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The Non-Casual Responsibility as a priori of Human Condition

Annotation: The aim of the present essay is mainly to introduce Emmanuel Lévinas' thought of non-causal responsibility by examining the various phenomena to the point where Lévinas challenges the boundaries between ontology, phenomenology and ethics. The idea of „non-causal responsibility” in the works of E. Lévinas is not grounded on the principles of reciprocity, *dialogicality* and symmetry, because its interpretation seems to be, furthermore, a kind of exteriority of the event. The first question Lévinas asks himself in his research concerns the essence of ethics and *status quo* of asymmetric relation with Other. How does Other go beyond its own subjectivity and (*s'enracine*) roots himself in „entre-nous” space? The responsibility for the Other's otherness is the source of ethical attitude, as well as the destruction of subject's indifference before his face which is anchored in the ethical notion of „*souci*” (care). Responsibility, as a counter-metaphysical paradox, echoes *a priori* abyss between my own subjectivity and uniqueness of human dignity.

Key words: asymmetrical relation, „entre-nous” space, non-causal responsibility, Emanuel Lévinas, indifference, anti-dialogism, vain suffering, Other.

Bezprzyczynowa odpowiedzialność jako a priori ludzkiej kondycji

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego eseju jest przede wszystkim przedstawienie roli fenomenologii w myśli Emmanuela Lévinas'a o nieprzyczynowej odpowiedzialności poprzez zbadanie różnych zjawisk do tego stopnia, że Lévinas kwestionuje granice między ontologią, fenomenologią, etyką. Idea „nieprzyczynowej odpowiedzialności” w pracach E. Lévinas'a nie opiera się wyłącznie na zasadach wzajemności, dialogiczności i symetrii, ponieważ odpowiedzialność, w konsekwencji, staje się interpretacją interpretacją ta opisem zewnętrznych zdarzeń i zjawisk. Pierwsze pytanie, które Lévinas podejmuje w swoich badaniach, dotyczy opcji etycznej odnośnie do esencji i *status quo* relacji asymetrycznej z Innym. Jak Inny wykraczając poza własną subiektywność pozwala podmiotowi zakorzenić się w „przestrzeni między nami 'entre-nous'”? Odpowiedzialność za inność Innego jest źródłem postawy etycznej, a także zniszczenia obojętności podmiotu w jego obliczu, co jest zakotwiczone w etycznym pojęciu „*souci*” (troska). Odpowiedzialność, jako paradoks kontrmetafizyczny, odzwiercied-

la a priori między moją własną podmiotowością a wyjątkowością ludzkiej godności Innego. **Słowa kluczowe:** nieprzyczynowa odpowiedzialność, relacje asymetryczne, anty-dialogizm, Inny, Emanuel Lévinas, próżne cierpienie, strach, obojętność.

Беспричинная ответственность как априори истины человечества

Аннотация: Цель этого эссе - в первую очередь приблизить мысль Эммануила Левинаса о беспричинной ответственности, исследуя различные явления до того, что Левинас оспаривает границы между онтологией, феноменологией и этикой. Идея «беспричинной ответственности» в работах Э. Левинаса не основана на принципах взаимности, диалога и симметрии, потому что ее интерпретация, по-видимому, является, в первую очередь, своего рода внешним характером этого события. Первый вопрос, который Левинас задает себе в своих исследованиях, касается сущности этики и существующего положения асимметричных отношений с Другим. Как Другой выходит за пределы своей собственной субъективности и (*serasine*) укореняется в пространстве «между нами»? Ответственность за инаковость Другого является источником этического отношения, а также разрушения безразличия субъекта в его глазах, которое закреплено в этическом понятии «*souci*» (беспокойство). Ответственность как контр-метафизический парадокс априори отражает разрыв между моей субъективностью и уникальностью человеческого достоинства.

Ключевые слова: асимметричное отношение, «между нами» пространство, беспричинная ответственность, Эммануэль Левинас, безразличие, анти-диалогизм, тщетные страдания, Другой.

