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**Albert Camus: *Rebellion* through the ethical frameworks of
Emmanuel Levinas and Soren Kierkegaard**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Philosophy



School of Philosophy and Theology

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Statement of Authorship

This research is the candidate's own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Conor Spence

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ABSTRACT

Albert Camus, in his novel length essay *The Rebel*, puts forth an argument regarding the nature of rebellion and how it is differentiated from other acts of political violence on account of its fidelity to its initial premise - the fundamental value of all individuals and parties involved. Camus, throughout this text, discusses the limitations of rebellion, its ethical character and how it is differentiated from its fallen counterpart revolution. Due to the fact that this text is primarily a critique of totalising political systems and philosophies, Camus is equivocal about the underlying philosophical foundations of this phenomena, refusing to put forth any argument as to why rebellion occurs, preferring to focus upon what rebellion is. This research proposal will outline an avenue of research into why rebellion occurs by calling on Emmanuel Levinas and Soren Kierkegaard. Specifically, I intend to conduct an ethical reading of Camus' rebellion utilising the thought of Levinas and Kierkegaard in order to argue that rebellion is essentially a manifestation of the human condition and the entailing predisposition for one to act ethically, even if it may go against one's best interests.

CHAPTER I: RECONSTRUCTING THE REBEL

The following chapter will reconstruct from *The Rebel* philosophical issues relevant to the undertaking of this thesis. Initially, I will begin with an analysis of the rebel as an individual in light of Camus' wider absurdist corpus, before demonstrating how this philosophical grounding engenders two unique forms of rebellion – namely, metaphysical rebellion and historical rebellion. The second section will then reconstruct these forms of rebellion in order to ascertain the relevant characteristics of these two phenomena. This will necessitate a genealogical reconstruction of rebellion, so as to effectively document the transition from one's initial, purportedly individual rebellious impulse into the totalizing philosophical and political doctrines of the twentieth century. The final part of this reconstruction will deal with the concepts of moderation, value and ethics that emerge in Camus work. Here I intend to emphasise the ethic of solidarity which originates from the common ground of the absurd, prompting Camus to forgo an absolutist solution in favour of philosophy of limits and relativity. This reconstruction will call upon both primary and secondary sources, including works such as *The Rebel*, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and the notebooks of Camus himself (specifically the 1942-1951 compilation). Additionally, the works of Matthew Sharpe, Ronald Srigley, Tal Sessler and John Foley will be employed in order to deepen my interpretation of *The Rebel*. Furthermore, my reading of the primary sources is influenced by the Hellenistic perspectives pioneered by the likes of Sharpe and Srigley, as it is my contention that such readings will provide a more nuanced and particular reading of Camus.

The rebel, according to Camus, is an individual who has either been subjected to repeated injustices, or, at the very least, has borne witness to said injustices being meted out upon someone else¹. In either situation, the defining characteristic of such an individual is an initial, spontaneous act of rebellion which is, paradoxically, both an act of negation and affirmation². In this way, Camus argues, the rebel should be understood as one who's actions imply, initially, a proclamation of a 'no', but also, the exclamation of a 'yes', as the slave has not only rejected the authority and excesses of the master, but has also recognized within their own self, and, indeed, all human

¹ Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, (Penguin, New York: 1951). 1

² Camus, *The Rebel*, 1

beings, a universal value which is not to be infringed upon³. Indeed, Camus maintains that this value is also present in the master, a value which is duly recognized by the authentic rebel⁴. It is this second element of rebellion that proves to be most interesting, as it confounds any attempt to conceptualise this act of renunciation as a merely egoistic, or cynical act undertaken on behalf of the self. On the contrary, Camus argues that one does not rebel in order to take the position of the master, but rather, one rebels against the very order of master and slave itself. Camus surmises this concept in the closing chapters of *The Rebel*, exclaiming the following.

The more aware rebellion is of demanding a justifiable limit, the more inflexible it becomes. The rebel demands undoubtedly a certain degree of freedom for himself; but in no case, if he is consistent, does he demand the right to destroy the existence and freedom of others. He humiliates no one. The freedom he claims, he claims for all; the freedom he refuses, he forbids everyone to enjoy. He is not only the slave against the master, but also man against the world of master and slave⁵.

It is here that a foundational element of rebellion comes to the fore. Namely, that rebellion appears to possess a humanistic foundation that demands consistency throughout the rebel's undertaking, meaning that the rebel is motivated by principles that transcend self-interest and gesture towards an affirmation of a universal value that they, in turn, must uphold⁶. In this sense, there is an element of self-denial in rebellion, and though the rebel is undoubtedly an individual reacting against certain injustices, this reaction is not one of revenge, rather it is an attempt to transcend the injustice of a given power structure altogether⁷. Broadly speaking then, the rebel can be understood as one who engages in an act of renunciation against perceived injustices, who simultaneously affirms and denies, and whose act is borne of recognition and solidarity as opposed to egoism or the will to power.

³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 1.

⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 226.

⁶ Matthew Joel Sharpe. "The Invincible Summer: On Albert Camus, Philosophical Neoclassicism." *Sophia* 50, no. 4 (2011): 585.

⁷ Sharpe, "The Invincible Summer," 588.

In order to fully understand the figure of the rebel, I will now situate Camus' claims within the wider body of his scholarship, as it is the very conditions of one's existence, that is, the absurdity of one's existence that forms the essential structural elements for rebellion. Absurdity, according to Camus, is the foundational characteristic of human existence, as it represents the single existential state to which all humans can lay claim⁸. In its most basic formulation, this concept can be understood as a sense of bewilderment and confusion originating from an irrevocable split between the self and the unordered, undisclosed cosmos⁹. This sense of bewilderment, Camus argues, arises from the disintegration of previously accepted metaphysical and theological frameworks which had hitherto endowed existence with meaning. The consequence of which, is that the individual will abandon such models and their severance from the lifeworld will thus be brought into painful relief¹⁰. Camus, in his work *The Myth of Sisyphus*, maintains that once one confronts the world of experience without the interpretive lens of the aforementioned metaphysical and theological models, the cosmos is revealed to be devoid of the meanings previously ascribed to it, hence its apparent absurdity¹¹. However, this renunciation does not prohibit meaning and order from existing within the universe, it only states that the meanings previously assigned to the cosmos are, in actual fact, non-existent, resulting in a situation whereby the absurd figure must embark upon a search for meaning in the absence of such grand narratives. In this sense the absurd can be considered a position of scepticism as opposed to nihilism¹².

In terms of enriching our understanding of the rebel, this notion of absurdity as the foundational element of the human condition should be considered crucial, as it confounds any explanations that attempt to use existential, Christian or nihilistic theoretical frameworks in order to ascertain the reasoning behind the rebel's actions. As we shall see in the following paragraphs, this absurdist foundation fosters a novel relationship to meaning, ethics and action quite distinct from the models mentioned above.

⁸ Sharpe, "The Invincible Summer," 583.

⁹ Ronald D. Srigley, *Albert Camus' Critique of Modernity* (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 20.

¹⁰ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York, USA: Penguin, 1942) 4-5.

¹¹ Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 4-5.

¹² Srigley, *Albert Camus' Critique of Modernity*, 27, 31-2.

As noted above, it is tempting to argue that the rebel's initial abandonment of previously unquestioned cosmological and theoretical narratives following their initial confrontation with the absurd will result in the wholesale collapse of meaning. However, the rebel's crusade against the world of master and slave directly contradicts this notion, as the dual actions of affirmation and negation inherent to rebellion are themselves premised upon the tacit acknowledgement of value and meaning¹³. What this suggests then, is that the rebel's abandonment of the various theoretical lenses through which the ideas of meaning and value are justified, is itself not equivalent to the destruction of such ideas in themselves¹⁴. Indeed, the world inhabited by the absurdist rebel is teeming with meaning and transcendence, the only caveat being that human reason alone is unable to interpret it concretely¹⁵. The importance of which, is that this absurdist position provides (ostensibly) the grounds from which the ethic of rebellion can originate. As Matthew Sharpe notes in his work upon absurdity and rebellion.

If Camus is right, that is, the famous motif of the critique of metaphysics shared by both analytic and continental philosophers implies an ethic of human solidarity which precisely none of the philosophers articulate. The grounds of the ethic, which Camus associates with the history of human rebellion decisive in the make-up of modernity, is neither metaphysical optimism, nor Augustinian despair about human nature. It is an ethics grounded in human fallibility, a solidarity in the error and aberration that besets a finite creature for whom all such absolving perspectives, so highly desirable, are unavailable.¹⁶

The connection between the absurdist foundations of the rebel and the act of rebellion is now revealed. The absurd, emerging from both the collapse of the epistemological, metaphysical and cultural paradigms which had hitherto enabled the interpretation of the world, as well as the fundamental split between the being-of-the-self and the cosmos, thus becomes the grounding for an ethic of solidarity predicated upon human

¹³ John Foley, *Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt*, (London, UK; Routledge), 60-61.

¹⁴ Srigley, *Albert Camus Critique of Modernity*, 23-4.

¹⁵ Srigley, *Albert Camus Critique of Modernity*, 27.

