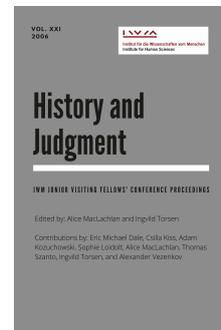


The 'Prophet' and the 'Histor': Levinas and Arendt on Judging

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Opening 1

In a dialogue that Maurice Blanchot writes as a reaction to 'Totality and Infinity', the answer to the opening question 'What is a philosopher?' is the following: "Once upon a time people said that a philosopher is a human being who is astonished; today I would say [...]: it is somebody who is afraid."^[1] It is remarkable that Hannah Arendt also refers to *fear (Angst)* or *fearful imagination* as useful "for the perception of political contexts and the mobilization of political passions."^[2]

The foundational mood (*Grundstimmung*) and with it the paradigm of ethical and political thinking has obviously changed. This does not have so much to do with the revolution in philosophy that Heidegger finally made explicit. What has really happened in philosophical thinking cannot be explained by history of ideas only. The Holocaust and the monstrous desertion that went along with it challenged and changed philosophical thinking in a way no single critique, however ingenious, could have ever done.

Opening 2

"The verdict of history is pronounced by the survivor [...]."^[3] – "Once you have this tumour in your memory, twenty years cannot do it any harm."^[4]

These are two different quotations by Levinas, from two different texts, taken out of their immediate context. Their conjunction or crossover is not, however, completely random. It expresses an ethical and philosophical awareness that haunts the once quiet business of thinking; to the survivor the judgment of history has been suspicious ever since. To the deserted, any other form of judgment provided was unreliable or useless: the time-barred values, the 'achievements of civilisation,' the 'honourable institutions' that should have guaranteed (human or natural) rights and justice. Deserted by all measures – this is what

Levinas calls the ever expanding tumor. The philosophical consequences he has drawn are widely known: His philosophy speaks itself out as the unspeakable trauma that demands an ethics as first philosophy. Within the very heart of a subjectivity that once was at home with itself, a disturbing disruption calls for an ethical response beyond stated 'values' or 'principles'.

Now what has happened to judgment in this development? Can it 'recover'? Is there a crisis of judgment, or insecurity in our use of judgment? Or, indeed, should there be? In the following, I will try confront two thinkers with regard to these questions: Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah Arendt. Their outlines sketch a crucial set of possibilities and difficulties for judgment in world that has come apart.

1. Transitions of Judgment in Levinas

To think the radical Other means to reverse all philosophical categories as we had previously known them. This is Levinas' thesis and his grand critique of our philosophical tradition from the ancient Greeks to Heidegger's ontology; every attempt to think the Other results in identifying it, i.e. in converting its otherness into knowledge and thus into a part of the same – or the self. The radical Other however would refuse this identification; it would constantly disturb the order of the self without being definable. It would only be there as a *trace*, a quasi-phenomenon that indicates an absence and that has always already withdrawn itself. It is primarily in the face of the human other (*autrui*) that Levinas locates this 'epiphany' of the non-phenomenal other, of the 'invisible' who irritates the plain visibility of the face[5]. The experience of the Other is not a relationship of cognition but *the* ethical event (*Ereignis*) that calls *me* into question: I cannot stay the same anymore.

Of course my judgments, even the faculty of judgment (*Urteilkraft*) I made innocent use of, are called into question by the challenge of the Other. I will try to sketch out four points in which Levinas marks this transformation of judgment:

1. Judgment means denial of singularity

Levinas begins with the will of the subject that – from fear of death – seeks its truth in the judgments of history and the principles of the universal. But these judgments cannot give recognition precisely to the singularity of the will because their universality and impersonality absorb all particularities. Thus, a political and technical existence ensures for the will something like an objective truth, where it is one amongst equal others but the price that is to be paid for this is that everything that was existence in the first person, subjective existence, appears as if it were nothing but the "after-effect of its animality." [6] Within the universal the singular will that craves its own recognition exists as if it were dead.