„Philosophy is a bringing to light”¹

Bringing to light focuses attention beyond all possible obscurity and unveils an invisible voice of lost memory, where the last voice „opens an responsiveness without reciprocity”². Lévinas’s ranging beyond violence or forgetfulness of relational intersubjectivity describes the *souci* (care) of thinker’s existence challenging destructive *entrelacs* (tracery) of reciprocity, *dialogicality* and symmetry. The history of humanity extends a summary of the contents of symmetrical ethics’, called otherwise „boomerang principle”. The „boomerang principle” or „common coinage” is a method for searching a cause-effect relationship, and measuring correlation and symmetry. One of the most evident example comes when we read Confucian golden altruistic rule command „Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you”. This passage finds its analogical idea in Christ’s second love commandment „Love your neighbor as yourself”. Relying on quintessential Kantian ethical ‘Maxima’ „Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” where the premise of categorical imperative entails a symmetrical relation. This fascination with symmetrical principle „I do for you and you do for me” we can read also in philosophical essay „I and Thou” of Martin Buber. These historical traces of ethical reciprocity between my-self and

¹ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, tr. M. B. Smith-B. Harshav, Columbia University Press, New York 1998, p. 52.

² S. Krämer, *Die ‘Rehabilitierung der Stimme’. Über die Oralität hinaus*, [in:] Doris Kolesch/Sybille Krämer (Hg), *Stimme*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p 284.

other-self involve Lévinas to revise the panorama of ethical credibility. The philosopher relentlessly begins to discover the lack of „self-less-ness” in the most benign questions of human relationships. The existing ontological egoism seems to dominate the destiny of human being. From this point „Lévinas directly links a drama of destiny with ‘invaded’ by everything that is not ‘authentic’ civilization where ‘the expansion of a force’ and the fear ‘to escape from’ self”³ endorses *status quo* of ethical slavery. It is an observation of growing importance that Lévinas decides to leave the logic of reciprocity and maintains to live the radicality and the asymmetry of the ethical relation. He begins to associate himself with the ethics of the voice of Other. The Other reveals no-mine-ness, consequently, other-no-mine-ness of otherness-without-me-self-ness of Other. At the same time the „The central task of Lévinas’s work, in his words, is the attempt to describe a relation with the other person that cannot be reduced to comprehension. He finds this proof in what he famously calls the ‘face-to face’ relation”⁴, which embodies assymetrical irreciprocity of Other-beyond-reciprocal symmetry.

The same idea, shaped in another sense, will be consistent with the opinion of Zygmunt Bauman, who indicates: „Morality does not require reciprocity. My moral commitment should one step ahead of your commitment (...) morality is a state of chronic uncertainty. The moral does not consist in swearing fidelity to a code, but in the responsibility for the other people. The most important feature of this responsibility is unconditionality. Morality is an order (obligation), but unannounced one. I know that I am guilty, but nobody told me why am I”⁵. Overcoming a sort of altruistically „adiophorising” *par excellence* (morally indifferent) relation, Bauman makes the point in terms of incompatibility of self-justification with an ethical Lévinasian dialogue of responsibility for the other and most tellingly, because the asymmetry between the „I” and „You” constitutes then an irreconcilable ‘abyssality’ of differences.

Toward an inapparent responsibility

In the present research, the key concept focuses on so-called „non-causal responsibility” which is ‘ungraspable’ by any causality and remains intact and indifferent to what it exteriorly conditions. The close parallel is anticipated in Old Testament, wherein Jewish tradition interpretes „Cain’s responsibility of choice” by question: „What was it that Cain said to Abel? And Cain said to Abel ‘Let us go outside’. Many of the translations fill in this blank with „It is outside, where there are no witnesses, is no cover or protection, that Cain kills Abel [...] Most of us, upon being asked, „Is Cain responsible for the killing of Abel?” would respond with an emphatic „Yes.” And if we were asked why we think so, most of us would say, „He is responsible because he committed the action.” The responsibility that Lévinas seeks to articulate, however, is not causal, but ethical”⁶. The ethical dimension of

³ S. Hant, *Emmanuel Lévinas*, Routledge, London-New York 2009, p. 29.