¹⁶ Sharpe, "The Invincible Summer," 583.

fallibility¹⁷. Indeed, the absurd, in terms of Camus' thought, can now be seen as an anti-position that provides the theoretical resources necessary for establishing an ethic of solidarity. It is from this position that the abstract human value inherent in any act of rebellion can thus be said to emerge.

To summarise: the rebel is an individual, who, despite being cognisant of the absurdity inherent to human existence, nevertheless, continues to ascribe value and transcendence to the lifeworld and the lives of their fellow inhabitants¹⁸. The implication is that this experience of the absurd functions as the common ground from which the values posited at the outset of rebellion can thus emerge. For Camus then, the value inherent to the self and other stems from the existence of a universal, albeit poorly defined, human nature, that originates from a shared existential state¹⁹. It is this assertion of commonality that prompts rebellion, and though both this alleged human solidarity, and its associated value, are left undefined or contradictory, it is nevertheless, the prime motivator driving the rebel's actions²⁰. The importance of which is that there is a tacit affirmation of value and solidarity inherent in the act of rebellion, and it is this affirmation which entails the recognition of the other – an other who can be both an enemy or a friend, as this affirmation is derived by virtue of the others existence, as opposed to their being-for-others²¹. This tripartite process of recognition, ascription and affirmation is summarised quite nicely by Camus at the end of *The Rebel's* first chapter, when he reformulates Rene Descartes *Cogito ergo sum* into the following statement.

Therefore, the first step for a mind overwhelmed by the strangeness of things is to realize that this feeling of strangeness is shared with all men and that the entire human race suffers from the division between itself and the rest of world. The unhappiness experienced by a single man becomes collective unhappiness. In our daily trials, rebellion plays the same role as does the 'cogito' in the category of thought: it is the first clue. But this clue lures the individual from his solitude. Rebellion is the common ground on which every man bases his first values. I rebel – therefore we exist.²²

¹⁷ Albert Camus, *Notebooks 1942-1951* (New York, USA: Knopf, 1963), 142.

¹⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, X.

¹⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 195.

²⁰ Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* (New York, USA: Knopf, 1961), 28.

²¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

²² Camus, *The Rebel*, 10.

The above passage demonstrates that the figure of the rebel utilizes this common experience of the absurd as the starting point from which to begin the affirmative element of rebellion, and whilst Camus refuses to provide an in-depth account of how this process occurs in concrete philosophical terminology, the general process of value-recognition and affirmation has been revealed. Moreover, as we shall see in the ensuing paragraphs, it is this alleged solidarity borne out of a common condition that shapes the very form of rebellion into that of metaphysical, and political rebellion.

On account of the absurdist particulars inherent to the rebel's existence, rebellion initially manifests itself in the realm of metaphysics. The aptly named metaphysical rebellion should be understood essentially as a protest against the realities of one's existence²³. Specifically, it is a protest against creation and its ends (or lack thereof), whereby the rebel, having noticed the seemingly random and arbitrary nature of the universe after their initial confrontation with the absurd, embarks upon a revolt against these realities in order to instil this world with a modicum of order and civility²⁴. In this sense, Camus notes, rebellion is paradoxically a demand for order amidst disorder, an attempt to inscribe self-made notions of fairness, liberty and justice into the very fabric of creation²⁵. This confrontation with the absurd also leads to a rebellion against the previously accepted metaphysical systems and hierarchies that helped structure the rebel's place within creation, the outcome of which, can be anything from the creation of entirely new value systems (as in the case of Nietzsche & de Sade)²⁶ or indeed the subversion of Christian binaries and the edification of the devil (as in the case of the Romantics)²⁷. However, at the root of all metaphysical revolt is an initial protest against the existing order, and, following this, the desire for a newer set of self-made values²⁸. In the following subsections of this reconstruction I will conduct a more detailed analysis of metaphysical rebellion, however the important idea to note here is that the absurdity of the rebel's condition engenders two unique forms of rebellion,

²³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 11.

²⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 11-12.

²⁵ Sharpe, "The Invincible Summer." 589-90.

²⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 24 & 50.

²⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 26.

²⁸ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 59.

that, whilst possessing many commonalities, nevertheless, differ fundamentally in terms of their object.

In addition to metaphysical rebellion, the absurd also prompts various revolts in the sphere of human relations throughout history. This so-called historical rebellion, in a manner similar to metaphysical rebellion, is motivated by a fundamental rejection of the dominant unjust order in the name of values and human solidarity²⁹. As a movement, its conception lies within the initial act of metaphysical rebellion, however it becomes manifest in the world after the rebel chooses to transfer the conclusions derived from this initial cosmological revolt into the political realm³⁰. The consequences that arise from such movements, as Camus notes in his historical critique of political rebellion, is more often than not the perversion of one's initial rebellious values in favour of absolutist political doctrines that seek to achieve totality by means of dominion³¹. This is due to the fact that the abandonment of certain metaphysical structures will lead to the de-divinisation of the lifeworld, and, subsequently, the attempt to substitute this lack of order by constructing a political absolute that will effectively subsume humanity beneath its dictates³². Camus argued that this tendency was an inherent part of Hegelian historicism and Marxist materialism, as both doctrines endeavoured to replace God with history, thereby endowing the actions of those successful with cosmological legitimacy³³. The outcome of which, is that any ethical trespasses committed by these regimes and their proponents are justified in terms of a future utopia that is, as of yet, non-existent³⁴.

As was the case with metaphysical rebellion, these two topics will be approached in further detail below, as my intention here is only to make explicit the transition undergone by the rebel, from their confrontation with the absurd, to the act metaphysical revolt, and eventually, the project of historical rebellion. From the above paragraphs, it is clear that the absurd is a seminal part of rebellion and the rebel, as it

²⁹ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 61.

³⁰ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 60-1.

³¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 84.

³² Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 65.

³³ Camus, *The Notebooks*, 136.

³⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 157-8.

provides the conditions necessary from which rebellion finds its grounding in the world of everyday lived experience.

As I have suggested in the above paragraphs, metaphysical rebellion stems from a seminal point of confrontation with the absurd³⁵. The Rebel, having grasped the twin realities of cosmological indifference and the all-pervading sense of incompleteness inherent to their own existence, will now seek to impress upon the universe a sense of order or structure that is more palatable to their moral and ethical sensibilities³⁶. In short, metaphysical rebellion is a demand made by the rebel on behalf of humanity, that the fragmented, unjust world of everyday experience become a unified totality with a discernible logos or structure³⁷. As Camus notes in the introductory part of his analysis of metaphysical rebellion, “Metaphysical rebellion is the justified claim of a desire for unity against the suffering of life and death – in that it protests against the incompleteness of human life, expressed by death, and its dispersion, expressed by evil.”³⁸

The consequences of this is often the rejection of dominant metaphysical narratives that had previously framed the rebel’s existence³⁹. This is evident in the first challenges to Judeo-Christian models mounted by the Marquis de Sade⁴⁰ and later, the romantics⁴¹, who, having accepted the existence of God, nevertheless challenged his authority on the grounds that the current order was hypocritical and unjust. Metaphysical rebellion, therefore, represents the first efforts to dissociate the providential order with ones understanding of the supreme good, as the evils inherent to existence appeared to contradict the notion that the divine order was fundamentally just⁴². In this sense metaphysical rebellion can be considered the first articulation of a contrary position that places a man-made system above that of its metaphysically preordained counterparts. In turn, this would lead to various rebellious projects that

³⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, XI.

³⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 11-2.

³⁷ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 73-4.

³⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 12.

³⁹ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 59-61.

⁴⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 18-25.

⁴¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 26.

⁴² Matthew Sharpe, *Camus, Philosopher: To Return to our Beginnings* (Boston, USA: Brill, 2015), 395.

would attempt to enact the rebel's desire for unity despite the impossibility of such an undertaking⁴³.

This project of metaphysical rebellion would eventually culminate in the de-divinization of the world, which is to say that the philosophical and ideological doctrines emerging from this initial act of revolt would ultimately discard the notion of divinity altogether and replace it with some form of alternative⁴⁴. However, as Ronald Srigley notes, this process of de-divinization began earlier with Judeo-Christian philosophy, as the doctrine severed divinity from the lifeworld by locating God externally to it, thereby removing inherent meaning from the world and instead positioning the almighty as the font from which meaning emerges and then is subsequently inscribed⁴⁵. From this foundation, the metaphysical rebel removed God from the equation altogether, but in doing so, failed to reinscribe the world with any inherent meaning or divinity⁴⁶, the result of which, were doctrines such as the nihilism of Frederic Nietzsche that sought to replace God with man⁴⁷, or the Hegelian substitution of God with history⁴⁸. Thus, history and/or might become the locus of meaning, the former being the abandonment of any concept of the good and the latter suggesting that the absolute good is located at the apocalyptic end of history, whereby the sum total of historical endeavours inexorably reaches a logical endpoint that absolves the universe of its evil⁴⁹.

As Camus noted in his exposition on such theories, the moral content of certain actions can only be adjudged as ethical or unethical by such theories in light of a proposed future outcome, thereby legitimising certain actions under the aristocratic right of the *ubermensch*⁵⁰ or, alternatively, beneath the guise of historical absolutism⁵¹. It is here that Camus' critique of metaphysical rebellion reveals a central tenant of his own neo-Hellenistic stance, namely, that the lifeworld is divine in-itself, which is to say that the

⁴³ Sharpe, *Camus, Philosophe*, 182.

