levinas argues that in objectivising relation with the other, namely, taking the "form" for one's "face" do violence to the otherness of the other. The "face" cannot be reduced to the "form" and it bursts opens the form. The first command unspoken from the "face", is "do not kill me" (TI 197), that is, 'do not reduce me to a form', or I am forbidden by the unspoken command not to reduce other's alterity to my own standard and thus mistreat him/her as a thing. The two foldness of this command speaks: do not reduce me to a form and respect me for who I am. I am invested with untransferable responsibility to regard and respect the other as a unique for "he is not under category" (TI, 69).

Ontological thinking, as the failure to appreciate the otherness of the other is the "reduction of the otherness of the other to the non-human-otherness of a totality, of a species in which otherness loses its singularity and is simply treated as one more of a kind" (TS, 180). The otherness of the other is defined here as the sum of the characteristics that render the other Other than me. Its otherness is relative when it is defined in terms of "for me". I take myself as being "this," and the otherness of the other is "not-this" being different from the same. The difference is approached as not of the same. It implies that the other is approached from a non-personal realm where the other person is not approached *qua* face but reduced to his/her visibility its "form", as having such and such characteristics and make them belong to a particular

caste, color, creed, race and the like different from the same and thus less/inferior to it. The other expects me to treat him as someone and as a “who” in her unique otherness. When such a demand from the other is not met or when I do not do this to the other, s/he feels that he is denied of his/her unicity. I am unique but you discriminate me for what I am/my visibility: “form”, “context”, “visage” etc. You reduce me to my appearance where you do violence to my difference. The face reveals an absolute alterity and when one fails to respond to this signification; one does violence to the otherness by treating the other as a relative other, hence fundamentalism, nationalism, fascism, etc.

The cunning of reason and the manifestation of violence concretises in the fascist identitarian politics as resoluteness of being, expressed from an “I think” to an “I can” and finally a “will-to-power.” The ego as sameness monopolises and imperialises everything under its tyrannical power and insists on its exploitation of reality (TI 47). Levinas, with his radical heteronomic philosophy, unravels an ethical metaphysics in order to reverse the terms of Western philosophy. This aim turns out to be the very nerve of his work *Totality and Infinity*, which he states is marked by “a non-allergic relation with alterity” (TI 47; CPP 53).

The other is approached in his or her radical alterity, which remains beyond his or her form. This ethical exigency is not ontological necessity but a moral command and beseeching of the other. Difference is the source of exclusion, but Levinas’s account of the ethical bodily subject stands beyond exclusion; for “*alterity makes difference*” (IRB 106). The other has a tribal link with no one. Metaphysical otherness, being a dimension of the other’s alterity, demands a radical separation and asymmetrical relation to the other in proximity, and this remains a true moment of the ethicization of the subject. The ethicization of the subject is not a matter of active affirmation but rather of the subject’s passive unconditioning. The subject as *conatus* – being-for-itself, crisis of humanism, in my view – is redefined in *Otherwise than Being* as a being-for-the-other as humanism of the other, which

is the fundamental structure of ethical subjectivity. For Levinas, then humanism is not simply placing human at the centre; it is specifically a focus on the other from a decentered subject. For “the very node of the subjective is knotted in ethics understood as responsibility” (EI, 95).

Humanism of the other would thus imply for Levinas, as one turning away from one’s ego toward the needs of the Other being affected by the other and from the other. Humanism of the human is at stake where one fails to heed to the radical transcendence of the other in proximity. Awakened by the proximity of the other, the self is radically altered, de-nucleated and fissured. To be a being-for-the-other is to be, as Levinas puts it, ‘*me voici*’ as a ‘here I am’ in the accusative passive rather than the nominative active; here the subject is fundamentally in its body as ‘ME’ and it is pre-original, anarchic, and older than every beginning’. Being is put into modes such as hostage, substitution, expiation, and for-the-other (OB 85).

The ethical provocation of Levinas challenges the rationale of any reductive thinking and cries for a new rationale for how to think of the other beyond categories of totalising anti-humanism. Totalising philosophies are uncannily anti-humanistic and ethically blind to the transcendent otherness of the other. Against this violent autonomy, Levinas holds that the ego is radically separated upon the entrance of the other, who resists totalisation and reduction; in this way, he challenges the egoism of the totalising subject; and the Other, as absolute otherness, is affirmed as a non-encompassable transcendence recalcitrant to objectifying thought. The radical exteriority of the other breaches totality (TI, 35). Levinas, here, in his radically heteronomic philosophy, unravels an ethical metaphysics in order to reverse the terms of Western philosophy that paves the way towards his ethical metaphysics as “first philosophy” (TI, 304). Such an ethics is not to be understood as traditional ontological ethics rather Levinas deliberates “to find its meaning” (EI, 90). Levinasian ethical hermeneutics, thus, understood, is a power



above all powers of the structural power of the world of reason and logic.