⁴ The Cambridge Companion to *Lévinas*, (eds. S. Critchley-R. Bernasconi), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, p.8.

⁵ S. Bauman, *We are afraid of freedom and dream of a community*. Interview for the *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19.01.2013. Reference of O. Radimsky in: <https://zbruc.eu/node/2318> (last access 12.06.2019).

⁶ C. E. Katz, *Lévinas, Judaism, and the Feminine. The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca*, Indiana University

responsibility traces Lévinas as the „philosopher of ethics” and the „sole moralist of contemporary thought, more-over ‘ethics occurs ‘prior’ to essence and being”⁷.

However, we must keep in mind the unconventional Lévinasian approach in construction of cause-effect relationships within genesis of separated concepts. For example, the primordial fault calls forth the principle of responsibility, which makes possible guilty to be responsible for his deeds beyond the limits of constituted subject, according limitless responsibility. What Lévinas wants us to see in the responsibility for other is not that other is absent in phenomenality of appearance, but rather other is inapparent in the horizon of his phenomenization by self. Paul Ricoeur reading Lévinas’ „Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence” writes: „Le prochain comme *autre* ne se laisse précéder d’aucun précurseur qui dépeindrait ou annoncerait sa silhouette. *Il n’apparaît pas*. Le prochain me concerne sans apparaître. C’est ce „sans apparaître” qu’on n’a jamais fini de Dire”⁸. Ricoeur refers to Lévinasian ‘Saying’ of/about/from responsibility which manifests other and his language beyond ‘Said’ of phenomenality. Lévinasian paralyzing passivity restructurizes perception of his radical responsibility when he acknowledges: „Since I am responsible even for the Other’s responsibility”⁹. Fragment of Doskoyevsky’s „The Brothers Karamazov” makes advantage for this *de-gocentric* ethical responsibility of Lévinas’ *de-alter-ego-ism* of Other: „We are all guilty all and for all men before all, and I more than the others”¹⁰.

The responsibility issues us with radical non-casual ethical exteriority since it is distinguished from cognitive function of ethics. There is an abyss in which Lévinas measures his conception of ethics over ontology, *témoignage* (testimony) over dialogue, fraternity over equality, self-sacrifice over reciprocity¹¹.

The untranslatable ‘beyond’

In Lévinas, we disclose the connections between thinker’s philosophical project and existential context of his personal challenges. Affected by diversity of national, cultural, philosophical belongings as well as tragical violences of the 21st century, his vital coordinates can’t be fixed on the page of written life path. The dead voice of/about biographical Lévinasian pages comes later then another other of *ex-(de)-self* of philosopher’s living mortal *phoné* (voice). Stated otherwise, we hear *mi-voix* (middle voice) of Lévinasian interval between Husserl and Heidegger. Lévinas reveals the influence of two non-symmetrical faces of philosophy who have paved his way from phenomenology, through ontology and towards ethics. The French thinker describes the encounter of the „in-between-ness” among Freiburg’s philosophers in the following form (*manière*):

Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2003, p. 101.

⁷ E. Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity. Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, tr. A Cohen, Duquesse University Press, Pittsburgh 1985, VIII, p. 9.

⁸ P. Ricoeur, *Autrement. Lecture d’Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence d’Emmanuel Lévinas*, PUF, Paris 1997, p. 21-22.

⁹ E. Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity. Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, p. 99.

¹⁰ E. Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity. Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, p. 98.

¹¹ N. Grynchshyn, *Moral responsibility of the person in the ethical concept of Emanuel Lévinas*. Author’s abstract for the receiving PhD in philosophy / Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Kyiv 2009, 1-16.

