



Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence

By Emmanuel Levinas

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Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence, first published in 1974, is the second of Levinas's mature philosophical works, the first being *Totality and Infinity* (first published in 1961). Otherwise than Being is essentially the sequel to *Totality and Infinity*, further elaborating the rich and comprehensive philosophy of ethical metaphysics that Levinas had introduced in the earlier work. At the heart of Levinas's writings is the irreducible ethical proximity of one human being to another morality, and through that encounter a relation to all others justice. Otherwise than Being emphasizes the themes of moral sensibility and language within this system of ethical metaphysics. These themes had been introduced in *Totality and Infinity*, but are developed in this later work. And while *Totality* is focused on ethical alterity, Otherwise is focused on ethical subjectivity. The process of the revelation of Being as laid out by modern phenomenological ontology is severely criticized, as Levinas claims that the ultimate account of these phenomena is not in ontology, but in a paradoxical discourse of what is beyond Being.

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About the Author

EMMANUEL LEVINAS, a major voice in twentieth century philosophical thought, died in late 1995. After studying under Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger in the late 1920s, Levinas went on to develop a philosophical system that placed ethics at its center. His writings have influenced several generations of French philosophers, including Jacques Derrida, and have won him an admiring audience among theologians.

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