## **Ethics of Non-Violence: Power above Power**

“Politics left to itself,” writes Levinas, “bears tyranny within itself; it deforms the I and the other who have given rise to it, for it judges them according to universal rules, and thus *in absentia*” (TI, 300). When is politics left to itself? What is the dynamics of politics at all? Doesn’t the end of politics is turned round upon it’s own concerns. Politics is for the sake of its polis which would concern upon its polis. The well being of the citizens of a state is the end of politics. Politics, left to itself, ends up with unrelenting power and tyranny deforming the essence of it to its structural ways of administration, law, and procedures of power. The inherent danger or the potential danger of politics left to itself is turning down the system into a structure of power and governance that spreads through domination and violence. Ontological structure of power is always a force that suppresses the force which is more forceful than itself.<sup>5</sup> “Moral force, however, the proximity of the face-to-face, the height of destitution of the other’s face is the ever patient counterbalance to all powers of the world, including nuclear power. Moral force is not stronger than the powers of being and essence, the totalising, synthesising powers, it is better, and this is its ultimate strength” (EI 14).

Moral power as ethical force is a non-violence and that is a condition for the possibility of the other as the radical Other in his or her total vulnerability and ethical nudity before the ontological self of the modern subjectivity. “Radical alterity figures in Levinas’s thought not as a flaw, an ignorance, an obscurity, a childishness, a laziness or a deferral, but as the non-thematisable charge through which ethics commands. “What ought to be” – the subject’s response to the Other – relates to ‘what is’ – being, essence, manifestation, phenomenon, identity – not by some subtle or crude conversion into ‘what is’ but by haunting it, disturbing it, raising it to a moral height of which its is not

capable” (EI 12-13). The non-allergic relation to the other is made possible through an ethical encounter with the other in the face-to-face with “no ontological basis” (EI 13) for the other. In a world of ontological ethics and structural Goodness one cannot run the risk of overcoming oneself through radical alterity of the Other. One remains embedded to the ontological self-sameness as the subject of the same. Overcoming the ontological imperialist self would necessitate the fissuring of such a subject to an ethical incarnate subject as a being-for-the-other. A concrete instance of such an ethics of non-violent self would immediately take us to one of the life incidents of M. K. Gandhi.

When in the late 1930s the British colonial administrators asked Gandhi what he expected from his annoying non-violent agitation, the Mahatma replied that he expected the British would quit India. They quit India on their own because they would come to see they were wrong. Moral force is a scandal for ontological thinking, whether that thinking is gently attuned to being or imposing its subjective will. The power of ethics is entirely different from the power of identities, whether poetic or political, whether knowledge or administration.

.... Ethics is forceful not because it opposes power with more power, on the same plane, with a bigger army, more guns, a finer microscope or a grander space program, but rather because it opposes power with what appears to be weakness and vulnerability but is responsibility and sincerity. To the calculations of power, ethics opposes less than power can conquer. With their lathi sticks the British occupational police struck their opponents, hurt them dreadfully, but at the same time they were hitting their own injustice, their own inhumanity, and with each blow non-violently received were taught a moral lesson. No that they were necessarily taught a lesson: ethics is not ontology, it is not necessary, one can kill (EI, 13-14).

The ethical self-other relation which Levinas argues for is qualified as a relationless relation (TI, 192). This would

immediately call for a non-allergic relation with the other from the point of Other's absolute otherness. How can one establish a relation with a radical other who is wholly different and separate from the self? Addressing this challenge of inter-subjectivity at the level of sociality, Levinas argues that "the other is what I am not" arguing for the absolute transcendence of the other. Levinas says:

As if obedience were already being [*l' être*]" ; and, for Levinas, the meaning of sociality consists in the face that "calls out to me, a voice that arises within me before all verbal expression, in the mortality of the I, from the depth of my weakness. That voice is an order. I have the order to answer for the life of the other person. I do not have the right to leave him alone to his death (AT, 101-104).

This absolute inescapability of my being from the responsibility towards the other tears me down; I am innocently culpable for the mistakes that I have not committed. Subjectivity is placed in an inescapable situation of being for the other and this non-interchangeable/non-transferable responsibility is the essence of human existence.

