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## FREEDOM VS. RESPONSIBILITY

### Hegel, Rosenzweig, Lévinas: Philosophies of the Times of Crisis

Hegel wrote his *Phenomenology of Spirit* when the battle of Jena was being fought. Rosenzweig saw his *Star of Salvation* on the Balkan front of the first world war. Emmanuel Lévinas formulated the main ideas of his *De l'existence à l'existant* in a concentration camp during the second world war. „Catastrophes of historical reality”, wrote M. Buber, „are often the crises of human attitude to reality”<sup>1</sup>, being concurrently the crises of reality itself. The philosophies of Hegel, Rosenzweig and Lévinas originated in the times of crisis, understood in its etymological Greek sense of a crisis of the sense of reality, and that of a turning point. Stemming from the latter, these philosophies became ultimately attempts at an answer to the question of what the import of a crisis is for the new situation man found himself in.

Facing the fall of the French Revolution, Hegel posed the question of what is the place of Spirit in history and what is the aim that it tries to achieve. Confronting a crisis, he asked: „Where does Spirit come from? and What does it aim at?” With equal laconism he answered: „Spirit comes from nature [...] and strives for freedom”<sup>2</sup>. The times, when Rosenzweig and Lévinas shaped their own philosophies exposed the frailty of the Hegelian, immanent solution to the problem of freedom, which had to be called into question. Rosenzweig became the greatest critic of Hegel's philosophy of freedom. Lévinas, following Rosenzweig, judged freedom by the standard of responsibility for another human being. A comparison of these three philosophies is based on a still more substantial reason. From Hegelian philosophy of freedom, born in Europe after the fall of the French Revolution, we are led straight to the philosophy of revelation of F. Rosenzweig, which was born in the trenches of the first world war, and finally, to the philosophy of responsibility

<sup>1</sup> M. Buber, *Franz Rosenzweig*, [in:] *Kantstudien*, Bd. 36, Berlin 1930, p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Berliner Schriften 1818—1831*, Frankfurt am Main 1971, p. 528.

of Rosenzweig's spiritual heir — E. Lévinas, which appears to be the most significant attempt at an analysis and understanding of human freedom in the post-Auschwitz epoch. The aim of the present exposition is to examine analytically the above-mentioned transition and to draw out a few critical remarks concerning the solutions that have been proposed by each of the philosophers. The author of the present study realizes that the presentation can be neither too detailed nor exhaustive given the vast range of issues dealt with by the authors in question.

#### FREEDOM AS RECONCILIATION — HEGEL

When Hegel was writing *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Napoleon Bonaparte entered Jena. Against the background of historical events that shook the foundations of Europe, Hegel was finishing his epos of the Spirit, trying to comprehend his contemporary situation. Like B. Lakenbrink, one may draw an analogy between Hegel and St. Augustine, who wrote his *De civitate Dei* after the fall of the Roman Empire.

Problems connected with freedom are closely linked to Hegel's understanding of history. In *Logic*, Hegel describes reality as a „union of essence and existence”<sup>3</sup>. The essence of history is constituted by the gradual realization of this union. In history, reason and Spirit gain objective existence and achieve self-consciousness. The essence of Spirit is freedom<sup>4</sup> and since the manifestation of Spirit is the substance of history, history is not an account of the domination of violence, instead, it is a picture of the development of freedom. „The world's history is not only the pronouncement of the Spirit's power upon the world, ie. it is not an abstract and mindless necessity of blind fate; since Spirit is reason in itself and for itself, moreover, the being-for-itself of reason in Spirit is knowledge, hence the world's history is a necessity, solely in its own freedom, development of the successive instantiations of reason, which stems from understanding, being thereby the development of the Spirit's self-knowledge and freedom”<sup>5</sup>.

The world's history is thus the history of freedom. But freedom is genuine only when it is conscious of itself. Hegel wrote: „Freedom is an ambiguous notion [...] Being the supreme good, it provokes at the same

<sup>3</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Bd. 2, Frankfurt aM. 1971, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt aM. 1971, p. 26; *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, Bd. 3, section 382.

<sup>5</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Frankfurt am Main 1971, section 342.

time an infinity of misunderstandings, errors and confusions, it leaves the field open to all possible excesses, which have never been realized or experienced more fully than nowadays" <sup>6</sup>. There is no freedom without the awareness of it. Therefore Hegel, facing the historical events of his time, fathoms his own consciousness in order to answer the question concerning freedom.

Finally, Hegel would say that the essence of freedom is reason. Freedom equals reconciliation with reason. This very category of reconciliation, coming from the essence of Spirit itself, is, to my mind, the key for an analysis of Hegelian philosophy of freedom, for the philosopher writes: „To recognize reason as a rose on today's Way of the Cross and to be able to rejoice in it thereby, amounts to a rational reconciliation with reality; a reconciliation, which philosophy grants to those who have obeyed an inner postulate to apprehend objects notionally and to preserve in that which is substantially their own subjective freedom, as well as to remain with this subjective freedom not in that which is particular and accidental, but in that which is in and for itself" <sup>7</sup>.

In Hegel's epic of the Spirit, freedom appears on the level of self-consciousness. The essence of Spirit's self-consciousness, freedom, is expressed by „being at home in what is other" (bei-sich-Selbst in einem Anderem) <sup>8</sup>. „What is other" for the inquisitive consciousness is a stage directly before self-consciousness; it is the world of objects. For any self-consciousness, it is the world of other self-consciousnesses, other individuals. It is the external world, which can be described as the world of political freedom. On the other hand, „being at home" is the inner world of subjective will and thought. Will embraces both elements for both are the components of self-consciousness. In none of them can Spirit be free as long as it is not free in both at the same time. Consequently, Hegelian freedom is the reconciliation of subjective and political freedom.

„What is other" for self-consciousness is the world of other human beings. In this world, freedom manifests itself as a problem with respect to the relationship that obtains among individuals. An example of a primitive relationship among individuals is that of fighting, which originates from the experience of another individual, as a limitation of his own freedom. From fighting, there emerges a world of domination and bondage, which is the world of a mutual subjugation of the slave by the master and vice-versa. Freedom, according to Hegel, is an intersubjective notion. Without another individual, a human individual can freely move in actuality, without being aware of his fetters, but he will not call this

<sup>6</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, p. 26—27.

situation „freedom”. Freedom is a being in itself which is not yet a being for itself. The problem of freedom appears only with the appearance of another individual. Initially, their relationship is the negative one of fighting, which begets bondage. But only the act of bondage experienced by an individual, as an intermediate act of self-consciousness, allows the individual to realize „what freedom is”. Nevertheless, freedom born in such an act, is already lost. In Hegel's terms one can speak about freedom in two temporal categories: the past and the future; freedom already was and will still be.