„I went to see Husserl and I found Heidegger”¹². In landmark studies entitled „The Theory of Intuition in Husserl’s Phenomenology” (1930) and „Martin Heidegger and Ontology” (1932), Lévinas „broke out of things” under the inspiration of idea of ‘phenomenological reduction’. Focusing on the meaning of „now” that confirms its aliveness, Lévinas finally selects Heidegger as source of authority for existential orientation of ontology. Heidegger determines more persuasively for Lévinas the philosophical and vital principles of human being, whereas Husserl’s phenomenological method was imprisoned at walls of university academic environment. Consequently, Heidegger’s personal involvement with National Socialism in 1933 and bringing to prominence of being over impartiality of goodness results a certain return to a phenomenological „Un-Saying” of things. As a result, Lévinas rejects the predominant primacy of ontology in philosophical discourse and protects ethical voice as immemorial trace ‘entre-nous (among us)’ of social experience with the primacy of authentic communication between us and social experience: „To understand being as being is to exist in this world (...) The whole man is ontology [...] To think is no longer to contemplate, but to be engaged, merged with what we think, launched – the dramatic event of being-in-the-world”¹³.

After a certain period of reorientation, Lévinas becomes an independent thinker. He accomplished in 1948 the work entitled „Time and the Other” reaching out to „the other” in view to replace the status of „being”. This future infinity of other beyond being finds its announcement in his doctoral dissertation „Totality and Infinity” (1961). Following the premises of the mentioned book, philosopher ceases to depart himself from the idea of the subject, but accomplish the idea of the Other.

The French thinker overthrows the Heidegger’s obsession with Being of *Dasein*, ontology of facticity and replaces them with ‘merely’ derivation of goodness. In fact, Plato’s concept of the *agathon* presents to Lévinas a counterweight to Heidegger’s ‘es gibt’ (there is) a new *commencement* (beginning) according to the sequence *Ethics precedes ontology*. Lévinas’s argumentation in favour of the ethics perceives the Plato’s order of Good (*Bonum*): *The Good is beyond Being (to agathon epekeina tês ousias)*¹⁴ It seems that re-foundation of approaches provides the author of „Totality and Infinity” for a phenomenology of Good constitutive of Other in metaphysical ethics of responsibility. We can’t forget Lévinas for not-being-forgiven of (by) *Dasein* which realizes the path towards its own mortality. We can forgive Lévinas for forgetfulness of being of *Dasein* replaced later by notions of ‘face’ and ‘appeal’. Prior to heideggerian being, Lévinas acknowledges, that face-to face relation precedes even the creation of the world. Taminioux briefly turns to Lévinasian „Totality and Infinity”, which does justice to heideggerian „Being and Time” (1927). Lévinas writes the following introduction to the German translation of „Totality and Infinity”: „This book which wants and feels to be of a phenomenological inspiration proceeds from a long frequentation of Husserl’s texts and from paying a ceaseless attention to „Sein und Zeit” [...]. That „ceaseless attention” that Lévinas paid to „Being and Time” as he was preparing „Totality and Infinity”. The word „ceaseless” not only suggests that a debate with Heidegger thoroughly pervades Lévinas’ book but

¹² S. Hand, *Emmanuel Lévinas*, p. 12.

¹³ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 2-3.

¹⁴ J. Taminioux, *The Presence of Being and Time in Totality and Infinity*, in: *Lévinas in Jerusalem: Phenomenology, Ethics, Politics, Aesthetics*, (ed. J. Hansel), Springer, Dordrecht 2009, p. 13.