2. The Judgment of History is pronounced in absence and only sees the 'visible'

Singularity is again not recognised in the Judgment of History, because this judgment only regards a person's deeds and works, i.e. only its external activities but not its inner life. It is pronounced only in absentia, when the will is dead and its apology is silenced. "The invisible is the offence that inevitably results from the judgment of visible history, even if this history unfolds rationally." [7]

3. The Judgment of God accuses me in the face of the Other

As long as the invisible offence is merely felt within me, "it is only produced as a cry and protestation [...]. But it is produced as judgment itself when it looks at me and accuses me in the face of the Other [...]. The will is under the judgment of God when its fear of death is inverted into fear of committing murder." [8] This is the ethical turning point; having pointed out how inapt judgment is to meet my innermost desire for recognition, Levinas introduces the 'idea' of a 'Judgment of God', which would discreetly take account of the will's singularity without silencing the subject's apologetic speech. As it turns out, it is the very experience of the Other's face that pronounces this judgment. It is the invisibility of the Other calling me within the visible order of history and of the self. Instead of crying about my own offence I stand in for the Other's absence and testify for his offence. Only here the 'I' becomes irreplaceable in its responsibility as the *One-for-the-Other*. [9] Levinas calls this condition *proximity*: beyond all intentional and objectifying relations the subjectivity is passively sub-jected to this appeal like naked skin is exposed to a touch and unable to distance it. It is thus not an *ability* of the subjectivity to respond (which would only confirm its sovereignty) but an *inspiration* [10] that lets the Other speak through me like the symptom that articulates the uncommemorable. [11]

4. The just Judgment I have to make in the wake of the Third

Of course, this responsibility for the Other is not the end of story but rather the *an-archival* condition of my further duties. Levinas develops a structure where "the contemporaneousness of the multiple is tied about the diachrony of two." [12] 'The Third' stands for the intrusion of the multiple that has always already interrupted my exclusive relation with the Other. Suddenly I have to share my responsibility and to distribute between the multiple. In other words, justice is demanded. So, with the Third, a return to objectiveness and universality becomes necessary again for the sake of making just judgments. The incomparable have to be compared [13] and I have to find a measure to treat all equally responsible. In this situation Levinas locates "the latent birth of representation, logos, consciousness, work, the neutral notion *being*. Everything is together, one can go from the one to the other and from the other to the one, put into relationship, judge, know, ask 'what about...?', transform matter." [14] So has anything changed at all in the end? At least one very important thing: Levinas reverses the 'genesis' whereby even the identifying and objectifying abilities of the subject are nothing neutral but are brought under the claim of justice. The ethical would thus be prior to *any mode of being*. Judging 'justly' in the Levinasian sense of the word means to handle the dimension of the objective without *forgetting* [15] that the visible gets calculated only for the purpose to serve the invisible, the unobjectifiable. "Justice is impossible without the one that renders it finding himself in proximity. His function is not limited to the 'function of judgment,' the subsuming of particular cases under a general rule. The judge is not

outside the conflict, but the law is in the midst of proximity. Justice, society, the State and its institutions, exchanges and work are comprehensible out of proximity.”[16] In other words, no order is an end in itself.

The target for Levinas’ criticism in all these forms of judgment is quite evident with regard to his project. It seems that judgment combines all forms of *distance* that exclude and forget *proximity*. It establishes an objectifying and intentional relation and thus expresses something *as* something; it subsumes the particular under a rule and it has to rely on the visible. It is important for Levinas to stress that it is again only the subjectivity that can make this sharp grasp of judgment milder through goodness (*bonté*). Only the subjectivity can transgress the law and forgive. Judgment thus seems to need a remedy, a correction, a ‘culture of remembrance’[17] (of proximity) and mitigation by goodness. Judgment is one of these ‘virile’ virtues that Levinas wants to languish, to weaken. For an ethical relationship, at least, it always seems to be only second best.

Prophecy, as Levinas calls it, thus remains the only appropriate answer to the ethical call. The ‘Prophet’ speaks at the verge of proximity, he lets the rational, the order, the visible be menaced by what can never be integrated; and all this in the name of the Other, being inspired, possessed, taken hostage by it. The two main works by Levinas have to be understood out of this serious desire or they are taken wrong.