Through his concept of a world of subjugation, Hegel asks what the world should be like for an individual to „feel at home” in it, to feel free. This, however, entails the next question of what it means to „feel at home”. Being „at home” implies familiarity of surroundings, the feeling of safety and the state of peace. Yet this state cannot be that of natural peace, for it has to take the existence of others into account. Genuine „feeling at home”, genuine freedom must ensure freedom for every individual, simultaneously preserving the freedom of all. What is the meaning of „at-homeness”, Hegel shows by analysing the inner structure of self-consciousness which is will and thinking combined. As will, it has its form and content. This distinction arises from the dialectics of being, torn between phenomenality and notionality. Will as form, is pure choice, absolute autonomy<sup>8</sup>. As such, it is dissociated from all objectiveness, it is not a will of any particular object. It manifests itself, then, as negativity, which neutralizes all determinacy and all diversity. According to Hegel, this absolute, pure freedom was brought to light by the French Revolution. Yet will cannot be pure negativity, it has to become the will for something. This will for something may have two forms, which Hegel presents in pars. 7 and 8 of his Philosophy of Right. In its first manifestation, the will as a free choice of external objects, being thus a predilection, an instinct or a desire. Such a will can also be perceived in terms of Emperor's will or wilfulness. This kind of will cannot be „at home” in the world. Only in its second form can the will be genuinely free, when it is not a will of external objects but a will that unites itself with the notional content it incorporates. The subjective will as form becomes the objective rational will. Accordingly, the will is not free through the act of choice alone but through the content of this choice. The will is free not only when it chooses, but when it chooses freedom. But what does the rationality of will, its very freedom, consist in? This question can be answered only through thinking. The will is rational inasmuch as it keeps thinking. Hegel writes: „Freedom is thinking itself; who,

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 78.

having given up thinking, is talking about freedom, does not know what he is talking about" <sup>9</sup>.

Thinking also has its form and content. Thinking, as form, is subjective reason and has three basic types. Of them, the first is stoicism — a withdrawal from the world of subjugation into „the simple essentiality of thought" <sup>10</sup>. Stoicism, however, cannot arrive at the truth about freedom, as it is concerned exclusively with thinking as such. It is incapable of providing the criterion for truth, i.e. „the content of thinking" <sup>11</sup>. Likewise, skepticism, the next type of formal thinking, is unable to discover the truth about freedom, despite its constant doubtfulness, negativity and disdain for what so far has been only indifferent for the subject. The entire skeptical thinking consists solely in harbouring doubts; finally, it doubts even in the purpose of doubting.

Unhappy consciousness, the third type of formal thinking, relapses into stoicism. Having established an infinite being — God, in front of whom everybody is equal, the stoical indifference of consciousness assumes a religious motivation. Formal thinking in its third form returns to its beginning. Stoic and skeptical freedom as well as freedom of the unhappy consciousness turn out to be seeming freedoms, for formal thinking is not genuine thinking. Thinking, just like will, has its own essential content, which is truth. Thinking, which as form unites with its content, is genuine thinking, so genuine thinking is truth-thinking. This kind of thinking has a speculative character. For Hegel, speculation is not an abstract mental construction but an act of cognition performed via an intermediary (*speculum* — mirror). Speculations is thus an activity in which reason objectivizes itself in the world and recognizes itself in its reflection. Speculation is an activity, which brings us back to the will. To think, means to perform acts, through which the will objectivizes its own content — freedom. When the self-knowing Spirit makes its freedom — its content and its aim, it creates the world and confers to freedom the autonomous being in it. Such a world is shaped and described by law <sup>12</sup>.

Law, which is an objective explication of freedom, has its own phases of development: the law of ownership, the moral law and the ethical law. The latter is the highest stage of law. It is the substance, in which

<sup>9</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Bd. 3, Frankfurt aM. 1971, p. 308.

<sup>10</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt am Main 1970, p. 157.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, Bd. 3, section 469.

individual self-consciousnesses, reconciled with reason and hence — with themselves, are also reconciled among themselves. An exponent of thus conceived ethical substance is community. „For ethical life”, writes Hegel, „is nothing else but the absolute spiritual unity of the essence of individuals in their independent actual existence”<sup>13</sup>.

The ethical community has its own phases of development. Initially, it is a family, then a society of citizens and finally — a state. The state is the highest form of ethical community. Further, Hegel notes that „in a state founded on truly rational principles all laws and institutions are nothing but the realization of freedom in accordance with its essential determinants”<sup>14</sup>. In the ethical community embodied in the form of state, freedom as „being at home in what is other” is ultimately fulfilled. The reconciliation of self-consciousnesses with themselves is at the same time their reconciliation with the state and in the state — among themselves. It is only the ethical community embodied in the state that can solve the aporia of freedom: everyone is free, with the freedom of all preserved simultaneously. „The highest community equals the highest freedom”<sup>15</sup>.

In order to explain the problem of the essence of freedom, it is enough to explain the norms governing the laws of the state. But here another question arises: which law and of which state? Hegelian analysis is an analysis on the level of an idea: „Considering the idea of the state one must not have his eyes on particular states or on particular institutions”<sup>16</sup>. Hence, it is impossible to point to a state which has already achieved the level of an idea. The idea of the state can be apprehended only on absolute grounds — the religious idea of God. „The state should, therefore, be venerated as the divine element of the world”<sup>17</sup>.

The ethical law of the state and its rational institutions are merely a realization of a religious principle hidden within the heart of an individual<sup>18</sup>. Religion is the temple of truth and freedom in God. The state is the embodiment of the same truth and freedom in the real world, hence the content of this reality can be considered divine<sup>19</sup>. The community of the state embodies what is the most general, which is divinity<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Bd. 1, section 396.

<sup>14</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenaer Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main 1971, p. 256.

<sup>16</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Frankfurt am Main 1971, section 258.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, section 272.

<sup>18</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Bd. 2, p. 182.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, Bd. 1, p. 210.

Actual states do not yet have a rational law or rational institutions, since they have not yet reached the level of an idea. There, even the most perfect of individuals often cannot find the realization of their own individual will, consequently, every actual state alienates the individuals. And, since the state does not ensure freedom for an individual, it is not free itself, according to Hegel's principle: „It is only to a free person that somebody else is free”<sup>21</sup>. An individual abandons the state searching for a region of free actuality. He leaves the temple of the state and enters that of religion. „It is within the sphere of religion, that man liberates himself from his relation to the state. Having retreated into his inner world, man can then escape the domination of lay authorities”<sup>22</sup>.

Going beyond the state and abandoning it does not mean abandoning the state as such. In the quest for a higher synthesis, the state is negated only dialectically. An individual does not leave the state altogether, but abides by it even amidst the greatest perplexity and the strongest negativity. For he does not escape into the world of stoical or skeptical illusion, the aim of which is merely to avoid contradictions. „The Spirit is a power when it looks straight into the eyes of negativity and stops before it”<sup>23</sup>. An individual does not escape from the state, since it is the temple of the state, that shall be filled with truth and freedom of God's temple. Ultimately, Hegel decides on a reconciliation with the age, on staying within the immanence of history, every moment of which brings us closer to the absolute freedom in God.