⁴⁴ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 64-5.

⁴⁵ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 66-7.

⁴⁶ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 71.

⁴⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 55.

⁴⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 84.

⁴⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 86.

⁵⁰ Sean, Derek Illing, "Camus and Nietzsche on Politics in an Age of Absurdity." *European Journal of Political Theory* vol. 16, no. 1. (2017): 24-40. 29.

⁵¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 88.

initial impulse of rebellion is itself predicated upon an assumed, almost immanent value or set of values⁵². Indeed, without such an assumption the rebel's insurrection against injustice (both metaphysical and material), would be rendered meaningless or pointless. Thus, de-divinization should be understood as an unfortunate biproduct of metaphysical rebellion that ultimately contravenes the initial values determined at the outset of rebellion, as it seeks to ignore them all together.

In his genealogy of metaphysical rebellion, Camus seeks to demonstrate the historical progression from the initial act of rebellion, into fully-fledged historical nihilism. As mentioned above, the movement at the root of such a process is the wholesale removal of divinity, and, along with it, any form of vertical transcendence or meaning⁵³. The functional outcome of such philosophical assumptions is that the world is stripped of any inherent meaning, with that meaning being subsequently reinscribed into the outcome of history – in other words, the end of history.⁵⁴ This position is most famously articulated in the thought of Hegel and Marx, however it is the latter that Camus devotes the most attention to, as the pseudo-Marxist states of the twentieth century appear to embody the greatest betrayal of one's initial commitment to human flourishing and justice on behalf of the future proletariats wellbeing. Specifically, this refers to the atrocities committed by the Soviet Union that were allegedly intended to transform what was then the present-day state into a Marxist workers utopia⁵⁵. The issue with this position, is that the states actions, when viewed through a historicist ideological framework, are above reproach, as history, not humanity, is the only legitimate adjudicator of the state according to this theory⁵⁶. This abdication of responsibility, and the associated immunity to contemporary judgement, was labelled historical nihilism by Camus, as it refuted the existence of contemporary value in favour of the providential gaze of history⁵⁷.

The outcome of such thinking is predictable, the positioning of history as the absolute meant that the state had the necessary philosophical grounding from which to subsume

⁵² Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 65.

⁵³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 116.

⁵⁴ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 74-5.

⁵⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 158.

⁵⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 158.

⁵⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 120.

the human person, the state, being the harbinger of the end of history, could rightfully attempt to bring about this end by any means necessary⁵⁸. The ultimate consequence, is the complete devaluation of the human person and the birth of rational state terror, culminating in a fundamental perversion of rebellious values⁵⁹.

The metaphysical realm is not, however, the only site of rebellion, instead, it should be viewed as an act that has subsequently endowed various flesh-and-blood rebellions with a certain kind of rationality⁶⁰. Camus, in his analysis of historical rebellion, sought to demonstrate the link between the initial rebellious act of value-affirmation and the later perversion of these same values caused by the descent into revolution⁶¹. It is this distinction between rebellion and revolution that enables Camus to subsequently introduce a binary through which to distinguish between actions he deems as legitimate and illegitimate, authentic and inauthentic, rebellious and revolutionary – a distinction which is enabled by an assessment as to whether the initial rebellious premise has been adhered to or not. As is often the case throughout the *Rebel*, the criteria used to differentiate two concepts from one another may differ from one context to the next, however Camus quite eruditely articulates the difference between the two concepts.

Rebellion is, by nature, limited in scope. It is no more than incoherent pronouncement. Revolution, on the contrary, originates in the realm of ideas. Specifically, it is the injection of ideas into historic experience while rebellion is only the movement which leads from individual experience into the realm of ideas.⁶²

This distinction indicates the opposition between the relativity resting at the heart of rebellion and the absolutism of revolution. As the former, by virtue of having its origins within one's confrontation with the absurd and the indignities of everyday life, finds itself diametrically opposed to the latter that constructs an absolute which is itself external to experience, before seeking to enact this absolute concretely⁶³. In turn, this

⁵⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 157.

⁵⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 185.

⁶⁰ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 60-1.

⁶¹ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 58-9.

⁶² Camus, *The Rebel*, 59.

⁶³ Sharpe, *Camus Philosophe*, 184-5.

mandates two very differing sets of attitudes, actions, and endgames inherent to each pursuit. However, as we have seen in the above paragraphs on metaphysical rebellion, this distinction is easily blurred, as metaphysical rebellion has often endeavoured to construct new philosophical doctrines in the aftermath proceeding from one's initial act of revolt, before subsequently seeking to manifest such ideas in the world of lived experience (as evidenced by Hegelian-Marxism, historical nihilism etc.). Regardless, the distinction between rebellion and revolution has been disclosed, and as I will demonstrate in subsequent paragraphs, this distinction emerges time and time again throughout various historical rebellions as each act inevitably falls into revolution.

The first historical example Camus analyses in order to illustrate this binary between rebellion and revolution is that of the French Revolution, specifically the philosophy of Saint-Just, and the regimes pursuit of absolute justice following their disposal of the previous government⁶⁴. The conflict that Camus identifies here is Saint-Just's attempt to enshrine virtue and justice as the new absolutes in the nascent post-revolutionary society. Specifically, his conclusion that the law was perfect and absolute, and the failure of the citizenry to live up to such lofty expectations was not a judicial failing, but rather, a human one⁶⁵. The consequence of which, was not the freedom and virtue initially espoused at the outset of the revolution, but rather the attempt to bring an idea birthed as an abstraction external to experience into the political realm. Thus, the distinction emerges, the demand for totality in the judicial state meant that the solidarity predicated upon a universal experience of the absurd was abandoned due to Saint-Just's insistence on transitioning principles external to ones lived experience into the sphere of politics and governance⁶⁶. The result of which, argues Camus, was not the liberation of humankind but rather the introduction rational terror, as the state, having now formalised morality, is now quite justified in committing its atrocities thanks to this overarching absolute⁶⁷. In this way the limits imposed by rebellion are shattered, and the formerly rebellious state transitions into a repressive apparatus through which to enforce the totality of justice. Such an example

⁶⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 73-4.

⁶⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 74.

⁶⁶ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 63.

⁶⁷ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 63-4.

demonstrates the dual tendencies of this phenomena, that is, the affirmative, yet relative world of limited rebellion, and the absolutist universal processes of revolution.

In order to continue our analysis of absolutism and historical rebellion, the relationship between historicist philosophies and the Soviet Revolutionary state must now be analysed. For Camus, this was probably the most important area of critique, not only because it was a contemporary issue at the time of the essay's writing, but also because this issue bore witness to a unique synthesis between metaphysical rebellion, de-divinization of the lifeworld, and a deliberate, somewhat enthusiastic attempt to inscribe ideas external from experience into one's concrete lived reality⁶⁸. The Soviet State embodied revolution for Camus, in that its pursuit of a worker's utopia gave the state a mandate that could justify any amount of atrocities and repressions in the name of "future man"⁶⁹. What this meant was that the values of justice and freedom themselves were suspended until such time as the communist state had succeeded in its endeavour to bring about an age of universal rule, and, until this goal was reached, everything was justified. In a lengthy quote, Camus encapsulates this notion beautifully.

From now on the doctrine is definitively identified with the prophecy. For the sake of justice in the far-away future, it authorizes injustice throughout the entire course of history and becomes the type of mystification which Lenin detested more than anything in the world. It contrives the acceptance of injustice, crime and falsehood by the promise of a miracle.⁷⁰

This passage suggests that a revolution will attempt to inscribe human-made absolutes into the lifeworld, and that a state will willingly stray from the initial rebellious act of value-affirmation in order to achieve this. Consequently, revolution abandons any pretence of ethical action in favour of a future, as of yet unrealised ethical age, one which may, or may not come to fruition. Due to this, the principles articulated in the act rebellion, both metaphysical and historical, are once more perverted.

⁶⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 84.

⁶⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 168.

⁷⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 179.

Throughout the preceding subsections I have outlined the absurdist foundations of the rebel and rebellion, the two differing forms of rebellion that this position engenders, and the fundamental distinction between rebellion and revolution. Throughout this analysis, I have made frequent allusions to certain ‘fundamental values’ that lie at the heart of rebellion, however these values have thus far remained ambiguous. However, the time has come to define these two principles as they represent the all-important regulatory framework through which one might curtail the perils of revolution. Camus suggests that rebellion is in part motivated by the pursuit of liberty and justice on behalf of the self and the other⁷¹. In turn, the rebel must pursue both equally and relatively to one another, as the absolute attainment of one over the other would see the destruction of its counterpart and vice versa⁷². Indeed, Camus states as much in the concluding section of *The Rebel* where he describes this tension in the following manner.

Absolute justice is achieved by the suppression of all contradiction: therefore, it destroys freedom. The revolution to achieve justice, through freedom, ends by aligning them against one another. Thus, there exists in every revolution, once the class which dominated up to then has been liquidated, a stage in which it gives birth, itself, to a movement of rebellion which indicated its limits and announces its chances of failure.⁷³

The tension in rebellion arises from the equal pursuit of these values. Thus, the rebel must forgo the installation of an absolutist regime in favour of an order of relativity found amidst these two values. In direct contrast to revolution, we see the primacy of experience and solidarity emerging over absolutist ideals, as the instigation of something external to the relativity of these values and the limits imposed by the other, would ultimately destroy both by sublimating all beneath an abstract. In conclusion then, the values espoused by the rebel throughout the various iterations of historical rebellion, are those of liberty and justice, which in turn, are predicated on the metaphysical rebel’s initial outcry for order and meaning amidst an uncaring cosmos⁷⁴.