But judgment is of course not obsolete. What is demanded through the Third is only achievable with ‘good judgment’ and were it to relinquish any of its mentioned traits, it would not be judgment anymore, but something else. So is judgment the worst tool we have, except for all the rest? Levinas remains rather unclear about this. We can see him exercising political judgment in other small texts quite securely and very perspicaciously. [18] But there is nothing like a theory or a hint to how judgment is supposed to be put forward and what implications this kind of practice could have. Is this concerning or is it unproblematic? To think about this question seems crucial to me – at the very least because it might indicate a *crisis of judgment* (in philosophy) that it is *either criticised or precisely regarded as unproblematic*. [19]

2. The Prophet and the ‘histor’

Hannah Arendt shares the same historical experience as Levinas and like him she advocates a new form of thinking that can be considered as an answer to the desertion of modernity. In her theoretical mindset, however she attaches special importance to the faculty of judgment. This can be explained for two reasons: First, Arendt cares most about a shared and pluralistic world in which (political) action can be possible. Second – and this seems to be even more important in this context – she sees the loss of judgment as a fundamental characteristic of modernity that grew along with growing senselessness and loneliness of the masses. For her, the experience of Totalitarianism has revealed the decay in our categories of thinking and our measurements of judging. [20] As we do not have the old rules and principles for subsumption anymore, the faculty of judgment is needed more than ever to understand and discern *without* given categories.

It is widely known that Arendt worked on ‘Judging’ (a book she never wrote) in her later years and that she interpreted Kant’s theory of aesthetic judgment as the genuine form of political judgment. Instead of trying to reconstruct this approach here, I would like to highlight four aspects in her thoughts on judgment that seem important to me with regard to the Levinasian critique and transformation of judgment.

1. The retrieval of singularity

Arendt is especially interested in *reflective judgment* as, in this case, a (new) rule needs to be invented in order to judge a given singularity.[21] In her view, the critical movement of thinking provides an open space where the particular can appear as itself and judgment can operate freely from the dominance of the universal.[22] This does not completely invalidate the Levinasian objection to the identificational process of judgment. But it highlights a form of responsibility only a judging subject can enact: not to simply subsume and apply rules but to value the particular in its singularity.

2. The responsibility of the ‘histor’

In the postscript to *The Life of the Mind*, which is reprinted at the very beginning of the *Lectures on Kant’s political philosophy*, Arendt introduces the etymology of the Greek noun ‘*histor*’, first found in the writings of Homer. In this context, the ‘*histor*’ is the historian and the blind poet Homer himself is the *judge*. “If judgment is our faculty for dealing with the past, the historian is the inquiring man who by relating it sits in judgment over it. If that is so, we may reclaim our human dignity, win it back, as it were, from the pseudo-divinity named History of the modern age, without denying history’s importance but denying its right to be the ultimate judge.”[23] Arendt adds: “Old Cato [...] has left us a curious phrase, which aptly sums up the political principle implied in the enterprise of reclamation. He said: ‘*Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni*’ (‘The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the defeated one pleases Cato’).”[24] This ethical approach against a monolithic history of survivors allows us to retell moments of human dignity even if they had no impact on the course of history. My ‘usurped place in the sun’ (as Levinas calls it) demands my responsibility as a *histor* more than ever: “to inquire in order to tell how it was”[25] (*historein*) is one of the most urgently needed functions of judgment and a form of speaking in the name of the Other.[26]