#### FREEDOM AS LOVE — ROSENZWEIG

F. Rosenzweig, who came from a Jewish family assimilated into the German culture, wrote his *Star of Salvation* on postcards as the soldier of the German artillery on the Balkan front of the first world war. What did the war mean to him? It annihilated the central tenet of Western philosophy — the idea of a Universe directed by one rational principle, whose laws are also laws of human thinking. According to Rosenzweig, this tradition achieved its peak in the philosophy of German idealism, particularly in the Hegelian concept of identity of being and thought. Rosenzweig writes: „Hegel is the last of philosophers, for everything that comes after him is philosophy itself”<sup>24</sup>. Now, that the world order of old

<sup>21</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, Bd. 2, Frankfurt am Main 1969, p. 93.

G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Bd. 1, p. 199.

<sup>23</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Bd. 1, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> F. Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften*, Den Haag—Nijhoff 1984, p. 358.

times has been reduced to rubble, should not the world be oriented to a new order? Should not the problem of rationality of history be reconsidered, since Hegelian reconciliation turned out to be a fiasco? Rosenzweig, the „repentant Hegelist”, the author of the best book on Hegel’s political Philosophy: *Hegel and the State*, became his most eminent critic. In the afterword to this work (published after the war), he writes: „When the edifice of the world crumbled, it buried the thoughts that gave rise to it and the dreams that had permeated it”<sup>25</sup>.

The philosophy of F. Rosenzweig grew out of a singular combination of convictions and philosophical ideas, among which the most prominent was faith in the rationality of history and its immanent cultural, ethical and political progress of humanity. This idea had already been manifest as early as in the Age of Enlightenment and developed in the Kantian philosophy of history, was then adopted by German idealism, Hegel in particular. It must be admitted that Hegel knew that the ultimate reconciliation of reason and freedom had not yet been achieved, but he believed that it can be effected, with a fundamental role in the process being played by the State.

Rosenzweig argued against this idea. He was led to this position by his studies and personal experiences. After a short period of studying medicine and then history, Hegelian political thought became of his prime interest, which he investigated under the supervision of professor Meinecke. He completed them in 1912 with a doctoral thesis based on his work *Hegel and the State*. In conclusion of his examination, Rosenzweig declared that the State, as understood by Hegel, is an aim in itself. Neither an individual nor a nation can exist without it.

His experiences of the first world war added the final touch to his enquiries. The tragic nature of the events of war did not negate, but rather confirmed the basic tenet of Hegel’s philosophy of history: that every nation regards itself as a political messiah that has a special role to play in history, which gives rise to conflicts among them. But Hegel was wrong asserting that the synthesis of reason and existence takes place in history. This is the work of Hegelian transcendental ego. History has no power immanent in itself to bring reason and being to a harmony, that is to a free ethical community where all human individuals would be reconciled with themselves and with God. Freedom, then, is possible only outside history, or rather, liberation may come only from outside history and philosophy, which gives history its rational sense. The war that buried the ideas of Hegel’s philosophy directed Rosenzweig to dis-

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<sup>25</sup> F. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, Bd. 2, München—Berlin 1920, p. 236.



posing of the totalizing Hegelian thinking and to solving the issue of freedom in an entirely new, extrasystemic perspective, the first manifestation of which was calling into question the old positing of the problem of freedom.

The classical question of the old metaphysics concerning the essence of things was, in the case of freedom, the question as to the essence of will. At the same time it was the question pertaining to responsibility. To give an affirmative answer to the question of whether man can be held responsible for his action, we have to say, following Rosenzweig, that man's activities must be truly his own, they must originate from his being and they must be free at the same time. Such a claim, however, is impossible. Rosenzweig writes: „If an action is mine, it is not free. And if it is free, it is not mine”<sup>26</sup>. What is the meaning of free and mine? Where is the source of this contradiction? It comes from the fact that the traditional way of asking the question is erroneous. When ancient philosophy inquired about the essence of freedom: „What is it?”, it invariably fell prey to the insurmountable contradiction between determinism and indeterminism. For if freedom is freedom, it is strictly speaking, not freedom, but a share in the world's laws. And if it is freedom, it is not mine, but God's freedom acting in me<sup>27</sup>, writes Rosenzweig. When we free ourselves from determinism, we lapse into idealism. Man is a citizen of two actualities: God and nature, which is the fullest exponent of the contradiction.

The classical metaphysics of Western philosophy, starting with the first question of the Ionian philosophy of nature as to the arche panton until Jena, attempted to gain knowledge of all that is. But to gain knowledge, according to Rosenzweig, means to raise all into the clarity of thinking. And the essence of clarity, is unity. From the Ionian philosophy of nature a straight way leads to the identity of being and thought in Hegel, expressive of the tenet of all Western philosophy: „Everything is...” This principle is linked with the classical question as to the essence of things, which we have just mentioned. It appears that an answer to this question cannot be that of a tautology, eg: Man is man. The sense of this question requires an answer in which the subjective complement would be different from the subject itself, eg: Man is [...] But what is man actually? According to Rosenzweig, the classical philosophy did not give any answer, but reduced all beings to one determinate principle unifying and comprising all that exist. Thales said: „Everything is water”. The crowning expression of this mode of thinking is the modern epoch,

<sup>26</sup> F. Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften*, p. 643.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 644.

complete with Hegelian idealism. In this philosophy all, ie. God, the world and man are reducible to thought. This reduction of world and God to the thinking subject (man) amounts, conversely, to the reduction of man to the world and God.

The problem of freedom posed through the category of being, which is the classical question of metaphysics concerning the essence of things, engenders this contradiction. It obtains in the idealistic actuality, where man is not free as part of nature, or is free as part of God. In each case he is an element of this actuality; he is not a subject but an object of freedom. Freedom, as the regulating principle of this actuality is above man. Thus, the first step proposed by Rosenzweig is to break free from the idealistic space where man is „partly lying in the dust, partly walking in the stars”<sup>28</sup>. It is necessary to find an actuality, where man would no more be the object but be the subject of freedom, where he could exist outside the identity of being and thought. But such an actuality lies beyond philosophical knowledge. It can be acquired only through experience, which is for Rosenzweig the *modus operandi* of his new philosophy. „While the old philosophy”, he writes, „poses the alternative between determinism and indeterminism, the new one follows the way of deed, away from the conditioning of character and the thicket of motivation, through a single lucid moment of the grace of choice, towards necessity which is beyond all freedom; in this way it overcomes the limitations of the constraining alternative, whereby man is either „a painted fragment of the world or a hooded God”<sup>29</sup>.

The liberation from the trap of idealistic actuality of freedom is at the same time the liberation from the determinism of the two basic categories of time: the past and the future. The past always expresses the determinism of nature, conditions of existence and the courses of activity, while the future is that of the determinism of goals and effects of this activity<sup>30</sup>. The past and the future of the idealistic actuality corresponds to the situations in which man is, to use Rosenzweig’s own words, „a painted fragment of the world” or „a hooded God”. It is only the present moment which is free from the determinism of time; being the moment when freedom is reducible neither to nature nor to God. Consequently, the actuality sought for outside the system of thought-being identity, is connected with the present moment. Experience prompts us that this very present moment is the most endangered one. In the concept of freedom, Rosenzweig discriminates between two aspects:

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 148—149.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 648.

will and power. Man wants a lot, but cannot achieve all. The lack of power is experienced most intensely in death.