⁷¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 229.

⁷² Foley, *Albert Camus*, 78-9.

⁷³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 229.

⁷⁴ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 57-8 & 78.

These values also privilege a certain form of relation with the other, as the aforementioned “ethic of solidarity” appears to endorse a methodology of engagement that should simultaneously acknowledge this alleged commonality while also endeavouring to resist the temptation of abolishing difference altogether. This notion is expressed in two seemingly contradictory statements by Camus about rebellion.

...put in the first rank of its frame of reference an obvious mutual complicity amongst men, a common texture, the solidarity of chains, a communication between human being and human being which makes men similar and united. In this way, it compelled the mind to take a first step in defiance of an absurd world.⁷⁵

Absolute revolution, in fact, supposes the absolute malleability of human nature and its possible reduction to the condition of historic force. But rebellion, in man, is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms. It is the affirmation of nature common to all men, which eludes the world of power.⁷⁶

However, this mutual solidarity does not permit the rebel to subsume the other beneath an overarching idea of humankind. Indeed, the authentic rebel is barred from assuming that the other, can, by virtue of some grand metaphysical framework, be situated concretely within the bounds of the friend/enemy distinction, or, additionally, that they should conform to some ideal.⁷⁷ Rather, there is a degree of mutual complicity that fosters revolution, but the rebel must not idealize the other according to what they are not, lest they begin to impose absolutes on this person⁷⁸. It is at this point that Camus’ seemingly contradictory position on otherness emerges, one that assumes both difference and commonality. First there is difference, because the rebel refuses to be reduced to a mere expression of various historical conditions, thereby asserting their uniqueness in the face of their respective historical and cultural circumstances⁷⁹. However there is also commonality, because the absurdist condition is endemic to all of humanity, and, as such, is a condition that is shared with all others, thereby asserting

⁷⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 223.

⁷⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 195.

⁷⁷ Matthew Sharpe, “Reading Camus with or After, Levinas Rebellion and the Primacy of Ethics.” *Philosophy Today* 55, no. 1 (2011): 84.

⁷⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 197.

⁷⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 195.

a certain degree of solidarity despite the myriad of distinctions that serve to demarcate individual human beings from one another⁸⁰. I shall explore this position further in my subsequent analysis of Emmanuel Levinas, as I believe his work may provide some degree of insight. However, note that authentic rebellion acknowledges, and, indeed, welcomes a model of otherness that relies upon both difference and solidarity to make its central claims, thereby creating the tension inherent to the relativity of rebellion.

The presence of rebellious values, and the entailing ethic of solidarity that they are predicated upon, appear to endow rebellion with a fundamentally ethical character. Indeed, as Camus mentions in the opening chapters of *The Rebel*, the act of rebellion is founded upon an initial act of recognition of the other and their innate value, meaning that rebel will often take action on behalf of someone who appears to be subjected to an injustice, yet, nevertheless, remains a mystery to them⁸¹. In this sense rebellion has a somewhat irrational character, in the sense that the rebel will quite willingly act against their own rational self-interest in the name of solidarity, a fact which is evident in the rebel's willingness to confront death, social ostracization and spiritual discomfort in order to protect the oppressed figure⁸². Furthermore, the rebel's affirmation of value is not just limited to the victims, on the contrary, once the initial rebellious movement is instigated, the solidarity the rebel shares with the victim is extended to all regardless of the friend/enemy distinction, meaning that the perpetrators of violence and oppression are also somewhat protected by this movement⁸³.

It is here that Camus gestures towards a conception of otherness that, on the one hand, acknowledges the ethical obligation one has to this person, whilst, on the other hand, rejects any pretences to supreme moral authority. The result of which, is that the movement of rebellion is non-totalizing - it desires neither the unification of humankind beneath the totality of an ethical system, or indeed, to mete out punishment on behalf of those newly liberated, rather, it imposes limits on one's actions by virtue of the movements basis in relativity and the acknowledgement that no single paradigm

⁸⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 223.

⁸¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

⁸² Camus, *The Rebel*, 225-6.

⁸³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

can coherently subsume the complexities of human life beneath it⁸⁴. Therefore, rebellion contains within itself an understanding of otherness and ethics predicated on relativity, meaning that the post-rebellious phase can never legitimately be one of conquest or unification, rather it can only be the establishment of a rule of moderation based upon an understanding of solidarity and the acknowledgement of certain limits⁸⁵.

The concept of moderation is perhaps the most important sub-principle within the movement of authentic rebellion as it serves to deter the rebel from revolutionary excesses. Essentially moderation is the sum total of Camus understanding of solidarity, rebellious values, relativity and the absurd, it is the notion that the rebel's actions are rooted in the common ground of the absurd, and that the rebel is no exception to the values that they affirm, meaning that their actions are themselves curtailed by certain ethical limitations found between the tandem values of liberty and justice⁸⁶. Camus defines this principle as;

Moderation, born of rebellion, can only live by rebellion. It is a perpetual conflict, continually created and mastered by the intelligence. It does not triumph either in the impossible or in the abyss. It finds its equilibrium through them. Whatever we may do, excess will always keep its place in the heart of man, in the place where solitude is found. We all carry within us our places of exile, our crimes, and our ravages. But our task is not to unleash them on the world; it is to fight them in ourselves and in others.⁸⁷

In this sense moderation is a fundamental tension existing at the heart of the rebellious movement that finds its equilibrium by rooting virtue within reality itself, thereby forgoing absolutism in favour of relativity⁸⁸. The significance of which, is that the rebel can never truly assume the privilege of sanctioned murder, as the innate value of human life affirmed within the initial throws of rebellion is unable to be surpassed on principle alone⁸⁹. It is this refusal to enforce a criterion that essentialises an absolute

⁸⁴ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 79-80.

⁸⁵ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 79-80.

⁸⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 239.

⁸⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 243.

⁸⁸ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 79-80.

⁸⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 120.

principle within society, and, furthermore, to be severed from one another that provides the limitations for what legitimate rebellion can and cannot do. This is by virtue of the fact that the rebel acknowledges that the authority to take a life is not conferred on the basis of principle or moral authority, and that such an act would contradict the initial value posited at the outset of rebellion – that of human worth⁹⁰. In this sense, moderation should be understood as an acknowledgement of certain limitations originating in the absurdist foundations of rebellion, along with the relativity that it presupposes. Defined thus, no one is above the initial principle of human worth affirmed at the outset of rebellion.

As demonstrated previously in this reconstruction, Camus' understanding of rebellion is predicated upon a manifold of specific understandings regarding time, historical expediency and the divinity of the lifeworld. In turn, these positions draw their justification from what Ronald Srigley and Matthew Sharpe identify as Camus neo-Hellenistic stance, a position that forgoes a linear understanding of history in favour of a cyclical one⁹¹, and a de-divinized perspective of the lifeworld in light of divinized one⁹². The consequences of which, is that there is never a real endpoint for rebellion, it remains a constant in human existence just as injustice, oppression and evil will always preponderate in some way⁹³. Furthermore, this cyclical understanding of history directly refutes the historicist perspective that certain actions can be legitimized as historical exceptions designed to bring about the end of history, as this cyclical model cannot, by definition, have an end. What this means is that rebellion will always function as that movement which attempts to bring about justice and remain more or less constant as the realisation of an ethical absolute is simply impossible. This notion is articulated by Srigley.

In contrast to the seamless worlds of historical and divine providence, the Greeks offer us a tragic world in which rebellion is a permanent feature of human life because the sources of rebellion – injustice, misfortune, suffering – are also permanent features of human life.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 79.

⁹¹ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 72-3.

⁹² Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 71.

⁹³ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 74.

⁹⁴ Srigley, *Camus' Critique of Modernity*, 74

The importance of this perspective is that it reveals the roots of rebellion and the metaphysical forces guiding it, as the cycle of history, the immutable nature of human beings, and the inherent divinity of the world, will inevitably result in the rebellions repeated occurrences. It is here that the limit of rebellion once again becomes apparent, as its basis in history means that it may only settle for a relative end as opposed to an absolute end, as the causes for it will inevitably remain constant along with the attempt to remedy such evils. In this sense rebellion should be considered a limited ethical phenomenon situate amidst a neo-Hellenistic standpoint.

As stated at the outset of this chapter, the purpose of this reconstruction was to provide an overview of *The Rebel* and the concepts introduced therein. From here on, the abovementioned topics of otherness, relativity, rebellious values, subjectivity, moderation, discourse and the rebel's avowed resistance to totality will become the focus of my analysis. Consequently, chapters two and three of this work will be devoted to reconstructing concepts germane to this investigation from the respective *oeuvres* of Levinas and Kierkegaard. Having then established a sufficient theoretical foundation for this thesis, I will then bring these notions together for a final comparative analysis in chapter four of this work.