also that the debate at stake had already occurred in Lévinas' work before the publication of „Totality and Infinity”¹⁵. Consequently, Lévinas places the Good beyond heideggerian formula 'Being is beyond beings'. Recently we have seen an attempt of Jacques Derrida to deconstruct two resounded 'maxima' of Good and Being. He notices that *nunc et hoc* of „'beyond' being and good” calls us to witness indissolubility of relation between Being and Other: „If to understand being is to be able to let be (that is to respect Being in essence and existence, and to be risible for one respect) that the understanding of being always concerns alterity, and par excellence the alterity of the Other in all its originality: one can have to let be only that which one is not. If Being is always to let be, the Being is indeed the other of thought”¹⁶. In order to deconstruct the ideas of heideggerian being and Lévinasian good of Other, Derrida realizes 'beyond' of cinder: „the cinder is nothing that can be in the world, nothing that remains as an entity [étant]. It is the being [l'être], rather, that there is – it is a name of the being that there is there but which, giving itself (*es gibt* ashes), is nothing, remains beyond everything that is (*konis epekeina tes ousias*), remains unpronounceable to make saying possible while it is nothing”¹⁷.

Confronting the personal dramas and following the call of Good, Lévinas attempts to define the nature of ethics as non-symmetrical relation. The relationship between me and others is possible when both resist the appetite of absorbing totality „We”. Lévinas at the end of 'Is Ontology fundamental?' illustrates the hunger as a sign „belonging to the field of physiology, (but) the famine of another – to ethics. This asymmetry constitutes actually an ethical attitude”. According thinker, at the heart of European ethics we find two cornerstones, namely, biblical commandements and principles of Greek justice. Their guidelines are closely intertwined and forme an 'inseparable unity' which may be simply erased when the boundaries between two traditions are established by the third independent institution: a court.

To have recourse to the coherence of Lévinas methodological rightness, we must seek the promises *vis-à-vis* each key concept as the possible perspective of ethical promise to admit. As such, Lévinas remains often a hostage of his confirmative denials. In particular, the thinker believes that „*entre-nous* space” constitutes the main ethical subject without necessary intervention of individuals. If we insist, for example, on making some efforts to idealize dialogue as the ground for ethical attitudes, then, we must be conscious, according, Lévinas of real threat of „intellectual violence”. This is precisely the target of his critical perception of Buber's understanding of the value of dialogue, which, as Lévinas interpretes, is grounded on the principle of reciprocity. Aware of maintaining diachrony and inevitable distance, Lévinas disapproves the naturalization of relations. The radicality of asymmetrical reciprocity between me and other precedes any practice of power's usurpation and, as a result, philosopher marks the means to overcome human egoism. The idea of Plato, hegelian concept of individuality, as well as Heidegger's 'Seyn' (beynd) include the threat of generalization, neutrality, personlessness in order to reduce personal, distinct, concrete, and defenseless existence. Or to put it differently, what is at stake of Lévinas' asymmetrical relation is ability to read the

¹⁵ J. Taminaux, *The Presence of Being and Time in Totality and Infinity*, p.3.

¹⁶ J. Derrida, *Derrida and Feminism. Recasting the Question of Woman*, (ed. E. Feder, M. Rawlinson, E. Zakin), Routledge, New York-London 1997, p. 199.

¹⁷ J. Derrida, *Cinders*, tr. N. Lukacher, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1991, p. 73.

nature of the ethical in key of religious consciousness. Let us exemplify the face of the Other as a method of epiphany of God's manifestation. The deepest category of human communication with Other (God, world) is ensured not by dialogue, but within 'testimony' represented by the formula *Me voici* (here I am). That is the way to disclose the different multileveled-ness and inequivalences of I - You asymmetrical distribution of reciprocity.