It is death that disintegrates the synthesis of being and thought, this impersonal world where „one dies”. For everyone dies on his own account. When man experiences death personally, he realizes his irreducibility to any system. The experience of death is more primary than philosophical thinking. The primary actuality, which philosophy discovers is not cogito (as in Descartes), but the fear of death. The mortal being of a thinker precedes his thinking. Death, then, draws the boundary of the idealistic philosophy, that understood as totality. In the personal experience of death man discovers himself as a meta-ethical individual, outside the system of a thinkable entity. But since one element of the whole finds itself outside the system there is no system. The meta-physical God and the meta-logical world are also outside the system.

„Mythical God, moldable world and tragic man”, writes Rosenzweig. „We hold only parts in our hands, we have achieved the break-up of all that exists. The deeper we go into the night of positivism to apprehend something, directly at its source, where it springs from nothingness, the larger the rift in all that exists”<sup>31</sup>. This fundamental rift, this separation and the self-imposed selection of God, world and man are described by Rosenzweig as paganism. He does not, however, identify this kind of paganism with the paganism of antiquity. Paganism is rather a separation, loneliness and reserve.

The employment of the term paganism implies that the mutual opening of God, world and man as well as interrelation among them would be a religious one. No more shall it be the relationship between them and the consciousness that endows them with sense, but the relationship which comes from within themselves. Rosenzweig describes them as the relationship of creation between the world and God, the relationship of revelation between God and man and the relationship of salvation between man and world. Through these interrelations a new being is born; a being different from the being identifiable with thought in the constitutive philosophical cognition. Besides ontology of being and philosophical truth there exist for Rosenzweig also ontology of religious being and religious truth.

Man, separated from God and the world, is just *self-fulness* of autonomy and freedom. Freedom of *self* is not freedom of individuality circumscribed by the boundaries of what is general and in which this individual participates. Likewise, it is not freedom of individuality limited by the boundaries of law and political actuality. For in both cases man

<sup>31</sup> F. Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung*, Den Haag 1976, p. 91.

is confined by the actuality of the system, in which he turns from „a painted fragment of the world” into „a hooded God”. In respect of the idealistic perception of freedom in the system, whose construction Hegel brought to the absolute shape, Rosenzweig’s freedom can be described as meta-freedom. But meta-freedom is, strictly speaking, the only kind of freedom — freedom of man’s own being. Freedom conceived in this way is solitary freedom of a reserved self. Freedom is, then, a pagan notion by virtue of its being a principle of separation. The self is fully free because it is utterly alone. It does not adjoin anything, it does not share its freedom with anything. Freedom thus construed is not a goal, like with Hegel, but the condition for a dialogue. It is not self-sufficient, though. Freedom can be ultimately understood through something that is not freedom, through the being of love, which would abolish the loneliness and separation characteristic of freedom. The relationship where the loneliness of freedom is overcome is revelation.

Death is the symbol of finiteness, the limit of freedom, the end of the totalitarian pretensions of philosophy. But simultaneously it is the beginning of a new, religious order of relationships. Revelation is described by Rosenzweig as the relationship from God to man, which starts with the question: „Where are you?” The question concerns the place that man occupies: whether he still hides in the impersonal system of being and thought or whether he is already himself. The question is not about freedom but about responsibility. Man has already confessed his freedom by way of doing what had been forbidden. But he is ashamed of his guilt and hides himself away from God. He does not affirm himself as I, but objectivizes himself into a man (he), who shifts the blame on a woman (she), who in turn blames the serpent (it). Only when the vocative (proper name) appears in God’s question and precludes objectification, man enters the present moment. Man leaves the world of objectification (third person) and enters the moment of God’s revelation as an open soul. God bestows his love on the soul.

The gift of God’s love, which is the essence of revelation is contained in the commandment: „Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God”. God, according to Rosenzweig, can express and give his love only through commandments because the essence of life is the present time. Whenever love exists, it is always in the present and the imperative of the commandment is always directed to the present moment. All other expressions of love are explanations, and as such they always follow love, they are always late. The answer to the commandment is the declaration of love. Likewise, the love of the soul must be in the present moment. But its present moment is different from that of God’s love. It is the present

moment inasmuch as it is faithful; faithfulness being directed to the future. Yet the past remains. There was a time in the past without the declaration of love. Hence, it is not easy for the soul to declare love, since in this act the soul reveals itself. It can declare its love when it simultaneously confesses its guilt. It is the guilt of a belated answer to God's call: Where are you?, which St Augustine expressed: „Too late have I got to love thee, love, so time-honoured, yet so new. Too late have I got to love thee”<sup>32</sup>. The soul that confessed its guilt frees itself from the world's past and emerges „from its confines into what is free”<sup>33</sup>.

The fear of death, which is the place of discovery and experience of a self which is irreducible to any system is not a fear of nothingness, like in Heidegger, but the fear of responsibility. Experiencing his self, man escapes from his guilt by ascribing it to impersonality. It is not so much an escape from guilt, but from God. It is only the confession of guilt, which is simultaneously an acceptance of God's love, where the secluded self which tried to hide in a system, becomes I. It becomes I only in the dialogue with divine You at the time and place of its responsibility, which is the answer to the question: Where are you?

The contradiction phrased by Rosenzweig in the following way: „If there is freedom, it is not mine, and if it is mine, it is not freedom”, finds its solution only in revelation. Freedom, if exists, is not mine, since I is not „I am” like „You are”. Man, liberating himself from the world's past does not become God, as Hegel would have it, but becomes truly him-self. The love in revelation, breaking with participation in the system, constitutes a free being, which, having confessed its guilt sets up the relationship of being „stronger than death”. This new, ultimate being is salvation.

Rosenzweig, for years suffering from a serious illness which eventually brought him to his death, could not fully develop the new perspective of freedom. He was also spared the experiences of a new war and new crisis, yet the atmosphere of his philosophy presaged what was soon to come. In one of his articles about Rosenzweig E. Lévinas writes: „Through the broadness of his horizons, the novelty of his thought and aspirations and through his intensive inner life terminated at the age of forty-three in consequence of an illness, which had paralyzed him for the last eight years of his life, Rosenzweig represents to us the very situation of Jewish intelligentsia in the West. Undoubtedly, he lacked the distressing and

<sup>32</sup> Św. Augustyn, *Confessiones*, X 27, Warszawa 1978, p. 197.