CHAPTER II: REBELLION AND EMMANUEL LEVINAS

Throughout the following chapter I will reconstruct the areas of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy pertinent to the ensuing comparative analysis. To this end, I will begin by addressing the central elements of Levinas's philosophy before demonstrating how these ideas enable an understanding of politics, ethics and violence conducive to a closed reading of Albert Camus' *The Rebel*. I will begin this chapter by first introducing, and then elucidating upon, the concepts of; being as exteriority, separation and interiority, otherness and alterity, the face, discourse and signification, desire and height, Ethical Metaphysics, freedom and responsibility, totality and infinity, justice, the critique of ontology, glory, politics, fecundity, and finally, the concept of substitution and the Man-God. In writing this chapter it is my intention to not only provide an overview of Levinas's core philosophy, but also to identify the homologies between Camus and Levinas that I will then explore in later sections of this thesis. Indeed, my analysis of Camus' *The Rebel* and the nature of authentic rebellion in chapter four will, for the most part, utilise Levinas's formulations of ethical metaphysics, glory, fecundity, justice and the Man-God as an expository device for specific elements of *The Rebel*. The following reconstruction has utilised a wide array of primary sources, including key texts such as *Totality and Infinity*, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, *Entre Nous*, and *Collected Philosophical Papers* in addition to the essay *Ethics as First Philosophy*. Along with the aforementioned primary texts, I will also call upon ancillary works from Brian Treanor, Daniel Smith, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi in order to further round out my conceptual analysis.

The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas rests upon an understanding of being which is diametrically opposed to both Heideggerian ontology and Husserlian phenomenology. At the centre of Levinas's philosophy rests the notion that being is exteriority or, in other words, that being is alterity⁹⁵. For Levinas, the other remains in itself a being of absolute alterity, something beyond the intermediary of ontology with an essence that is not some inner or hidden property to be unveiled in act of disclosure⁹⁶. Rather, it is

⁹⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh, USA: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 290.

⁹⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 36.

a being revealed in the expression of the face⁹⁷. In contradistinction to Husserlian or Heideggerian models, the revelation of the face precedes the apprehension of the other, where the metaphysics of the encounter transcends any attempt at phenomenological incorporation, negates the *Sinngebung* of the I, and overflows the synthesis between the subject and the represented object⁹⁸. The other maintains this exteriority by virtue of an inner transcendence that confounds and overcomes the plasticity of perceptive and cognitive apparatuses⁹⁹. This means that one's relation with the other is not one of synthesis or understanding, instead, it takes place on the surface of a being exterior and alien to oneself, whereby 'the face' (not literally the others face, more like a process of discourse) is in fact the essence of the being encountered by the subject. The exteriority of being according to Levinas, rests upon an understanding of separation that attaches to the same and the other an element of non-essence which is not to be overcome, hence:

Exteriority is true not in a lateral view apperceiving it in its opposition to interiority; it is true in a face to face that is no longer entirely vision, but goes further than vision.¹⁰⁰

And:

The truth of being is not the image of being, the idea of its nature; it is the being situated in a subjective field which deforms vision, but precisely thus allows exteriority to state itself.¹⁰¹

This conception of being as exteriority negates any efforts of the same to totalize the other, meaning that the categories and frameworks of understanding assigned to them by the same are inevitably ruptured by the infinity possessed by the other. This deformation of vision, or the inadequacy of the gaze to properly apprehend being is caused by an infinity, or non-essence residing in the core of the separated being¹⁰². The metaphysics of this infinitude will be explained in the following paragraph;

⁹⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50-1.

⁹⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51-2.

⁹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 296.

¹⁰⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 290.

¹⁰¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 290.

¹⁰² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 290.

however, it is important to note that it is the driving force behind the alterity that, for Levinas, defines being.

Separation is produced by the infinite nature of being, ensuring that the other cannot be concretely encapsulated by its corresponding idea or representation. The infinite, or infinity for Levinas, is understood as a concept that has an ideatum exceeding its idea, that is, it is inevitable that the very notion of infinity available to consciousness is exceeded by the reality of the existent that it corresponds to, effectively rendering it unknowable and therefore irrevocably separated from being¹⁰³. In Levinas's words:

Infinity is a characteristic of a transcendent being as transcendent; the infinite is the absolutely other. The transcendent is the sole ideatum of which there can only be an idea in us; it is infinitely removed, that is exterior, because it is infinite.¹⁰⁴

Thus, the others exteriority is maintained by an absolute separation produced by infinity. In turn, this ensures the alterity of the other despite the pitfalls of the subject-object dichotomy. This means that the other is unable to be fully integrated into an ontological system, even as a counterpart that possesses all of the same qualities of the self, as the other will just transcend these impositions¹⁰⁵. Infinity manifests itself in being through the interiority of the same and the other, this psychism, or inner life should be understood as a dimension of non-essence that produces an interior time separate to historical time¹⁰⁶. What is meant here by 'psychism' or 'interior time' is the personal dimension of consciousness that is unable to be accounted for by so-called universal time, it exists outside of the lifeworld and therefore possesses an element of non-being that shatters the static understandings which can be readily placed upon the world of appearance¹⁰⁷. Levinas attributes the separation of being to this interiority as it assigns a dimension to being that remains unknowable and external to totality. This concept is expressed by Levinas in *Totality and Infinity*.

¹⁰³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 49.

¹⁰⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 49.

¹⁰⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹⁰⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 54.

¹⁰⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 55.

The separation is radical only if each being has its own time, that is, its interiority, if each time is not absorbed into the universal time. By virtue of the dimension of interiority each being declines the concept and withstands totalization.¹⁰⁸

Separation as a phenomenon produced by infinity maintains exteriority/alterity by endowing being with an extra-dimensional realm of unknowable potentiality and transcendence, thereby mandating that the other remain absolutely other through the negation of understanding itself. This leads Levinas to conclude that being is exteriority, and, additionally, to propose a novel conception of interaction that forgoes subsuming the other beneath sensory apparatuses and frameworks of understanding in favour of a process that utilises discourse and signification, in other words – the face¹⁰⁹.

Otherness in Levinas's work is shaped by the abovementioned factors. The other is defined by their exteriority, resisting totality via a combination of passive resistance provided by their interiority, and the infinitude of this interior realm. The other is thus an anathema to any static characterisations enforced upon it, stubbornly remaining an individuation despite the attempted imposition of a kind or type. The other is not merely the mirror of the same in a manner similar to the Hegelian other, they are not a competing self-consciousness battling for recognition upon a universal plain, but rather, they are an unknowable presence to be encountered¹¹⁰. The other comes to the same from 'on high', that is, from an interior realm of transcendence. For the same, this quality ruptures the perceived singularity of the lifeworld, manifesting an infinity that overflows the parameters of one's worldview¹¹¹. Levinas argues that:

The collectivity in which I say "you" or "we" is not a plural of the "I". I, you- these are not individuals of a common concept. Neither possession, nor the unity of number nor the unity of concepts link me to the Stranger, the Stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself. But Stranger also means the free one. Over him I have no power. He escapes my grasp by an

¹⁰⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 57.

¹⁰⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

¹¹⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 36.

¹¹¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 297.

essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal. He is not wholly in my site.¹¹²

The other as the exterior being thus resists knowing and domination through an interior transcendence borne out of separation. They cannot be reduced to an appearance, and thus to an object. Indeed, the perceptive apparatuses of sensory experience and the accompanying relation of the subject-object dichotomy is not equal to the event of the encounter, as they are inevitably overflowed by the separation produced in transcendence¹¹³. Naturally, this conception of otherness warrants a method of interaction that avoids these pitfalls whilst engaging the other in such a way as to preserve their transcendence and separation. Levinas proposes that authentic interactions with the other are achieved through encountering ‘the face’, meaning a process involving signification through discourse and language.

The face in Levinas’s work is referred to consistently as that which is possessed by the other and received by the ‘same’ (meaning the self) amidst the event of the encounter. Contrary to popular use, the face does not denote the others’ visage, instead, the ‘face’ refers to the living expression of the other, it is a mode of expression that successively confounds the reception of the other as an object, be they an object of one’s gaze, or an object of one’s knowledge¹¹⁴. The face, according to Levinas’s, is discourse, in the sense that it speaks and manifests the existent existing in its full transcendence¹¹⁵. In turn, the transcendence or spontaneity of discourse overcome one’s efforts to thematise this encountered individual, confounding the attempt to ‘know’ by introducing that which is infinite, thereby preserving the other in their alterity¹¹⁶. This understanding of the face is reflected in the following passage from *Totality and Infinity*.

The face is a living presence; it is expression. The life of expression consists in undoing the form in which the existent, exposed as a theme, is thereby dissimulated. The face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

¹¹³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

¹¹⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50-1.

¹¹⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹¹⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

¹¹⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

The face, defined thus, presents the exterior being of the absolutely other in its full transcendence in such a way as to negate the attempt to objectify it, pre-empting the phenomenological apprehension of the other by providing a metaphysics of the encounter that posits discourse as expression¹¹⁸. The face proves favourable as a site for the encounter because it remains exterior to the self, whilst also evidencing the infinity of the other due to the spontaneous nature of discourse. Here, the infinity of the other comes to the fore through its expression in language, it is neither prepared nor objective, and it can introduce into the self what was not previously there, hence the notion of ‘overcoming’ the mental, or phenomenological form of the other¹¹⁹. In all of Levinas’s work the encounter with the face is the site from which the ethical relation originates, with the revelation of the face being an experience that profoundly alters the being of the same, an important consideration to note is that the face is not a static or physical object, it is nothing other than the metaphysics of otherness and infinity, and thus, it will come to initiate the ethical relation¹²⁰.