### **Small Goodness (*la petite bonté*) above Structural Goodness**

In refiguring humanism Levinas considers the question of 'ethics as first philosophy', prior to ontology or epistemology; can such insistence contradict ethical relation itself for it precedes being and knowing. How can such a relation with the other human being be possible? Against all traditional ontologies Levinas argues that the essence of human being is not to be found in the genus as a substance rather the essence of human is to be in his/her responsibility and this essence precedes all ontological features. Such a responsibility remains prior to being and consciousness as the hallmark of the human being. This is marked with "goodness of everyday life" (AT 107). "Goodness invests me in my obedience to the hidden Good" (OB 118). This

is a “goodness without witness”, “goodness as kindness” and “it could be described as goodness without thought” (AT 108). The idea of the little Goodness or small Goodness is one that stands outside all structural and institutional systems of religion and social organisations. It is feeble and fragile. This survives all horrors of man brought about. “No matter how many horrors, atrocities, abominations, and evils man lets loose upon the world.”<sup>6</sup> Levinas considers this innocent Goodness that lies at the essence of man as the most human in man. This is beyond all the structures of being and thinking. It cannot be conceived from the frame of being and epistemology. No matter how clever one is; however, one does not get into the logic of this madness in human being.

All ontological structures can failingly account for such an original goodness. “The small Goodness is the most human thing there is in man. It defines man, despite its powerlessness. It is beautiful and powerless, like the dew” (AT 109). Levinas attempts to see the kernel of the meaning of humanism far beyond the traditional humanisms and contemporary anti-humanisms. Levinas considers the Goodness in human as the underlying construct of the humanity of the humans. Upon which he would argue for a humanism of the other human which does not disqualify the humanism rather he attempts to refigure the humanity of the humans beyond the logic of the traditional humanisms and anti-humanism. He argues that “[t]his saintliness of the human cannot be expressed on the basis of any category” (AT 109). Levinas argues:

Modern antihumanism, which denies the primacy of the human person, free and for itself, would have for the signification of being, is true over and beyond reason it gives itself. It clears the place for subjectivity positing itself in abnegation, in sacrifice, in a substitution which precedes the will. It inspired intuition is to have abandoned the idea of person, goal and origin of itself, in which the ego is still a thing because it is still a being. Strictly speaking, the other is the end; I am a hostage, a

responsibility and a substitution supporting the world in the passivity of assignment, even in accusing persecution which is undeniable. Humanism has to be denounced only because it is not sufficiently human” (OB 127-128).

Vassily Grossman in his *Life and Fate*<sup>7</sup> reads these words through his character:

Most of those beings who inhabit the earth do not take as a goal the definition of the good. In what does the good consist? The good is not in nature, and it is not in the preachings of the prophets, either, or in the great social doctrines, or in the ethics of the philosophers. But simple people bear in their hearts the love of all living thing; they love naturally; they protect life. [...] Thus there exists side by side with this so terrible greater good human kindness in everyday life. It is the kindness of the old lady who gives a piece of bread to a convict along the roadside. It is kindness of a soldier who holds his canteen out to a wounded enemy. The kindness of youth taking pity on old age, the kindness of the peasant who hides an old Jew to his barn (AT 108).

The ethical responsibility remains as an imperative to which I can ever say No. Why? One finds oneself woven in this ethical responsibility to and for the other. Levinas “reserve another word: *misericorde*, mercy, when one assumes responsibility for the suffering of another” (IRB, 146). This “responsibility is mercy”<sup>8</sup> as a longing to selflessly dedicate myself to the well being of the other as an ‘internal ought’ far beyond the structural Goodness as voluntary commitment for the other. This is far beyond, truly, for it is beyond any system and thought. To do more than oneself; i.e., “despite oneself” (OB, 51).

This ethical being of the self for the other becomes an optics that points towards the radical Other who solicits us from beyond as signification in proximity. The idea of mercy is “the phenomenon of love” (IRB, 146). “The little goodness going only from man to man, not crossing distances to get to the places where events

and forces unfold!” (IRB, 207). As Martha Nussbaum notes “the human world is held together by pity and fellow feeling.”<sup>9</sup> The little act of Goodness, however insufficient to address the needs of justice, remains imperishable. Though insignificant in the sight of the structural Goodness and social justice, acts of genuine Goodness and kind human acts of small Goodness crowns the humanity of the humans. Tender acts of love, acts of social charity, the politics of love, always supplants social justice. Mercy as responsibility for the other is ethical vocation of human being, the true refuge to the refugee that we are upon earth, a true relief to the overburdened, a soothing song to the afflicted, without which our world remains so impoverished. Humanity, without small Goodness, cannot be humanity. We remain human to each other in the shipwreck experience of life as we turn to be humane to one another. Friendship and fraternity can only be meaningful in this little act of Goodness that we extend to the other human person. As Levinas cites from Philip Nemo “Only the excess of beatitude will respond to the excess of evil” (GCM, 132). This small Goodness in human being is the innocent dew with which s/he flourishes in the human sociality as being-for-the-other.