<sup>33</sup> F. Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung*, p. 229.

painful experiences of a Jew in the modern world. Although he died in Frankfurt in 1929, without seeing the 1939 war and its nuclear aftermath, he had come to know the fear of the catastrophic world, knocked off balance. He knew the hideous face of the pangermanic barbarism even though he did not live to see the national-socialist domination. He saw the birth of the new society in the Soviet Russia even though he did not see its geographical expansion. He knew and gave his verdict on Sionism even though he did not see it thrive in Israel. All the life of Rosenzweig is as if a premonition of the great upheavals and the break with the modes of thinking responsible for so many catastrophes”<sup>34</sup>.

#### FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY — LÉVINAS

The author of these word departs even more radically from the old mode of thinking, more radical, because the crisis experienced by Emmanuel Lévinas was also more radical. His philosophy grew out of two sources. On the one hand, it is a continuation of questioning of Hegelian idealism. On the other, it is the product of experiences brought about by the second world war and the post-war stalinist totalitarianism.

Emmanuel Lévinas, born in 1906 in Kaunas, Lithuania, emigrated to France and studied philosophy in Strasbourg. Then he went to Freiburg, where he attend the lectures by Husserl and Heidegger in 1921—1929. Even though he owed much to both of them, none became his master. The true philosophical master of E. Lévinas was F. Rosenzweig. In Rosenzweig’s philosophy Lévinas for the first time discovered a protest against philosophy as a universal synthesis. Continuing the line of Rosenzweig’s thought, he questions Hegelian idealism more radically.

The second source of experience was that of the second world war, of Auschwitz in particular. For Lévinas, Auschwitz impersonates the greatest crisis of humanity that has ever been experienced in history. Francois Poirié, in one of his last interviews with Lévinas, wrote about this crisis: „For the first time in history a human being means nothing. It is not an enemy whom you can fight, it is not a prisoner whom you can exchange. It is the object of destruction”<sup>35</sup>. Auschwitz becomes, for Lévinas, a significant interval separating our epoch from the others. How is it possible to save the sense of goodness, religiousness and dignity of man in the post- Auschwitz epoch we live in? This is the question, to which Lévinas tries to provide an answer by way of formulating his

<sup>34</sup> E. Lévinas, F. Rosenzweig, *Współczesna myśl żydowska*, [in:] *Twarz Innego. Teksty filozoficzne*, Kraków 1985, p. 112—113.

<sup>35</sup> E. Poirié, *Emmanuel Lévinas, „Qui-êtes-vous?”*, Lyon 1987, p. 16—17.

metaphysics of freedom — the philosophy of infinite responsibility for another human being.

This answer, however, requires an account of the causes which engendered such immense hatred towards another human being. This goal is achieved through analyses of the notion of humanity as freedom stemming from ontology<sup>36</sup>. I shall call it ontological freedom. Ontological freedom is freedom in the immanence of such a system of being, where freedom realized itself as fulfilment of the fundamental need, contrary to metaphysical freedom, which is a philosophy of desire and transcendence. Let me discuss the concept of ontological freedom first.

The concept of hypostasis is key to the concept of ontological freedom. Hypostasis is being which takes its being upon itself, remaining in an intrinsic relationship with existence. This relationship is constituted by the movement towards existence and the return to itself, which is constitutive of identity. In this relationship, being becomes the master of itself, freedom. This kind of freedom is called by Lévinas the first freedom. It is not yet the freedom of will, but the freedom of beginning. For freedom to exist, there must exist a being which takes its existence upon itself.

Hypostasis is being which cannot be separated from itself. It has to look after itself. This necessity of looking after itself constitutes, according to Lévinas, the materiality of the subject. The first freedom is hampered by the necessity of looking after itself, of responsibility for itself. „The beginning”, he writes, „is emburdened with itself; it is the present moment, not a dream. Its freedom is directly limited by its responsibility. This is the essence of its great paradox: a free being is not free any more, because it is responsible for itself”<sup>37</sup>.

Encumbered with materiality hypostasis remains in itself. And being, which is in itself must try to survive. To be means to try to survive. To illustrate his thesis, Lévinas refers to Spinoza and Heidegger. From Spinoza, he adopts the notion of „conatus essendi”<sup>38</sup> and quotes the sixth theorem of Spinoza’s third part of *The Ethics*: „Every thing, inasmuch as it is in itself, tries to persist in being”<sup>39</sup>. Conatus essendi is also Heidegger’s *Dasein*, which „in its being is concerned just about being”<sup>40</sup>. Hypostasis, as the first freedom, is egoistic in its essence. It is not, however, a characterological egoism but an ontological one.

<sup>36</sup> E. Lévinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée*, Paris 1982, p. 83.

<sup>37</sup> E. Lévinas, *Le temps et l'autre*, [in:] *Le Choix, Le Monde, L'Existence*, Cahiers du Collège Philosophique, Paris 1947, p. 126—196, 145—146.

<sup>38</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà l'essence*, La Haye 1974, p. 133.

<sup>39</sup> E. Lévinas, *Noms Propres*, Montpellier 1976, p. 104.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

The freedom of hypostasis thus conceived experiences its limitation from the very beginning. Its first limitation is that it has not chosen itself<sup>41</sup>, which is considered a scandal in modern philosophy. From the very beginning, betrayal is contained in the concept of freedom. Freedom is betrayed from the very beginning: it falls into the trap of egoism, it is limited in strength, anxious about itself, put to suffering and death. Freedom is not heroic. „The precise experience of the twentieth century man teaches us”, writes Levinas, „that human thoughts are founded on needs, which explains both the form of the society and that of history; it teaches us that hunger and fear may become the masters of human resistance and freedom. One cannot possibly doubt in human vanity, in the power that things and various rascals have over human beings, in this bestiality. But to be a human being means to realize that this is the way things work. Freedom lies in the awareness that freedom is in constant danger”<sup>42</sup>.

Freedom, experiencing betrayal in its essence, experiencing needs, turns them into the need of freedom, which is that of a salvation, of mastering what it is dependent on. Freedom incarnate, encumbered with its materiality seeks refuge in the world. It is fulfilled in the category of „being at home”, which ultimately expresses the notion of ontological freedom. Freedom is not only essentially linked with the world as correlative with its needs, but also realizes itself exclusively as „being at home” in the world.

It finds refuge in the world living in it. This living is a mode of subsistence. Lévinas writes: „At home does not denote an area but a place, where I, depending on the external reality, can be free, despite (and, maybe, owing to) this dependence. It is enough to set out, to take every thing one by one. In a sense every thing is in this place, ultimately at my disposal”<sup>43</sup>. Freedom, as being at home in the world is possible only thanks to taking control over the world, that is, over the objects as correlative of our needs, over suffering and death as well as over the conflict and war, which are the consequences of ontological egoism. At-homeness is then fulfilled through possessing, which is tantamount to overcoming the limitations imposed on freedom by objects, through the heroic will of suffering, rationalization of death and finally, through subordination of subjective freedom to the objective law of the state. Let me discuss the last dimension of „being at home”, which, apart from

<sup>41</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'extériorité*, La Haye 1961, p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 129.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 212.



the rationalization of death, is the crowning concept of ontological freedom.