The face, as the presentation of the existent in its alterity, is discourse and language. Language and signification in Levinas’s thought functions as a vehicle through which ethics originates. Signification through discourse or language (both appear to be interchangeable in Levinas’s work) is considered external to the deliberations of intellectual intuition, it is not a synthesis between external phenomena and internal processes of meaning-making. As mentioned above, signification manifested in the face, is an ‘original relation with exterior being’¹²¹ whereby meaning is derived outside of the self in concert with the other. Signification is the revelation of the existent being on its own terms, the meaning discovered does not originate in conclusions drawn after the fact, but rather, in the very process of revelation, here, the other in their transcendence introduces something entirely new¹²². Levinas argues that signification upon encountering the face is teaching, the revelation of meaning on account of:

¹¹⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

¹¹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 193.

¹²⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, “Ethics as First Philosophy”, in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1992), 82-3.

¹²¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

¹²² Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer), 1991, 13.

Meaning is not produced as an ideal essence; it is said and taught by presence, and teaching is not reducible to sensible or intellectual intuition which is the thought of the same. To give meaning to one's presence is an event irreducible to evidence¹²³

Signification through discourse is the revelation or manifestation of being that precipitates the beginnings of meaning itself. Meaning for Levinas is produced by signification, being introduced by the other via one's encounter with the face. Through this signification the other is revealed external to a singular point of view and thus is exhibited on their own terms where the meaning of that which is experienced is not determined by a singular, internal process of deliberation, but instead originates in a realm exterior to the same¹²⁴. This means that the other comes to teach the same by way of signification, and, by extension, their encounter with the face¹²⁵. Levinas conceives of the encounter as 'ethical' precisely because it preserves and respects the alterity of the other whilst allowing for their reception. Furthermore, the novelty of that which is introduced by the other is predicated on this alterity, it is a revelation originating in the separated other who is beyond the knowing gaze of the same. If the other was stripped of this alterity, discourse would lose this educational property¹²⁶. A noteworthy homology between Camus and Levinas emerges here – namely that discourse in *The Rebel* is the mode of interaction integral for the preservation of rebellious principles¹²⁷. I will explore this concept further in the later chapters of this thesis.

The ethical element of the abovementioned relation is provided by two interconnected notions; desire and height. Desire for Levinas is differentiated from need. Need is by nature negative and thus denotes the possibility of satisfaction, biological transubstantiation and the ability to totalize or know that which is being consumed¹²⁸. In contrast, Desire is positive, it stems not from an innate lack but is superfluous,

¹²³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

¹²⁴ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 13.

¹²⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹²⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 99.

¹²⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 225.

¹²⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 33.

inessential, and thirsts for the other which cannot be known or subsumed¹²⁹. Desire is the force that drives the encounter with the face, provoking this meeting through its pursuit of otherness and its striving for what has hitherto remained unseen, namely, the infinite¹³⁰. In Levinas's words:

The metaphysical desire has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it. It is like goodness – the desired does not fulfil it but deepens it.¹³¹

And:

A desire without satisfaction which precisely, understands the remoteness, the alterity and the exteriority of the other. For Desire this alterity, non-adequate to the idea, has a meaning. It is understood as the alterity of the Other and of the Most-High.¹³²

Desire for the other opens the ethical relation, driving the encounter with the face through its bottomless wanting. In turn, this Desire only deepens upon the encounter, leading to ones continued engagement with the other. Levinas later makes desire synonymous with 'goodness' as the desired being does not fulfil this wanting, but deepens it, in the same way that 'goodness' deepens with practice¹³³. In this sense desire comes to engender desire, making the being of the self a being-for-the-other, or, as a goodness that is beyond happiness. At this juncture the concept of 'Height' comes to the fore, as the other is revealed to the same in a dimension of height, or 'on high', denoting a certain superiority or nobility inherent to this being¹³⁴. This height refers not to the others occupation of a certain physical or divine plane, instead it denotes their self-sovereignty and the infinity of their interiority¹³⁵. This height aids the reorientation of being mentioned above, placing the subject into a role that is both beholden to, and responsible for, the other.

¹²⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

¹³⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 62.

¹³¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

¹³² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

¹³³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

¹³⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 41.

¹³⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34-5.

Desire and Height represent two pillars supporting the Ethical Metaphysics residing at the heart of Levinas's philosophy. Ethical Metaphysics refers to the 'calling into question' of the same by the other upon the event of the encounter and the radical responsibility for the other that eventuates from it¹³⁶. Levinas states that the same experiences the world in a state of enjoyment where the objects constituting the lifeworld are made available for the subjects use and appropriation without question or rebuke. The world appears to be for-the-same, an object of dominion and utility readily available to the intellectual and physical manipulations of the same¹³⁷. In this state, the freedom of the same is unquestioned, absolute, and without compulsion to justify itself. Upon the encounter with the other however, this freedom is immediately called into question by the presence of an exterior being who represents a passive resistance to the hitherto unrestrained freedom of the same¹³⁸. The other possesses this capacity for calling into question by virtue of their being which is beyond possession, irreducible to objectivity, and is revealed to the same from a dimension of height. Ethical Metaphysics is defined in the following passage:

A calling into question of the same – which cannot occur within the egoist spontaneity of the same – is brought about by the other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other ethics. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics.¹³⁹

The alterity of the other, derived from infinity and coming to the same from a dimension of height, puts one's freedom immediately into question. This calling into question is the focal point of Levinas's ethics, initiating a crisis of being and giving birth to related concepts such as Glory, Justice and Fecundity – all of which express specific aspects of the ethical relation as a whole. These concepts will be elaborated on in the latter part of this reconstruction, the important point here is that the infinity of the other, the Desire for this alterity, and the Height endowed by infinity question

¹³⁶ Levinas, *Entre Nous: Essays on Thinking of the Other* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2000), 131.

¹³⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 60.

¹³⁸ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 132.

¹³⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

the spontaneity of being, thus giving birth to the ethical relation residing at the centre of this philosophy.

The ‘calling into question’ initiated by Levinas’s ethical metaphysics entails the suspension of freedom caused by the encounter with the other¹⁴⁰. Freedom, as I alluded to in the preceding paragraph is encapsulated by autonomous, self-contained spontaneity and the enjoyment of the lifeworld¹⁴¹. Whilst the same is suffused with an insatiable Desire for the other, enjoyment is nevertheless the default state experienced by the ‘I’. Upon the encounter though, the combination of Desire and revelation (stemming from the face) subverts this condition by subjecting the freedom of the same to questioning, commanding it to justify itself as it unmasks this freedom in its arbitrariness¹⁴². Levinas’s other does not counter the freedom of the same through the exercise of force like the Sartrean or Hegelian other, rather, the infinity of their being presents an ephemeral, passive resistance whose function is revelation as opposed to brute force. This revelation of freedom’s arbitrariness produces a sense of shame within the I, where freedom discovers itself as ‘murderous in its very exercise’¹⁴³ thus giving rise to a single moment of moral consciousness. The entirety of this revelation is recounted in the following passage by Levinas.

The conscience welcomes the Other. It is the revelation of a resistance to my powers that does not counter them as a greater force, but calls in question the naïve right of my powers, my glorious spontaneity as a living being. Morality begins when freedom, instead of being justified by itself, feels itself to be arbitrary and violent¹⁴⁴

It is at this moment that responsibility or being-for-the-other is borne. The other in its infinity is ineluctable though non-domineering, invoking the freedom of the same in its primordial obligation. Responsibility is therefore the activation or transfiguration of one’s freedom to the ends of the other, a recognition of one’s own capabilities yet

¹⁴⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 203.

¹⁴¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 46.

¹⁴² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 84.

¹⁴³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 84.

¹⁴⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 84.

the revelation of their arbitrariness in the face of the other¹⁴⁵. For Levinas this responsibility is the impetus behind ethical action itself.

Levinas utilises this principle of ethical metaphysics to introduce a binary between Totality and Infinity. Totality for Levinas is the tyranny of the same and the destruction of alterity through the application of ontological systems that seek to reduce otherness to a corollary of the same¹⁴⁶. Totality, as the endeavour to make that which is other into the same, is a process that Levinas admits is useful in purely objective pursuits, but nevertheless does ‘disrespect’ to human beings by reducing them to a state of immanence or objectivity¹⁴⁷. Totality is an innately domineering pursuit, expressed in historicist reasoning, absolutist political regimes, and an approach to knowledge that seeks to encapsulate the infinite within the bounds of an all-knowing system. This totalization is facilitated by the ontological project which seeks to interpose an impersonal term between the same and the existent, decoupling this being from its uniqueness and affixing it to a general order of beings that derive their commonality from some form of shared genus¹⁴⁸. The infinite, as I have demonstrated above, is a breach of this totality, an area of non-being accessible only to the same and the other that is expressed in language or discourse. Respect for the infinite is expressed on the other side of this dichotomy by Justice - a counter-movement against totality that privileges the exteriority of the other by engaging in discourse, refusing to transpose the intermediate term of ontology and therefore restoring the primacy of the ‘I’.¹⁴⁹ This mutual antagonism is made evident in the following passage from *Totality and Infinity*.