## Conclusion

The idea of ‘small goodness’ as interpreted by Levinas from the insights of the novel *Life and Fate* remains the crux of the argument of this paper, i.e., the meaning of human existence – one’s relation to the other – is far beyond being, system and structure. A society that is completely dehumanised by the decay of all human values, failure of human relations, in such a social misery life seems unpredictable and worthless. There is a loss of human dignity and value, lack of respect for one another, an absolute despair and desolation of all human aspirations for meaning and being. Engendered by the traditional practical and noetic totalisation philosophy remains a point of no consolation. Rationalised behaviours and systems of power remain embedded in the magic of the mighty ones. There remains an impossibility

of Goodness in any system and social institution. No matter how good is the effort to bring about it, the monsterocity of the systemic evil subverts the good. The good has no records! Alas. No matter however the structural evil is, there is still a ray of hope. That's the humanity of humans! Nothing is more sublime and saintly than the humanness as manifested in the little Goodness of the everyday life. It is the Goodness without witness! One's bearing witness to the glory of the good that announces its height from above. The freshness of the human Goodness bears witness to the little one's across the globe who are last, least and the lost! This is the glory of the infinite incarnate in the human flesh as being-there-for-the-other. "The Other is what I am not. [...] The other is, [...] the weak and the poor, 'the widow and the orphan'" (TO, 83). An excess of small Goodness is the way of being fully human – a path toward human flourishing!

## Notes

1. "Being is exteriority:" writes Levinas, "the very exercise of its being consists in exteriority, and no thought could better obey being than by allowing itself to be dominated by this exteriority" (TI, 290). Although Levinas seems to return to the traditional metaphysics that has been already deconstructed by Heidegger, actually he does something more fundamental than what Heidegger has done it; that is what Derrida has described it as a 'semantic transformation' of traditional terms in Levinas's hands. He makes very definitive efforts after *Totality and Infinity* to overcome ontological language of presence that he attempts to overcome after Heidegger in a totally different spell, i.e., by way of '*palaeonymic displacements*,' where the ancient terms are repeated with a semantic transformation. Cf. Simon Critchley, "Prolegomena to Any Post-Deconstructive Subjectivity," in *Deconstructive Subjectivities*, ed. Simon Critchley and Peter Dews (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 43.
2. David Tracy, "Theology and the Many faces of Postmodernity," *Theology Today* 51 (1994), 104-114, 108.
3. Terry A. Veling, *For You Alone: Emmanuel Levinas and the Answerable Life* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 53-55.

4. There is both a noetic and practical totalization that happens at every level when philosophy that is taken to mean ontology. “Western philosophy has most often been this ontology, a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of the middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being” (TI, 43). In the economy of the self the ego tries to become what it is as a self-sufficient being where the ego strives to draw the world to itself through economic and practical totalization. In the noetic totalization the ego allows nothing to be outside its purview; nothing to be outside its rule, comprehensive knowing is a violence and power as it subdues every alterity into the self-sameness of the ego. “It is the determination of the other by the same” TI, 170).
5. Ontological power is a tyrannical power that totalizes everything under the despotic I who attempts to subjugate the other without killing, so that, in some way the other submits his/her freedom. Tyrannical forces always oppress the other to surrender their freedom by means of persuasion, brain washing, intimidation, bribery, moral violence, threat, physical assault and the like. Fascist forms of violence do remain at the height of such a totalizing I who imperializes the other. There is an enslavement of the other whereby the tyrant crushes the other by violence and hate. This is not only done in the practical level but it is all the more operative within the noetic structure of reducing the other to mere concepts disregarding the difference and alterity of the other. Representationalism is key to such violence of reason that play an important role in reducing the other to mere concepts. Levinas objects this theme of representation that remains central to his master Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology. Cf. Naud Van der Ven, *The Shame of Reason in Organizational Change – A Levinasian Perspective*, Issues in Business Ethics, Vol. 32, trans. David Bevan (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 100-110.
6. Pat J. Gehrke, “The Ethical Importance of Being Human: God and Human in Levinas’s Philosophy,” in *Philosophy Today* (Winter 2006, 428-436), 435.
7. Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate*, trans. Robert Chandler (London: Vintage Books, 2006)
8. Roger Burggraeve, *Each Other’s Keeper: Essay on Ethics and the Biblical Wisdom of Love* (Thrissur: Mary Matha Publication, 2009), 89-99.



9. Martha C. Nussubbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, 215.

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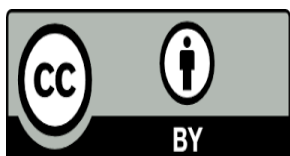
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