Ontological freedom is the freedom of controlling. „This is the definition of freedom: sustaining one's self despite the other, despite all references to the other, to consolidate the sovereignty of I" <sup>44</sup>. Freedom is domineering <sup>45</sup>. And this domination is bidirectional. Hence, the egoism of being is the state of war and conflict. Betrayal, which is contained in freedom encumbered from the very beginning by needs and the necessity of looking after itself, is also the betrayal of others. Yet, if in relation to things betrayal is overcome by possessing, in relation to other freedom it is impossible. Here, „to be free, means to build a world where one can be free" <sup>46</sup>. Creating the free world consists in establishing a rational order outside oneself, in establishing rational institutions, the state. Freedom, fearing tyranny, apprehends itself in totality. Lévinas writes: „This seems to be the vindication of freedom to which philosophy aspires, philosophy, which from Spinoza to Hegel identifies will with reason... in order to place them where the opposition I — not-I disappears, in the bosom of impersonal reason. Freedom... resolves itself now into a reflection of a universal order, which maintains and justifies itself, like God — from the ontological argument" <sup>47</sup>. In this divine rational order, individual freedoms achieve universality. Universality is the final shape of „being at home" in the world's immanence.

The attempt to solve the problems of conflict and war typical of being ends up with a failure. The solution available takes place in the totality of the world of law. In order to be free, one must yield to the higher, objective freedom of law. Yet this external law is already alien to will. Will experiences it as another tyranny <sup>48</sup>. This trap of ontological freedom, according to Lévinas, ensues from the great philosophical myth of the legislative consciousness <sup>49</sup>, present especially in Hegel. The starting point of this myth is the affirmation of will, unconstrained by anything. „The entire theory of modern politics since Hobbes deduces the social order from the unquestionable law of freedom" <sup>50</sup>. This unquestionable

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup> E. Lévinas, *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, Paris 1964, p. 166.

<sup>46</sup> E. Lévinas, *Liberté et commandement*, „Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale" 59:1954, p. 267.

<sup>47</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, p. 60.

<sup>48</sup> E. Lévinas, *Transcendance et hauteur*, „Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie" 3, 1962, p. 94.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, p. 92.

<sup>50</sup> E. Lévinas, *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, p. 176.

law of freedom terminates in impersonal law embodied in a homogenous or a socialist society<sup>51</sup>. Ontological freedom is then confined within an alternative between the affirmation of the superiority of one's own freedom and being over that of the others and the reduction to impersonal relations in a universal order of the state.

Going beyond the trap of ontological freedom is possible only when the fact of the injustice of freedom is accepted as a starting point. Having accepted this fact, we are introduced into the metaphysical perspective of questioning freedom through responsibility. This questioning is effected in the experience of the face. Lévinas opposes face to phenomenon. Phenomenon is immanent and historical, while face is transcendent and comes „from the outside”. Phenomenon is correlative with the intentional consciousness, while face visits. This visit is contained in the notion of request. Lévinas describes it as an ethical request, which is something more than just a request. It embraces simultaneously an ethical prohibition and an imperative.

The other, present in face opposes all attempts at reduction and totalization. It shows resistance, the logos of which is the first ethical commandment: „Thou shalt not kill”. The resistance of the other is not physical but ethical, whose essence is the transcendence of the other. The other does not adjoin me. He does not have a motherland common with me, he is a foreigner. He does not oppose me like other freedoms, as arbitrary as mine. His being different manifests itself in his nobleness, which does not fight, like in Hegel, but teaches. The transcendence of the other which puts up ethical resistance is the opposition prior to my freedom, for the transcendence of the other is not within my capacity. Face is simultaneously an ethical imperative; it is naked when divested of all its attributes. It passes amidst its presence<sup>52</sup>. The ethical commandment: „Thou shalt not kill” denotes not only a prohibition but also a request: „Do not let me die alone”<sup>53</sup>.

Just as resistance is ethical resistance, a request is an ethical request, an appeal to freedom. Freedom is requested, not forced physically to anything, but at the same time it is required. „A request asks inasmuch as it can require and requires inasmuch as it can ask”<sup>54</sup>. The requirement of a request consists in the fact that it does not leave free actuality for a decision. It does not let itself be forgotten. The lack of

<sup>51</sup> E. Lévinas, *Transcendance et hauteur*, p. 93.

<sup>52</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être...*, p. 112.

<sup>53</sup> E. Lévinas, *Philosophie, justice et amour*, „Esprit” 80—81:1983 p. 8—17.

<sup>54</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, p. 48.

free actuality and the impossibility to forget comes from the fact of my closeness to the other.

Closeness, for Lévinas, is a form of non-intentional consciousness. The other fellow human is transcendent, but simultaneously linked with me. Lévinas does not accept the romantic idea of closeness as unity. He rejects also the Hegelian dialectical closeness, which is the unity of identity and difference, an absolute community and separation of individuals that constitute it. Instead of dialectic he introduces the concept of diachrony. The other is transcendent, separated from me by the entire infinity, but at the same time he is linked with me. This bond, however, is not an initiative, an act of freedom or free commitment. The bond was formed in the past, where I was not present. This past is not a synchronic past along the line of time of my consciousness. It is diachronic for it separates from the past, which cannot be reached by consciousness, but concurrently it binds through the call which, because of this separation, cannot be evaded. Lévinas writes: „In closeness one can hear the commandment as if coming from time immemorial: it has never had the present time, no freedom has ever given rise to it”<sup>55</sup>.

This commandment questions my freedom. This very „highest immediacy of summoning shatters the calm cheerfulness of consciousness”<sup>56</sup>. In confrontation with the other *conatus essendi*, the egoistic ontological freedom, is questioned. When visited by face I loses its independence and its identity. It stops being „at home”. This questioning of „the safe freedom of its shelter” is not only something negative. It is the acceptance of the call for responsibility, which is older than freedom. Lévinas speaks at this point of the idea of being chosen: „I was chosen by goodness before I had chosen it”<sup>57</sup>. The idea of being chosen is alien to Hegelian idealism, according to whom the Spirit is present at the moment of creation. Lévinas argues that this conviction is present as early as in The Book of Job. It shows a rational world where one is responsible for what he has done himself. But we are born into the world which has not been designed by the Spirit. „The famous finite freedom of philosophers amounts to my responsibility for what I have not done, the condition of creation. The responsibility, which Job could not find searching through his irreproachable past. „Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?”, asks him the Almighty. You are I for certain: the beginning and freedom. But freedom is not the absolute

<sup>55</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être...*, p. 109.

<sup>56</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, p. 190.

<sup>57</sup> E. Lévinas, *Humanisme de l'autre homme*, Montpellier 1972, p. 78.

beginning. You follow after the goodness of things and persons. You are not only free but also loyal outside your freedom. You are responsible for all. Your freedom is brotherhood as well”<sup>58</sup>.