The substitution of men for one another, the primal disrespect, makes possible exploitation itself. In history – the history of states – the human being appears as the sum of his works; even while he lives he is his own heritage. Justice consists in again making possible expression, in which in non-reciprocity the person presents himself as unique.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 141.

¹⁴⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Pittsburgh, United States: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 48.

¹⁴⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 298.

¹⁴⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 194.

¹⁴⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 88.

¹⁵⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 298.

The political utility of ontology is the ability to reduce the other to the same thereby establishing totality. The implication being, is that citizens subjected to this thematisation are degraded by the state, robbed of their uniqueness, and by extension their humanity. The work of Justice is in this sense a work of restoration, as assertion of uniqueness in the face of totalizing forces that commences with the other. Levinas's Justice will later be employed as a tool for reading Camus rebellion, as it suggests that the rebellious impulse may be an attempt to restore the others infinity against the dehumanizing totality of a given regime.

The restorative project of Justice entails the infinite progression towards 'goodness'. As the protestation against the impersonal and dehumanizing totality of politico-ontological doctrines, Justice is borne from the other as an accusation stemming from the face¹⁵¹. Justice, therefore, is produced by the self-same ethical metaphysics residing at the heart of Levinas's critique, it is a bi-product of the others revelation that the freedom possessed by the same is arbitrary¹⁵². This revelation engenders a judgement upon the self, calling one to a responsibility that is infinite, that goes beyond universality/totality and produces subjectivity when it pronounces itself upon the same¹⁵³. This judgement elicits within the self a responsibility that re-establishes the other in their alterity, due to the fact that the face-relation necessitates an encounter with the existent itself, as opposed to just the idea of an existent, thus restoring their exteriority. In this sense Justice ruptures totality, transcending this framework of immanence and instigating a responsibility that is unable to be satisfied. Additionally, the responsibility aroused by Justice re-articulates the priorities of the same in such a way as to overcome certain instincts such as self-interest, self-preservation and fear, as this ever-deepening, indeed infinite, responsibility places the other's wellbeing above that of the subject¹⁵⁴. The role of the intertwined processes of judgement and Justice are evidenced in the following two passages by Levinas.

¹⁵¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.

¹⁵² Emmanuel Levinas and Sean Hand, *The Levinas Reader*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1989), 83-4.

¹⁵³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.

¹⁵⁴ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 132.

The exaltation of the singularity in judgement is produced precisely in the infinite responsibility of the will to which the judgement gives rise. Judgement is pronounced upon me in the measure that summons me to respond¹⁵⁵

And

In reality justice does not include me in the equilibrium of its universality; justice summons me to go beyond the straight line of justice, and henceforth nothing can mark the end of this march; behind the straight line of the law the land of goodness extends infinite and unexplored, necessitating all the resources of a singular presence. I am therefore necessary for justice, as responsible beyond every limit fixed by an objective law.¹⁵⁶

The judgement produced by the other elicits an infinite responsibility within the same thereby beginning the project of Justice. Like much of Levinas's philosophy, this relation calls upon the very nature of otherness and the encounter to uphold and explain this phenomenon. This assertion of responsibility external to the totality enforced by a political regime, will hopefully provide a narrative in later chapters regarding the tendency for rebellion to break out at the very 'spectacle of injustice'¹⁵⁷. Much of Levinas's critique focusses upon the role of ontology in facilitating totality. This critique, as I have previously demonstrated, is based on the contention that ontology reduces the other to a mere instantiation of an idea within an all-encompassing system¹⁵⁸. Given his understanding of infinity and being as exteriority, this is obviously an anathema to Levinas, however the crux of this argument still warrants further elucidation. Ontology is a third term that is employed by the same to negate the 'shock' of the other, this term is in itself not a being, but rather a projection of understandings upon the other which determines their essence in accordance with same thus reducing them to a satellite of the subject¹⁵⁹. This ability to neuter the other of their alterity enables the establishment of totality as it places each existent within a single overarching framework which may succeed in acknowledging a degree of superficial difference, however, cannot truly account for radical alterity¹⁶⁰. Here,

¹⁵⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 244.

¹⁵⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.

¹⁵⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

¹⁵⁸ Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 50.

¹⁵⁹ Brian Treanor, *Aspects of Alterity: Levinas, Marcel and the Contemporary Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 5.

¹⁶⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

totality attempts to establish a single overarching framework of being that differentiates its constituents by way of genus or a numerical designation within said genus, it is the imperialistic quest to abolish the absolutely other through the exercise of will and reason¹⁶¹. According to Levinas:

This identification requires mediation. Whence a second characteristic of the philosophy of the same: its recourse to neutrals. To understand the non-I access must be found through an entity, an abstract essence which is and is not. In it is dissolved the other's alterity. The foreign being, instead of maintaining itself in the inexpugnable fortress of its singularity, instead of facing, becomes a theme and an object.¹⁶²

Totality is the philosophical tendency to make the other into the same, it is facilitated by the interposition of the ontological third term and can be extended to politico-philosophical enterprises by way of domination and the abolition of true difference. This critique of totality and ontology is the reason why Levinas names his philosophy an 'ethical metaphysics' and why ethics for him is 'first philosophy'.

Alongside the concept of Justice, 'Glory' figures as an equally important derivative of Levinas's ethics. Glory emerges upon the horizon of the encounter in a similar manner to Justice, however, unlike the latter it is not a restorative project, rather, it is an advancement of the radical responsibility one bears for the other, hence the alias - 'beyond-being-and-death'¹⁶³. Upon this encounter there occurs the questioning of one's freedom and the responsibility initiated by the face relation with the other, here the other will command the same from a position of height. Glory is the formalisation of this relation; it is the rearticulation of a consciousness brought out of its egoism into the service of the other in their destitution¹⁶⁴. It uproots the subject from its status of self-reference, placing them on grounds referencing the other, exposing the same to 'assigination by the other' realized before consciousness¹⁶⁵. This relation is not be

¹⁶¹ Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2002), 191.

¹⁶² Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 50.

¹⁶³ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 132.

¹⁶⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

¹⁶⁵ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 145.

surpassed, it is irreducible and inescapable, one is compelled to act, furthermore, in Glory, the responsibility to the other is absolute. The absolutist character of responsibility encapsulated in Glory reorientates consciousness, negating self-interest in lieu of the others wellbeing. The default status of enjoyment and the labours of survival are hereby negated, and one finds themselves in the aforementioned state of ‘beyond-being-and-death’ ready to face destruction¹⁶⁶. In *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Glory is introduced as:

Glory is but the other face of the passivity of the subject. Substituting itself for the other, a responsibility ordered to the first one on the scene, a responsibility for the neighbour, inspired by the other. I, the same, am torn up from my beginning in myself, my equality with myself. The glory of the infinite is glorified in this responsibility.¹⁶⁷

Glory as the continuation of radical responsibility presents a compelling avenue for reading rebellion. It is the not to be surpassed commandment administered from the on high of the other, in *Entre Nous* this is characterized as the preference for injustice undergone than injustice committed, a crisis of being that radically reorientates consciousness, tearing one away from their self-satisfied enjoyment of the world available¹⁶⁸. There emerges here the possibility for Camus’ rebellion to be construed as an aspect of Glory or vice versa, being a compelling narrative for why the rebel reacts upon witnessing injustices committed against the other, suspending the instinct of self-preservation at the behest of the destitute one.

The political for Levinas is the continuation of totality. It is the framework mediating relations amongst groups of citizens through the imposition of knowable, quantifiable and objective categories upon the human person¹⁶⁹. The political serves to govern relations by mitigating the aforementioned ‘shock’ brought on by the encounter with the existent. For the political to function, the alterity of the other must be reduced in some way, as the state does not have the faculties capable of engaging otherness in the same way as the person, to this end, politico-ontological categories such as the citizen,

¹⁶⁶ Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean hand, 84.

¹⁶⁷ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 144.

¹⁶⁸ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 132-33.

¹⁶⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 225.

genus, and number are employed as mediating concepts¹⁷⁰. It is important to note that politics for Levinas is not innately evil, in fact, it is a necessary part of modern existence, however when left unchecked it tends towards tyranny, being unable to recognize the radical exteriorities constituting it and subsuming them beneath the judgement of universal laws. Thus, this project has the tendency to deform the person as Levinas notes;

But politics left to itself bears a tyranny within itself; it deforms the I and the other who have given rise to it, for it judges them according to universal rules, and thus as in absentia.¹⁷¹

This understanding of politics is, to a certain degree, antagonistic to Ethical Metaphysics given that it has potentially totalitarian principles residing at its core. The infinite is thus reduced to mere possibility, accounted for in potentialities and actions as opposed to Height, Infinity and Alterity. The political-ontological systems shaping governance, if left unchecked, will subsume the human beneath impersonal laws, decoupling the existent from its transcendence¹⁷². The perils of this outcome warrant a restorative principle that can account for true multiplicity whilst simultaneously recognising the radical alterity of the other. Levinas names this principle Fecundity. Along with Glory and Justice, the concept of Fecundity emerges from Levinas's ethical metaphysics. Fecundity bares similarities with Justice in that its intention is restorative, however its function is to maintain subjectivity against the reality of the State. This involves the reconciliation of transcendence, pluralism and exteriority within the politico-ontological context of the State. Fecundity may be taken as a direct rebuke of Hegelian philosophy, given that it does not elevate the State as the actual above the subject, rather, it seeks to break up the supremacy of the State by first acknowledging, and then engaging with, a dimension of being existing beyond its auspices¹⁷³. The State for Levinas is not the single, all-encompassing framework containing the exigencies of the human individual, rather, it is a mediating idea guiding

¹⁷⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 225.