The passage from ethics to social democratic space

It is significant not to lack a proper name of worthy ideas related to the humanization of the social nature of man. Lévinasian quest for the source of ethical attitude attempts to name a structuring themes of I - Other relation concerning: dedication-to-another, anxiety for others, self-sacrifice, responsibility for another, breaking of indifference, vocation to exist-for-another, the unselfishness of being beyond-oneself-for-another. By excluding the symmetry in relationships, the French thinker rejects my touch with other, but in advance he frames the relation 'I on the path towards Other'. Lévinas doesn't pretend to identify the phenomena of erotic relation with an ethical dimension while the symmetrical reciprocity announces its possibility as a structure of I and non-ego. Couples are not male-female relationships where the modality 'one has another' can't be ethical. By symmetrical relationship of man with regard to woman, the other is native, closed, comprehensible. Other is always „en route" (on path) towards 'Vous' (you) rather 'Tu' (you), because he is far more estranged from the „I" than Buber's „Tu". The inter-encounter of their meeting starts behind the curtains of reduction where the place of insideness is inaccessible. Nothing is stranger than the other, who in his grammatical declination, ethically impose himself closer to third single person 'he' than to secondary single person 'you'. In this tension, ethics loses its normative privilege of science with appropriated normativity of rules, insufficiently addressed to the absolute otherness of another, conceived as transcendent in its essence¹⁸.

The trace of Other precisely imposes a light of reciprocity in front of radical otherness. Approaching Husserl's phenomenological tradition conceived as interpretation of the Other, the sense of world itself must be bracketed, because its being is relative to the sense. Lévinas suggests forgetting all those habitual knowledge of the Other, which we possess and remind, notably the Other is identical to us, but not identifying us.

Other is 'word-less-ness', 'nature-less-ness', beyond all seductions of conceptual categorization. The identification of other remains inherently disassociated from its nature, nationality, ethos, social engagement or career. This lack of linguistic identity makes reference to the *infans* (from *infari*, speechless other) and exerts a claim of St. Augustine's *Confessions* (397 AD) „Non enim eram infans, qui non farer, sed iam puer loquens eram" (I was non longer an infant who does not speak, but a speaking child). Approaching to essentiality of Other, his uniqueness rests unattained within an „intolerable primacy". All we can say about the Other concern other's otherness, which independantly somehow defines, affects my self, keeping possible attainableness to my life. With the Other, I live by a constant infinite relation: „The other in itself contains a paradox: he is otherly different, like me, but he is closely similar to me in otherness and different in peculiarity

¹⁸ D. Gerasymenko, *The idea of a civil society: (I. Kant and E. Lévinas)*. Author's abstract for the receiving PhD in philosophy /M. Drahomanov's Pedagogical University, Kyiv 2017, 1-19.

[...] The breed to live other closes two boundaries: other can never identify itself in „us“ and reach the complete differentiation «between us»¹⁹. Consequently, we can understand the essence of the Other only when we exclude him the space of social determinations and insert him in the horizon of ethical responsibility. Lévinas involves the establishment of „non-intentional consciousness“ to demonstrate that primary consciousness is not „consciousness of something“ or intertwined with any objectiveness. Reflexivity, deprived of concrete existential certainty by the care of another, becomes a source of moral self-consciousness. The French philosopher believes that our relationship with Other is not limited in desire to understand him. Other’s influence upon us begins more early, notably before the moment when it became for us conceptual, existent and valuable as such. From the very beginning, the Other appears in front of me as „Face“. The commandment of Face enforces my responsibility, because I am responsible for its otherness, which that appears before me according „exacting defenselessness“. The transformation of essence into concept reduces common point conditioned by a semantic class. For example, if a judge replies to the accusations of accused, any referring sort of communication between them *a priori* is reciprocally impossible. Instead, „It is this presence for me of a being identical to itself that I call the presence of the face. The face is the very identity of a being; it manifests itself it in terms of itself, without a concept”²⁰. The face of other isn’t my a simple possibility in front of another face but nowise resembles the interlocutor who, apparently, speaks in front of me, in staying outside the context of the world, in his strange nakedness. Lévinas goes on to say: „as an interlocutor, he faces me; and, properly speaking, only the interlocutor can face, without „facing“ meaning hostility or friendship. The face as de-sensibilization, as de-materialization of the sense datum, completes the still encumbered movement in the figures of mythological monsters in which the body, or the animal half-body, allows the evanescent expression on the face of the human head they bear to break through”²¹.

