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question Honneth himself tries hard to answer in the above-mentioned new postscript. Sartre can simply point to the Hegelian insight that the individual who has experienced objectification will struggle to recover her status as a subject by in turn objectifying the other. Consequently, and unlike Honneth, Sartre understands social order as inherently conflictual, making it hard to imagine a stabilized and harmonious arrangement of mutual recognition that is not continually challenged and transformed (pp. 104-105).

The relationship between recognition and autonomy, then, does not seem as self-evident as Honneth at times suggests. If Sartre’s phenomenological analysis of the negativity and asymmetry of identificatory and objectifying processes of recognition is at all plausible, it strongly tells against recognition being based on a non-distorting perception of—or adequate response to—qualities of persons and unambiguously ensuring individual autonomy. On the other hand, it is not clear how the justification of (moral) claims to recognition has to be understood: is it a matter of (evaluative) perception, which is supposed to provide the moral agent with reasons directly, or rather a matter of argument with and justification to relevant others? As seems to be the case with the struggle for recognition, then, the theory of recognition is not about to come to a standstill. In particular the relations between the cognitive and the normative dimensions of recognition and between its freedom-enhancing and its conformity-imposing effects clearly need more discussion—a discussion Honneth fortunately seems ready to carry on.

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Emmanuel Levinas has been emerging as the most important voice in moral theory in Continental Europe in the twentieth century. While no satisfactory grasp of his thought can be gained without studying his two masterworks, *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, there are many glimpses of his radical approach to ethics in the many essays and smaller books that he published in his lifetime.

The three essays by Levinas that make up the bulk of this text were published separately in France between 1964 and 1970 and then gathered together by him into a book with a new foreword in 1972. They have been previously published in English in a collection of articles by Levinas, translated and edited by Alphonso Lingis: *Emmanuel Levinas: Collected Philosophical Papers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987) and the most substantial of these essays was also reprinted in a revised version of Lingis’s translation, with copious footnotes, in Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 33-64. However, in his introduction to the present volume, Richard A. Cohen explicates some of the subtle
differences that the two translations evince. For her part, the translator acknowledges the inevitable reshaping that any translation brings to the thought of so intricate a writer as Levinas. There may well be value, then, in having a new rendering of these texts and in a form more akin to the original French publication.

Of considerable value in the introduction is the situating of Levinas's thought in the context of a debate within European thought between humanism and anti-humanism. This debate was crystallized in an exchange in Davos in 1929 between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger at which Levinas was present (and in which he was to play a minor role critical of Cassirer which he was later to regret). The dispute between the two great German thinkers was ostensibly over their respective interpretations of Kant. Cassirer took the more traditional view of Kant as having theorized the creative role of human intellect in the production of knowledge and of culture so as to empower reason in its enlightenment role. Heidegger, in contrast, appropriated Kant's thought to highlight the role of imagination. Insofar as man is situated and 'thrown' into a worldly and historical existence, his productive imagination is an expression of his context with the role of reason demoted to that of editor, as it were, of the resultant finite understandings on the part of Dasein. With these differing conceptions of reason and of human freedom, the lines were drawn between an enlightenment humanism that accords humanity freedom and a critical reflexivity that can attain to truth and a conception of justice on the one hand, and an anti-humanism that, in Heidegger's version, sees humanity as the fated expression of the self-disclosure of Being and the 'guardian' of what history makes inevitable on the other. While Levinas's sympathies in this debate came to lean more towards Cassirer, recent scholarship has aligned him with Heidegger. Nothing could be further from a true appreciation of both thinkers.

There would seem to be two dialectical nodes to the first of Levinas's three essays, 'Significance and Sense'. The first of these is the structuralist conception of subjectivity that would see it as the product of culture and of discourse. The so-called 'death of the subject' is an anti-humanism in which social and historical forces are posited as having a more formative role in human existence and in the values we live by than does originary and creative human subjectivity. The second dialectical node is relativism. It would follow from the 'death of the subject' position that, without a basis in a subjectivity that was somehow 'independent', there is no place from which a moral critique of culture could be offered. If such a critique were proffered from outside of that culture it would be an expression of cultural imperialism and if it were proffered from within that culture it would lack a basis transcending the norms of that culture and so fail to have any critical edge.

Levinas seeks to refute the 'death of the subject' view and the relativism that comes in its wake by reaffirming the active and creative nature of subjectivity. He does so by suggesting that the meaning or signification that the world has for subjects always goes beyond what is given in perception. Meaning is the product of a hermeneutic process that not only interprets reality as being more meaningful than the merely given, but also creates the context or 'totality' within which this interpretation can be grounded. Subjectivity, therefore, is both creative and necessary to there being a meaningful world. But lest this argument be thought to lead to an idealist, voluntarist, or Nietzschean conception of subjectivity as will-to-power, Levinas argues that the ground for this creative and meaning-making role for subjectivity is not the Ego, but the Other. It is by responding to the ethical demand
placed upon subjectivity by the nakedness, vulnerability and absoluteness of the Other, that the self comes to itself. It is not the reflexivity of consciousness that establishes subjectivity but the call that the Other places upon one.