3. Distance demanded, plural views required

Following Kant, the technique of aesthetic and political judgment is, for Arendt, a matter of ‘enlarged mentality’ (*erweiterte Denkungsart*),[27] that is, the ability to teach your imagination to make ‘visits’[28] and to comprehend all kinds of other viewpoints in order to finally engage in critical judgment. Arendt refers to the figure of the *spectator* who judges from a distance and who needs that distance to judge justly. At the same time, the presupposition of a shared world with other people is precisely active when we judge; we refer to a ‘*sensus communis*’ in our judgments and are ready to convince (*ansinnen*) others of our deliberated opinion. Judgment thus opens the political sphere. Again Arendt refers to Kant when she quotes that reason is not meant “to isolate but to get into community with others.”[29] The activity of judging (in contrast to the debate about

pronounced judgments) must, however, remain in one's very own responsibility and must be performed alone. Arendt emphasises the feeling of *melancholy* that accompanies strict judgment, a topic she takes again from Kant, who speaks about "the weariness of oneself as of the world." [30] I would like to read this melancholy also in a different way. In Levinasian terms, the distance that is needed for judgment puts the subject in the position of the third person. It is not "The-One-for-the-Other" [31] but *The-One-as-the-Third*. This loss of an ethical proximity can also be interpreted as melancholy. To judge is not to speak a superior truth that is followed by just punishment, but a "severe and irksome" [32] business that is aware of its loss and "betrayal" [33] of the anarchical relationship with the Other.

4. The claim for truth is to be debated

Finally, the concept of aesthetical/ political judgment differs fundamentally from logical judgment with regard to its evidence: In the latter there lies an evident claim for truth while the former needs exchange of opinion and discussion. This is no reason to

postpone judgment says Hannah Arendt; instead she wants us to "begin to judge and to be frank about it" [34]. Ronald Beiner links this attitude very convincingly to a certain concept of history: "A concept of judgment is ultimately bound up with a concept of history. If history is progressive, judgment is infinitely postponed. If there is an end to history, the activity of judging is precluded. If history is neither progressive nor has an end, judgment redounds to the individual historian, who bestows meaning on the particular events or 'stories' of the past." [35]

With these four aspects of judgment, Hannah Arendt has given a sensitive analysis of the tasks and possibilities of judgment under the allowances of a new form of ethical and political thinking. I would argue that her suggestions are crucial for a responsible concept of judgment without making it impossible and inadequate at its innermost concern – a potential problem for judgement according to Levinasian conception. Arendt thus covers an aspect of judging that could be read as a counter position to the inspired form of responding to and testifying for the Other. However, I do not think that these two approaches must exclude each other. Instead, I would like to suggest that they stand for two fundamental positions of a 'post-metaphysical' and ethically redrawn subjectivity: '*The-One-for-the-Other*' and '*The-One-as-the-Third*'. Both parts have to appear in a world in order to be visible – and thus political: the 'Prophet' in order to disturb the order, to remind us of the uncommemorable and to speak out the anarchy of the invisible; the '*histor*' to discern (*krinein*), to retell (*historein*) and to judge within the visible and restore it to dignity and meaning. The 'Prophet' lets proximity speak out through him (rationality meets inspiration), the '*histor*' needs the distance of judging something *as* something and thus has to imagine himself as the T/third (person) (rationality causes melancholy).

In Latin rhetoric Quintilian differentiated between '*iudicium*' and '*ingenium*': the faculty that was competent for the '*inventio*', the inspiration for how to invent or solve a case. Once Cicero took up the distinction, '*iudicium*' and '*inventio*' became complementary notions that first stood for the virtues of the speaker but, more and more, were used in logical and epistemological methodology up to Kant's 'Critique of Judgment.' The

inspiration that came from the *'inventio'* was considered giftedness (*'natura'*) and often higher valued than the *'iudicium,'* which belonged to the *'techniques' ('ars')* that were supposed to be taught and learned. However, in their interplay as *'good fancy'* (Hobbes) or *'wit(craft)'* and *'good judgment'* these two powers were constitutive for the virtuous speaker and finally for the prudent wisdom-seeker.[36]

We can regard the *'Prophet'* and the *'histor'* as two figures that stand for this ancient differentiation in an ethically reversed philosophical universe. I would regard both as fundamental for the sources and the duties of a subjectivity that has to meet its responsibilities.