Being chosen for responsibility is prior to freedom<sup>59</sup>, prior to the alternative freedom-bondage. „But because of this, it forms a call which goes beyond the limited and egoistic fate, which is only for itself and washes its hands of the guilts and calamities which do not begin within his own freedom or his present time”<sup>60</sup>. Classical philosophy of freedom attempted to defend free will against all kinds of determinism in order to be able to accuse it before the tribunal of responsibility. Lévinas reverses this classical perspective: there, responsibility is prior to freedom. Before all commitment and unrestrained decision I is encumbered with responsibility regardless of whether it is accepted or rejected. It is the responsibility for another freedom.

This responsibility is called substitution by Lévinas. Substitution is not an act. It is the irreversible passivity in the very act, that is the basis for all activity. It is through the condition of hostage „one on behalf of another” that mercy, compassion and forgiveness can arise in the world. „The unconditionality of a hostage is not a borderline case of solidarity but the condition for any kind of solidarity. The substitution „one on behalf of another” is the condition „for another”<sup>61</sup>. Responsibility, though Lévinas does not say it explicitly, appears to be gradable. The first of them is care for fellow human’s well-being, eg. food sharing. Lévinas illustrates this with an excerpt from Matthew 25<sup>62</sup>. Then, it is the readiness to serve: „To say here I am, to do something for another person, to give him something. This means to be a human spirit [...] The diaconate before all dialogue”<sup>63</sup>. Further there comes the concern for somebody else’s death through the concern for one’s own death<sup>64</sup> and the affirmation of the existence of another before the affirmation of one’s own existence<sup>65</sup>. This attitude is also called holiness by Lévinas. Holiness means yielding precedence to somebody else before me<sup>66</sup>. And finally, the highest degree

<sup>58</sup> E. Lévinas, *Quatre lectures talmudiques*, Paris 1968, p. 182.

<sup>59</sup> E. Lévinas, *Un Dieu homme?*, [in:] *Qui est Jesus-Christ?*, Paris 1968, p. 192.

<sup>60</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu’être...*, p. 148.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, p. 149.

<sup>62</sup> E. Lévinas, *Philosophie, justice et amour*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> E. Lévinas, *Éthique et Infini*, Paris 1982, p. 122.

<sup>64</sup> E. Lévinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l’idée*, Paris 1982, p. 263.

<sup>65</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement que savoir*, Paris 1987, p. 72.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem.

is substitution itself, responsibility for the evil in another human beings<sup>67</sup>, up to expiation for them. This extreme formulation Lévinas expresses through Dostoyevski's words: „We all bear the blame for everyone and everything before everyone and I am the first to be blamed”<sup>68</sup>.

Responsibility thus conceived does not end. It is a desire which grows the more it is satisfied<sup>69</sup>. This springs from the very nature of Good, which is never good enough. Responsibility is asymmetrical and undirectional. It never returns to its starting point. Lévinas writes: „In this sense I am responsible for my fellow human without awaiting mutuality, even if it were to cost me my life. Mutuality is his own concern”<sup>70</sup>. The fullest expression of asymmetry is an act. An act is not an objectivization of the universal ego, like in Fichte or Hegel. It is the movement towards another being, without being returned, which denotes the lack of gratitude. Gratitude would mean a bill made out, a return of the movement to its source. An act understood in this way is possible only as a resignation from enjoying the achievement of a given goal. An act enters the diachronic future, the time of other human beings, where I will be absent. „Eschatology without hope for oneself, or liberating oneself from his own time [...] means a transition into the time of another human being”<sup>71</sup>. This transfer makes it possible to sacrifice oneself. An act is disinterested<sup>72</sup>.

Disinterestedness is tantamount to leaving one's being<sup>73</sup>. Humanity is being which strips itself of its state of being. „To be human means to live as if one were not flung between beings. As if for the human spirituality the categories of being reverse themselves into „otherwise than being”. Not only into „being otherwise”, which is still being”<sup>74</sup>. Disinterestedness is the transcendence of being towards Good. Responsibility as the transcendence of being towards Good does not, however, eliminate freedom, but gives it a true qualification. In responsibility, where being cannot substitute being its uniqueness and particularity manifest themselves. Responsibility breaks up the self-secluded and so-

<sup>67</sup> E. Lévinas, *Quatre lectures talmudiques*, p. 181.

<sup>68</sup> *Rozmowy z Emmanuelem Lévinasem*, przekład Marek Jędraszewski, „Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne” 6:1986 p. 496 (*Rapport de la conversation avec M. le professeur Dr. E. Lévinas à Leyde le 20 mai 1975*, Leyde 1975).

<sup>69</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être*, s. 14.

<sup>70</sup> *Rozmowy z Emmanuelem Lévinasem*, p. 504.

<sup>71</sup> E. Lévinas, *Humanisme de l'autre homme*, p. 260.

E. Lévinas, *Éthique et Infini*, p. 103.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*.

litary hypostasis and gives freedom its unconditioned, unalterable and absolute form. It is not in the solitary hypostasis but in responsibility these synonyms of freedom acquire their true sense<sup>75</sup>. Lévinas writes: „Even though nobody is good out of his own free will, nobody is a slave to goodness, either”<sup>76</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

We have started with Hegel and finished with Lévinas. We have commenced our discussion in the situation of a crisis in Europe after the French Revolution, where the Spirit was searching for its freedom, its „being at home” in the world and in history, and we have arrived at Auschwitz, which forces us to question ontological freedom in the name of responsibility.

The starting point for Lévinas’ philosophy is a fellow human, who primarily is neither an enemy of mine (like in Hegel) nor my complementation (like in Plato)<sup>77</sup>. The relationship to a fellow human is neither domination nor vanishing in the impersonal reason. It is the relation of responsibility, prior to freedom. The difference between what is human and what is not, cannot be reduced, like in Hegel, to the freedom-bondage alternative. The problem of what is human, of the foundation of humanity is a fundamental issue, which delineates the horizon of the sense of being. Realizing the enormity of human hatred Lévinas asks how to salvage human dignity so that it could not be questioned even during the worst of crises. This very unquestionable source of dignity is responsibility. „Responsibility is what constitutes the burden which belongs only to me, which I cannot refuse to accept. This burden is the highest dignity of man”<sup>78</sup>.

The discovery of the unquestionable dignity of man, which manifests itself with all the more prominence in the times of crisis, constitutes already a transition from the ontological to the metaphysical order. The metaphysical perspective of freedom linked with responsibility is, according to Lévinas, the questioning of Hegelian ontological perspective. If, for Hegel, the absolute category where freedom can realize itself is „being at home in what is other” in the world, for Lévinas it is a withdrawal from the world, withdrawal from being.

<sup>75</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, p. 160.

<sup>76</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu’être*, p. 13. 176.

<sup>77</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, p. 282, 229.

<sup>78</sup> E. Lévinas, *Éthique et Infini*, p. 103.