While some of the intuition asserts the relation between me and other, there is voice of a third person, participating of/in our touch of justice, which should precede the responsibility. It is necessary, however, to valorize the moment when philosophy performs the effort of the theoretical interpretation of justice²². The modification of comparison and of what is basically not comparable, obeys the incomparableness in his attribute of uniqueness. What makes philosophy remarkable is the unity of wisdom and *caritas*, acquainted with „burden“ of face’s comparison. The Justice represents a certain measure of cruelty, which is inevitable for justice and clarification of limits of responsibility. Therefore, responsibility in the Lévinas’ intention exercises its potentiality in the world of citizens, obedient under State’s judge regulation. The relations of responsibility should be mediated by the institutions of citizenship, which dictate not-being of face-to-face relations: „dialogue is called to play a privileged role in the work of social justice, but dialogue cannot resemble the intimate society and it is not the emotion of love that constitutes it. Law takes precedence over charity. In this sense, too, man is a political animal”²³.

¹⁹ A. Yampolskaya A., *Emmanuel Lévinas: Philosophy and Biography*, Dukh I Litera, Kyiv 2011.

²⁰ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 33.

²¹ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 33.

²² J. Tischner, *Extract from the book Inny. Eseje o spotkaniu*», „Gazeta Wyborcza“ (10.03. 2017), in: <https://zbruc.eu/node/64678> (last access 12.06.2019).

²³ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 23.

The background of another person explains my peculiar instance of moral commitment and the source of my responsibility: „I am recalled to a responsibility never contracted, inscribed in the face of an Other. Nothing is more passive than this prior questioning of all freedom.”²⁴ My responsibility for the Other is not necessarily a conscious free choice, but a *a priori* condition. Therefore, the basis to define „I” hides behind my ability to be responsive responsible for the Other. We understand the notion of responsibility in check by the modes of substance in Descartes. The mode of material substance according to Descartes reveals length and spiritual thinking which bring up the impossibility of extent body, likewise unthinkable subject beyond his ability to respond (for-to-of) the Other. I can't pretend to understand the status of a subject without targeting the Other. My responsibility for the Other refers not only to help him, but rather recover the ability to form and distinguish other as a subject. We find a similar account of event closed to God's election of Israel, notably in the history of resistance who constitutes the meaning of my being: „to be” I which „is always to have one more responsibility»: „I am recalled to a responsibility never contracted, inscribed in the face of an Other. Nothing is more passive than this prior questioning of all freedom. It must be thought through with acuity. Proximity is not a consciousness of proximity. It is an obsession which is not an over-enlarged consciousness, but counter-consciousness, reversing consciousness,“²⁵. We can witness that our actions are never „innocent” and isolated from their own undesirable and unpredictable consequences. However, we are responsible for all those „traces” that were unwittingly abandoned on the map of reality. The relation to other seems to express some sort of „game which on a plain covered with snow, runs in a straight line from the hunch of hunters and leaves precisely those traces that will cause it to perish. So, we are responsible for the other aspect of our intentions. From the point of view guiding the action, it is impossible to prevent the act from being neglected²⁶”. An illustrative example of the unconditional and non-causal nature of personal responsibility can be read in New Testament parable of Good Samaritan, who answers by the mouth of Christ to the question of a Jewish scribe: „Who is my neighbor?”. From this point of view, the merciful Samaritan cannot be responsible for robbing anyone. A priest and a Levite who are passing by, show a legal notion of responsibility. What can oblige a person to act according the example links to the hospitality of good Samaritan like in a parable? Lévinas believes that I am responsible in the face of the Other, even if I am not guilty of those misfortunes that have happened to him. The sense of guilty is born of responsibility for the Other, which is ahead of the existence of real guilt. This attitude to responsibility gives birth to my, so-called 'non-memorable past', which has never been an experience of my present. Man is responsible for his neighbor always, not because he belongs to a certain community, independently of biological or conceptual compatibility. An example of non-deterministic responsibility we find in Old Testament story, of the first fratricide of Abel by Cain: „Instead of equality, which implies the equality of human nature, E. Lévinas brings forth brotherhood as the main principle of ethics. I become a neighbour to my little brother at a time when I cease to ask who is his watchman while the answer is known to me in advance,“²⁷.

