

Religious Studies 3CP3

Reading Assignment for October 27

1. "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite," pp. 88–93

Note: Levinas begins by introducing "two directions" taken by philosophy in its search for truth. His question regarding both "directions" is: when philosophy follows this "direction," does it really seek (and thus encounter) truth as something "absolutely other"? The first "direction" described under point 1 (pp. 88–90) is that of the Western philosophical tradition that Levinas will reject: although it understands itself to be directed at a truth/reality/ experience that is "absolutely other," Levinas will argue under point 2 (pp. 90–91) that the "freedom" of the Western tradition's search for truth is not actually a relationship with otherness. Freedom/autonomy/"the Same" are terms associated with Western philosophy's traditional search for truth. Heteronomy/"the Other" are terms associated with the philosophical alternative that Levinas would like to propose.

2. *Ethics and Infinity*, pp. 75–77 middle

Reading Assignment for November 3

3. 99 bottom ("let us first observe...") – 102, para. 1, line 9 ("...It converts into intelligibility")

Optional for those who are interested in more about Levinas's objections to Heidegger: 103–5

4. 105 top of page – 112, para. 1 of sec. 5: "...must participate in it"

Recommended Background Reading: pp. 106–7 footnote 48

5. 113: "We separate ourselves from..." – 114 para. 2, line 5: "It is goodness."

Recommended Background Reading: Dana Hollander, "Levinas, Emmanuel" in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* [follow link from syllabus entry to online edition, or see e-mailed handout]: paras 6 and 7, beginning from "Levinas's central project..."