The Levinasian approach to political thought, in which the *One-for-the-Other* constantly irritates this order has been read as a political strategy of *'an-archy'*[37] that undermines the institutions' pretension to be an end in themselves. At the same time Levinas regards these institutions as most necessary (we remember the *'tumor'* he spoke about), as *"freedom is not realized outside of social and political institutions."*[38] Levinas is very much aware of the importance of political and juridical institutions and he is also aware of the necessity of the *'Third-Person-Perspective'*. With this regard I would argue that we should take the perspective of *The-One-as-the-Third* more into consideration when judgment is in question; otherwise the ambivalent attitude towards judgment and institutions of (Third-Person) judgment could result in ambivalence towards the political (as subjected to the ethical). The task would be to open up the sphere of the political differently without ignoring or neglecting the never-ceasing discomposure that is the Levinasian legacy to philosophical thinking. Some people might object that this Arendt-inspired suggestion misses the radical point that was Levinas' concern. To restore meaning to history in the process of understanding and judging – as was Arendt's project – is, however, not a naive effort to dilute or to cover up a trauma but a narrative ethics that demands as much from the *'poet'* and the *'judge'* as *'performing a vacancy'* would do from the *'Prophet'*. The decisive question might still lie in our conception of history; the new *'Messianism without a Messiah'* (as advocated by Derrida) obliges and inspires us by the radical *Other-to-come (à-venir*[39]) in the commitment of the moment. The burden of *contingency*, however, that Arendt saw in the course of history throws us back onto ourselves so that man can judge: *'The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the defeated one pleases Cato.'*

Notes:

1. My translation from German: „Was ist ein Philosoph? [...] – Früher hat man gesagt: das ist ein Mensch, der staunt; heute würde ich mit Georges Bataille sagen: das ist jemand, der sich fürchtet.“ (M. Blanchot, *Das Unzerstörbare. Ein unendliches Gespräch über Sprache, Literatur und Existenz.* Munich : Hanser, 1991, p. 95)

2. H. Arendt, *On the Origins of Totalitarianism* . New York : Harcourt Brace & Company, 1951, p. 441.

3. E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969, p. 240.

4. My translation from German: „Hat man im Gedächtnis diesen Tumor, so können ihm zwanzig Jahre nichts anhaben.“ (E. Levinas, *Eigennamen. Meditationen über Sprache und Literatur*. Munich: Hanser, p. 102)

5. In a famous quote, Levinas expresses this special experience of the face as follows: “I wonder if one can speak of a look turned toward the face, for the look is knowledge, perception. I think rather that access to the face is straightaway ethical. You turn yourself toward the Other as toward an object when you see a nose, eyes, a forehead, a chin, and you can describe them. The best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes!” (E. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity. Conversations with Philippe Nemo*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985, p. 85)

6. E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 242.

7. E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 243. While it is quite evident that this is an open critique of Hegel, the first point could be read as very bluntly as a critique of the Kantian categorical imperative: Every maxim which is not according to the moral law is due to the subject’s sensuality and thus its animality. The will’s singularity must not deviate from universality that makes its very singularity clearly contingent.

8. E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 244.

9. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981, pp. 56ff, 136ff.

10. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, pp. 140ff.

11. Cf. P. Zeillinger, „Das Ereignis als Symptom. Annäherung an einen entscheidenden Horizont des Denkens“, in: P. Zeillinger and D. Portune (Eds.), *Nach Derrida. Dekonstruktion in zeitgenössischen Diskursen*. Vienna: Turia+Kant, 2006, pp. 173-199. Zeillinger shows how the ‘symptom’ is introduced in Derrida’s discourse on the appropriate answer to the Other’s call: the ‘symptom’ (as a philosophical notion) would be a ‘third way’ beyond the ‘true proposition’ on the one hand and the ‘performative speech act’ on the other hand. The ‘symptom’ would be the most appropriate way to ‘answer’ to the ‘event’ (*Ereignis*) of the Other’s call as it does not have command over its answer. Thus the ‘symptom’ represents the uncontrollable invasion of the Other.

12. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 159.

13. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 158.

14. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 158.