²⁴ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 58.

²⁵ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 58.

²⁶ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 5-7.

²⁷ A. Yampolskaya, *Emmanuel Lévinas: Philosophy and Biography*, p. 314.

As a result, responsibility seems to postulate its existential perspective of *a priori* status. At this aspect, its prerequisite constitutes the limits of my subjectivity and the level of human dignity. I do not choose the situation of my responsibility, just as I do not control the fact of my neighbor's approach according the question of freedom: „I am recalled to a responsibility never contracted, inscribed in the face of an Other. Nothing is more passive than this prior questioning of all freedom. It must be thought through with acuity. Proximity is not a consciousness of proximity. It is an obsession which is not an overenlarged consciousness, but counterconsciousness, reversing consciousness. It is an event that strips consciousness of its initiative”²⁸. Human subjectivity, interpreted as free person, is one who accepts the need to recognize the fact that I, in comparison with my neighbors, always have one responsibility more, since I am always responsible for his responsibility towards me.

Reflections on the nature of responsibility in E. Lévinas are framed by the existential experience of the human rights' tragedies in the twentieth century, „which, during thirty years, survived two world wars, right and left totalitarianism, Hitlerism and Stalinism, Hiroshima, Gulag, genocides of Auschwitz and Cambodia”²⁹. These reflections are the source of the motive for the acute experience of the 'useless suffering' situation, which was generated by a painful reason to be excluded from possible ethical dimension. Throughout human history, the whole nations have been destroyed to conquest the power or the wealth. The Nazis killings regulates destruction for the sake of destruction and cultivation of absolute evil without any admixtures of excuses. In the philosophy of E. Lévinas we read the actual warning for the challenges of humanity in 21st century that addresses to the situation of defending the boundaries of Ukrainian identity and the integrity of the state. Indeed, the inspiration for the tradition of dignity leads us to declare with Lévinas, that: „humanity of those who suffer is overwhelmed by the evil that rends it, otherwise than by non-freedom: violently and cruelly, more irremissibly than the negation that dominates or paralyzes the act in non-freedom. What counts in the non-freedom or the submission of suffering is the concreteness of the *not*, looming as an evil more negative than any apophantic *not*. This negativity of evil is probably the source or kernel of all apophantic negation. The *not* of evil, a negativity extending as far as to the realm of un-meaning”³⁰.

Conclusion

As a result of our research, we tried to explore Lévinasian primarily concerns and 'philosophical perspective in front of opened by permanent excess the ethics of responsibility. Lévinas' claims about the care and fear for the life and death of another person make the sublime in 'between space'. The fear of another person is not grounded on disturbing external forces, but inserts the refusal of danger in front of Other's transcendence, which recognize the source of my own self. The source of humanity strikes the ability to transform fear into the life of a neighbor, avoiding the ubiquitous fear for myself. Humanity is rooted in the ability to fear injustice more than death and pursues me to realize my vocation by an 'existing-for-another'. In relations with Other(s), there

²⁸ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 58.

²⁹ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 91-101.

³⁰ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 92.

is always a latent possibility of self-sacrifice. The source of human is the 'dedication-to-another, the overcoming of indifference, the creation of a situation for the possibility of one-to-one: „The interhuman, properly speaking, lies in a non-indifference of one to another, in a responsibility of one for another, but before the reciprocity of this responsibility, which will be inscribed in impersonal laws, comes to be superimposed on the pure altruism of this responsibility inscribed in the ethical position of the / **qua** / . It is prior to any contract that would precisely specify the moment of reciprocity"³¹. Therefore, the ethical and philosophical guidance, interpersonal perspective of responsibility for another person, reveal the principles of asymmetry, anti-dialogism and uncertainty in view to acquire the state of peace with Other.

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³¹ E. Lévinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking-of-the-Other*, p. 100.