In this way, Levinas has established both the active, creative and essential nature of subjectivity for the meaningfulness of the world, and also its ethical and relational nature. It is this latter which then becomes the basis for his attack on relativism. Levinas grants that a Platonism or moral realism which sees the intelligible as existing beyond the world is untenable. However, a conception of values as immanent to cultures need not preclude the possibility of subjectivity taking a critical stance towards its own culture and towards the cultures of others. Its ethical nature as a response to the call of the Other gives it a basis of critique. Subjectivity has a ‘sense’. It has a direction and movement towards the Other. It is on the basis of this primordial direction or sense that the significances and norms posited by historical cultures can be criticized.

Levinas’s discussion of the face of the Other in its seventh section of the essay is as clear and succinct a statement of the core of his ethics as one is likely to find. The essay also contains suggestive excursions into the epistemological and ontological difficulties raised by positing the face of the Other as a being beyond being and by displacing subjectivity from the epistemological centrality which traditional philosophy has given it.

In the essay, ‘Humanism and An-Archy’, Levinas returns to his attack on the anti-humanists and to his positing of a core of subjectivity that escapes their totalizing theories. Here he speaks of subjectivity as ‘pre-originary’ and in that sense ‘an-arthic’ (p. 51). It is expression and creativity. It is a ‘responsibility prior to freedom’ (p. 52). But this may lead one to think that this responsibility is fate and is not accepted voluntarily. Are we enslaved to the Other? Such a conception, answers Levinas, would presuppose an ontological distinction between subjectivity and that which would enslave it. But it is precisely this distinction which does not obtain at this primordial level. The subject does not pre-exist the responsibility that it is called to by the Other. It is called into being by this responsibility, and so it is not enslaved by it.

In the third and final essay, ‘Without Identity’, Levinas extends his critique of the contemporary thesis of the death of subjectivity and the social construction of identity to Heidegger’s contribution to that position. For Heidegger, it is not humanity that speaks and acts, but it is Being which speaks and acts through humanity. It is the task of human beings merely to tend to the voice of Being and, through art, knowledge and culture, bring it to expression. Humanity is, as it were, a vehicle for the being of Being. Heidegger rejects any primordial interiority which belongs to humanity as such. Against these attacks on humanism and on interiority, Levinas posits the vulnerability of the subject. Against all the ego philosophies from Plato to Nietzsche, which posit the subject as epistemological or ontological centre, Levinas stresses its vulnerability to the Other and to the suffering of the Other. It is on this that our interiority, and thus identity, is based.

Levinas’s prose is deeply imbued with references to the Western philosophical tradition and he addresses an audience similarly imbued. Rather than clarification and carefully signposted argument, we have hyperbolic prose that provides what Richard Rorty has called ‘edification’ rather than demonstration. While the text is somewhat removed from the style and substance of ethical debates in the Anglo-
American tradition, there is much that can be learnt from exploring Levinas’s ideas. These essays are not a definitive or comprehensive explication of those ideas, but they are a relatively accessible introduction. For scholars already familiar with Levinas’s work they disclose interesting aspects of his engagement with the philosophical climate of his time and for any philosopher interested in ethics Levinas’s placing of ethics at the very heart of epistemology and metaphysics cannot but be inspirational.

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This book belongs to a series, Live Questions in Ethics and Moral Philosophy, offering ‘short, accessible studies addressing some of the most topical questions shared by moral philosophy and the social sciences’. It has three long chapters, respectively on ‘Children’, ‘The Family’ and ‘The State’.

The first chapter is mainly about whether children may be said to have rights. It begins with a discussion of theories of rights which leaves unclear Archard’s view on two related questions: does every ‘perfect’ moral duty (duty to a specific person or to all) correlate with a moral right, as is sometimes maintained? And is a moral right something which by definition ought to have a corresponding positive right, actually enforced in law? Archard speaks of moral rights as enforceable (e.g. on pp. 4-5); I assume this means that they all ought to be backed by positive rights. This assumed correlation of moral and positive rights presumably explains why he usually writes simply of ‘rights’, without qualification as moral or legal, and why he sometimes asks whether children or parents do have a certain right, at other times (without apparent change of sense) whether they should. But the correlation should be made explicit.

The chapter contains detailed discussion of three possible positions on whether children have rights: roughly speaking, that children have no rights, that children have the same rights that adults have and that children have some rights (perhaps including some which adults do not have) but not all those which adults are thought to have. I found much of this chapter rather unsatisfactory. The discussion of the first position is in part about an important paper by Onora O’Neill; in this she argues, not that children have no rights, but that instead we should stress adults’ obligations to children, which consist in part of imperfect obligations which do not correspond to rights. Archard’s account of this difficult paper is very obscure, partly because of his lack of clarity about the relation between positive and moral rights.

Archard links O’Neill with critics of children’s rights who think that too much stress on rights may undermine the love and care which are children’s best safeguard. But he does not point out that this is not an argument against children’s *having* rights: a champion of children’s rights would say that we appeal to rights when love and care are lacking—or seriously misguided, as when a loving parent wishes to deny a daughter education. Archard does mention (pp. 10, 16) a claim that children do not need the protection of rights, but does not explain how this