15. It is remarkable that this becomes a certain philosophical attitude throughout Levinas’ approach of the political and institutional world: Equality and Justice have to commemorate their descent from the immediate relationship with the Other. This which

should not be forgotten can however not be correctly remembered at the same time as the passive subjection to the Other engrosses any form of objectification. Again, the similarity to the structure of the traumatised subject is striking.

16. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 159.

17. Cf. footnote 15: Remembering the uncommemorable becomes a certain command and condition for judgment.

18. The German volume *Die Unvorhersehbarkeiten der Geschichte* which collects a number of Texts Levinas wrote from 1929 until 1992, gives one good example for Levinas' enacted political judgments. One of the famous texts included is 'Einige Betrachtungen zur Philosophie des Hitlerismus' ('Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlerisme'). Cf. E. Levinas, *Die Unvorhersehbarkeiten der Geschichte*. Freiburg: Alber, 2006.

19. Derrida for example talks about the difficult relation between the 'calculable' and the 'incalculable' when having to make a decision (J. Derrida, *Schurken. Zwei Essays über die Vernunft*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 204f.). The incalculable demands to 'do the impossible', i.e. to measure it; the calculable is obviously measured very easily. The question is if this dichotomy does not lead on the one hand to a *trivialisation* of judgment as a possible practice (for the 'calculable' I could use a machine, too) and on the other hand to a *stylisation* of the impossibility of judgment.

20. R. Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Judging", in: H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Edited with an Interpretive Essay by Ronald Beiner. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press paperback, 1989, pp. 95f.

21. Kant broke judgment down into two distinct forms: *determinant* and *reflective* judgment. Determinant judgment is the application of an existing concept to a particular. Reflective judgment is the judgment of a particular for which no concept existed.

22. R. Beiner, in: H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 112. Levinas speaks even stronger about the "tyranny of the universal" (E. Levinas, /Totality and Infinity/, p. 242).

23. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 5.

24. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 5.

25. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 5.

26. Cf. P. Trawny, *Denkbarer Holocaust. Die politische Ethik Hannah Arendt*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006. In this book on Arendt's 'political ethics' the author carefully redraws Arendt's project of 'reclamation' of dignity through narration.

27. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 43.

28. Arendt adds in brackets: „Compare the right to visit in *Perpetual Peace*” (LK 43).

29. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 40.

30. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 125. The melancholy that Kant is referring to is evoked by the observation of the drama of history: „The spectator tires of it, ‘for any single act will be enough for him if he can reasonably conclude from it that the never-ending play will be of eternal sameness’.” (H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 125) Arendt takes it as a self-portrait when Kant writes about the temperament of the melancholic in his *Observations*: “[I]t is the melancholy man who is distinguished chiefly by his uncompromising judgment: ‘He is a strict judge of himself and others, and not seldom is weary of himself as of the world...He is in danger of becoming a visionary or a crank’.” (H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 125)

31. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 136.

32. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 125.

33. E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 158.

34. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 100.

35. R. Beiner, in: H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 131.

36. Cf. J. Ritter, K. Gründer and G. Gabriel (Eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie. Band 11: U-V*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 2001, pp.430-484.

37. Cf. M. Abensour, “Der Staat der Gerechtigkeit”, in: P. Delhom/ A. Hirsch (Eds.), *Im Angesicht der Anderen. Levinas' Philosophie des Politischen*. Berlin: diaphanes, 2005, pp. 45-60. The term ‘an-archy’ has to be understood with regard to the relation to the Other who does not give an ‘arché’ or a ‘principle’ at hand but who represents exactly the opposite for the subject: an ‘an-arché’. Levinas uses the expression of the ‘state of David’ to mark a sort of ‘messianic politics’ that constantly disturbs the order of the ‘Roman state’ with the ‘anarchy’ of ethical dynamics.

38. E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 241.

39. Derrida uses the expression of ‘à-venir’ e.g. for ‘democracy’ (*democracie à-venir*) to mark that ‘democracy’ is not a full-drawn concept but is always yet ‘to come’, to be *realised* in performative acts and speeches that perform its openness.

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