The transition into the metaphysical perspective does not, however, solve an important problem, the problem which Rosenzweig described as the impossibility of effecting a transition through the tension between the transcendence and being in the world, between the extra-historic and historic dimension of being. For Lévinas, this tension arises between responsibility and justice. The substitutive responsibility is a relationship to that which is unique. Such a situation, however, never occurs, we are never alone with another being, there is a third one and others. Strictly speaking, there does not exist a pure ethical situation. Everyone is unique for me, so who is more important? In the perspective of this question, there appears philosophy of universality, which founds the law and the State on the basis of logic and philosophical truth, which is that of a kind, species and individual. In this way justice is born. Justice is the limitation of responsibility. Lévinas writes: „If there were no order of Justice, there would be no limit to my responsibility”<sup>79</sup>. On the other hand, it is only with reference to responsibility that one may speak of the legal validity of the State, the law, that is justice. Lévinas, despite his reasonable claim that the State is not the limitation of violence, as was argued by Hobbes and Hegel, but the limitation of mercy, benevolence and responsibility, does not explain what justice really is. It seems to me that it was Hegel who tried to solve this problem. His solution to the issue of the relationships among free beings is the most absolute out of all immanent solutions. It is the most absolute ontological solution. And though in his system there is no transition to the metaphysical order, to the non-intentional consciousness, that is, to what is more primary and fundamental than ontology, yet the solution to the problem of the interpersonal relations in the ontological dimension still remains open. The issue of justice cannot be enclosed in the metaphor of universality, as Lévinas does.

But inasmuch as Hegel's vision is radically ontological, that of Lévinas is radically metaphysical. Here, I do not oppose the idea of responsibility nor individual degrees on the way of substitution. Ethics are readiness to serve, as giving up one's place to another fellow human and affirmation of his being prior to one's own being is the basis for all dialogue and all interpersonal relationships. Yet the extreme form of substitutive responsibility for the guilt of all others appears to be too great a burden to carry. This burden cannot be reduced through justice. It can be carried only by one Messiah. The extreme form of subjective responsibility, if I may risk the statement, appears to follow from the fact that Lévinas stopped short of the final decision to accept the Messiah.

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<sup>79</sup> E. Lévinas, *Philosophie, justice et amour*, p. 10.

Instead of having one, Lévinas made all human beings messiahs. Between responsibility and justice, in Lévinas, there exists an impassable tension. This tension is perceptible especially in his statement which discovers the horizon of future in front of us: „Is it not the case that future is the opening, which expresses the constant delay of justice with respect to the requirements of love?”<sup>80</sup>.

The second kind of tension which is also difficult to overcome arises in the concept of being. Being, for Lévinas, is not synonymous with Good, which is transcendent with respect to being. Yet what is the meaning of the formula: „otherwise than being?” In the commentary to Lévinas, E. Strasser writes that going outside being is not tantamount to lapsing into nothingness. Outside being „means something different than against or instead. Outsidedoes not contain negation, rejection nor replacement”<sup>81</sup>. Lévinas himself asserts: „To reduce good to being, to its calculation and history, means to annihilate it”<sup>82</sup>. It seems obvious that being itself does not signify being good. But does it mean that it is evil, as Lévinas directly asserts in his *Le Temps et l'Autre*?<sup>83</sup> Does being have to be equated with calculation, economy or the effort of survival? In order to be for the other, withdrawing oneself from being in the entirety of disinterestedness; in order to be good one has to be. The more so that, as Lévinas writes: „saying you pervades instantaneously my body (down to the hands that give), in consequence it takes for granted my body (as its own body), things (as the objects of use) and the hunger of the other”<sup>84</sup>. It takes for granted the ontological perspective of freedom, possessing and being. Further, does the desire for being (to be) have to be an obstacle for Good and responsibility? Do I not have the right to be? These are questions which arise in connection with Lévinas' philosophy, who, in my opinion, did not overcome the tension between Good and being, insofar as it can be overcome at all. At any rate one cannot pass by Hamlet's dilemma: To be or not to be. Yet it has to be admitted unconditionally that without responsibility, the fruit of human freedom, bearing in mind the evil embodied in Auschwitz and the camps of Kolyma, one should rather turn away from the future of the years and centuries of our social life, which are to come and which we will have to live through within the world and history.

<sup>80</sup> Ibidem, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup> S. Strasser, *Jenseits von Sein und Zeit*, Den Haag 1978, p. 225.

<sup>82</sup> E. Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 30.

<sup>83</sup> E. Lévinas, *Le temps et l'autre*, p. 139.

<sup>84</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, p. 151.



## WOLNOŚĆ I ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚĆ

Hegla, Rosenzweiga i Lévinasa filozofia kryzysu czasu

### Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu jest problem intersubiektywności w filozofii Hegla oraz jego krytyka w filozofii Rosenzweiga i Lévinasa. Każda z tych filozofii zrodziła się jako odpowiedź na kryzys swego czasu. Hegel kończył swe główne dzieło *Fenomenologię ducha* podczas bitwy o Jenę. Rosenzweig swoją *Gwiazdę Zbawienia* pisał na kartkach frontowej korespondencji jako żołnierz I wojny światowej. Filozofia Lévinasa zrodziła się jako odpowiedź na kryzys człowieczeństwa totalitaryzmu faszystowskiego i komunistycznego. Katastrofy historycznej rzeczywistości ujawniają jednocześnie kryzys ludzkiego stosunku do tej rzeczywistości. Każdy z wymienionych myślicieli potraktował swą filozofię jako odpowiedź na tak pojęty kryzys.

Upadek Rewolucji Francuskiej i polityczna działalność Napoleona skłoniły Hegla do postawienia pytania o miejsce ducha i kierunek jego rozwoju: „Skąd duch przybywa (...) i dokąd zmierza”? W odpowiedzi na kryzys Hegel buduje swój racjonalny, absolutny system, w którym intersubiektywność oparta jest na wolności ducha. Kolejne historyczne wstrząsy ukazały jednak niewystarczalność Heglowskiego systemu. Rosenzweig i Lévinas czuli się zobowiązani poddać radykalnej krytyce Heglowską koncepcję wolności. Rosenzweig uczynił to w imię miłości, a Lévinas postawił wolność ducha pod sądem odpowiedzialności za innego. Tak też tworzą własne koncepcje intersubiektywności. Dla Rosenzweiga relacje międzyludzkie spełniają się w miłości, dla Lévinasa w odpowiedzialności za innego, aż po substytucję.

Filozofię Hegla, Rosenzweiga i Lévinasa łączy więc nie tylko kryzys i próba przewyciężenia go. Między filozofią Hegla a filozofią Lévinasa, właśnie wskutek historycznych kryzysów, dokonuje się przejście od świadomości wolności do świadomości odpowiedzialności. Artykuł usiłuje zrekonstruować to przejście i poddać krytycznej ocenie argumentację. Rosenzweig i Lévinas w obliczu kolejnego kryzysu historycznego (I i II wojna światowa) proponują taką koncepcję intersubiektywności, która jest transcendentna wobec historii i państwa. Tymczasem człowiek, pomimo kryzysów, jakich doświadcza, pozostaje w relacji do innych w ramach życia społecznego i politycznego. Zbyt metafizyczna filozofia intersubiektywności u Rosenzweiga i Lévinasa wymaga krytycznej refleksji.