¹⁷¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300.

¹⁷² Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 252-3.

¹⁷³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 301.

certain forms of human relations, with its inhumanity necessitating the deformation of the subject through its totalitarian endeavour¹⁷⁴.

Fecundity is predicated on the same-other encounter explained in the above paragraphs, it draws on the separation of interior being, Justice, and the call to responsibility in order to achieve the rupture of totality and thus the maintenance of the individual. Subjectivity is maintained against the State via the encounters call to responsibility, forcing the same to acknowledge the very alterity that the political is blind to whilst revealing a responsibility beyond the mediations of the State¹⁷⁵. In addition, interiority, as the receptacle of the infinite that overflows its idea, maintains subjectivity by endowing humans with transcendence, this unknowable element of being serves to rupture the totality of the state by resisting objectification absolutely¹⁷⁶.

These aspects of Fecundity are evident in the following passage:

Fecundity opens up an infinite and discontinuous time. It liberates the subject from his facticity by placing him beyond the possible which presupposes and does not surpass facticity; it lifts from the subject the last trace of fatality, by enabling him to be another.¹⁷⁷

Fecundity enables the maintenance of subjectivity against the State by opening up the interiority of the subject. This is achieved through the encounter with the other bringing one into relation with an alterity that cannot truly be recognized by the State, infinity thus breaks up the totality. Fecundity can provide some further insight into rebellion, being another assertion of humanity, transcendence and alterity against the absolutism of the State, I intend to pursue this line of inquiry in the comparative analysis chapter.

The Man-God is a concept introduced in Levinas's later work. It is the idea of substitution, or an I-for-the-Other, introduced first in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, and further elucidated upon in *Entre Nous*. Substitution begins with the radical responsibility initiated by the other and the reorientation of consciousness

¹⁷⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300.

¹⁷⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 301.

¹⁷⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300-1.

¹⁷⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300.

integral to concepts such as Glory, its function is to enable the same to suspend their ego and go beyond the limits imposed by identity towards the other¹⁷⁸. This suspension brings the same into a state of being-for-the-other, a state characterized by an openness to them, and where the action of the same coincides with the specific needs of the other¹⁷⁹. Substitution thus involves a disinterested generosity, which is to say that the generosity involved in substitution pays no heed to an economic provision of aid, indeed, it transcends self-interest entirely. In his reconstruction of this concept, scholar Daniel Smith notes that;

Levinas is asking us to think a form of subjectivity which does not begin with an egoism – although egoism will of course remain a possibility for it – but with the idea that there is something of the other already within the self, which Levinas also figures through the term ‘the other in the same’.¹⁸⁰

Substitution is generosity on behalf of the other that is recognized in the self, this recognition likely stems from the primordial responsibility revealed through the encounter. In *Entre Nous*, the Man-God is a continuation of this reasoning, a figure who assumes absolute responsibility for the suffering and destitution of others, a person whose existence is framed by the infinitude of this responsibility¹⁸¹. Levinas argues that the Man-God is placed before the other in a state of accusation, being held responsible before any injustice has even been perpetrated, in turn, the Man-God assumes responsibility for the other, and this act of substitution abolishes the default status of egoist self-consciousness in favour of being-for-the-other:

It is an event that strips consciousness of its initiative, that undoes me and puts me before an Other in a state of guilt; an event that puts me in accusation – a persecuting indictment, for it is prior to all wrongdoing – and that leads me to the self, to the accusative that is not preceded by any nominative.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 144.

¹⁷⁹ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114.

¹⁸⁰ Daniel Smith, “After you sir! Substitution in Kant and Levinas”, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 48, no. 2 (2017), 157.

¹⁸¹ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 52.

¹⁸² Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 52.

This is the final tool for my closed reading of Camus' *The Rebel* as the Man-god presents many of the same qualities found in the rebel, ranging from automatic responsibility, to the primordial 'we are' found in ethical action¹⁸³. The man-god also figures as an offshoot of Glory and responsibility, however unlike the former concepts, it provides reasoning as to why egoism fractures in the face of the other.

¹⁸³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 239.

CHAPTER III: REBELLION AND SØREN KIERKEGAARD

The philosophy of Soren Kierkegaard, in conjunction with the work of Emmanuel Levinas, will inform my final close reading of Camus' *The Rebel*. Kierkegaard's work on subjectivity, existence, ethics, freedom and the teleological imperative shaping the existing individual, presents a rich area for my analysis. Please note that throughout this chapter I will be referring to Kierkegaard by both his name and his pseudonyms, and whilst I am aware of the debates surrounding the separation of the various personae from the author, it is not a concern for this work. As outlined in the abstract, Kierkegaard's dialectic of existence, when coupled with his understanding of ethical action, has the potential to enrich our understanding of the rebel as an individual in and of themselves. Additionally, Kierkegaard's thought regarding the transition of the ethical from mere possibility to concrete action, facilitates an alternative perspective upon the origins of rebellion. Specifically, chapter four will employ Kierkegaard's notion of the existential dialectic, the absolute telos, neighbourly love and ethical pathos in order to highlight and explain certain elements of the rebel's subjectivity. In light of this, I will reconstruct Kierkegaard's conception of the subject, the dialectic of existence, the task of existence, the notion of truth in subjectivity, his critique of Hegelian idealism, the absolute telos, individual transformation and the absolute, ethical action and its reception, the ethical, the pathetic moment of resignation, resignation and rebellion, transformation and suffering in rebellion, relativity and the open-endedness of rebellion, love and the other, and finally, the hierarchical relationship between ethics and the law. In writing this reconstruction I have drawn extensively from primary sources such as the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard's notebooks, and *Works of Love*. Supplementing these sources are works from Niels Thulstrup, Howard Hong, Herman Diem and Christopher Arroyo.

The subject for Kierkegaard is an existing individual whose being is a synthesis of the finite and the infinite¹⁸⁴. The finitude of this figure is manifested in the immanent and biological factors of their existence, in turn these factors shape the day-to-day realities of the individual. These factors include, but are not limited to, the occupation of a

¹⁸⁴ Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, 1968), 198.

given spatio-temporal plane, the necessity for physical upkeep, and a constant engagement in the world as an agent. These factors necessitate that the individual is to some degree immanent, that is, engaged as an object in the world and subject to the myriad concerns associated with existence¹⁸⁵. Additionally, the finitude of the individual stems from their being located within the bounds of time, and thus, they possess an existence that is governed by the limitations and potentialities associated with this phenomenon. Importantly time, when coupled with absolute existential telos (which will be elucidated upon later), endows the individual's existence with a permanent characteristic of striving towards an as of yet undefined target¹⁸⁶. Alongside this first pole of finitude, there is the accompanying counterpart of the eternal. Here, the eternal provides the continuity essential to the flux and motion of an individual's existence. Whilst time, and therefore finitude, warrants the continuous striving and decision making of a free-thinking person with the lifeworld, the eternal offers an underlying existential substratum that holds together these decisions, thus enabling a synthesis within the striving individual¹⁸⁷. On the nature of infinity Kierkegaard, by way of his pseudonym Climacus argues:

The goal of movement for an existing individual is to arrive at a decision, and to renew it. The eternal is the factor of continuity; but an abstract eternity is extraneous to the movement of life, and a concrete eternity within the existing individual is the maximum degree of his passion.¹⁸⁸

The eternal, therefore, is internal as opposed to external, it is not something outside of the individual to be analysed conceptually, rather, it is an innate and essential part of the subject, one that reconciles both flux and continuity. This distinction serves to form the other side of Kierkegaard's dialectic of existence, enabling the constant striving and spontaneity of finite life to exist alongside of a larger teleological project that retains its continuity.

¹⁸⁵ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 279-80.

¹⁸⁶ Niels Thulstrup, *Commentary on Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript: With a New Introduction* (New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, 2014), 221.

¹⁸⁷ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 277.

¹⁸⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 277.

These two polarities structure the dialectic of existence, providing the necessary oppositions from which the synthetic individual emerges¹⁸⁹. On the one hand, the temporal aspects of existence constitute the everyday lived reality of an individual, constructing them in accordance with a given historical epoch and defining their capabilities accordingly¹⁹⁰. Additionally, the past likewise shapes one's reality, as it is a concrete actuality that contrasts markedly with the fluid potentiality of the future¹⁹¹. This dialectic is thus the existence of a past alongside the potential of the future, resting in the uneasy tension of what Kierkegaard scholar Herman Diem terms the "creative present". This creative present is the freedom of choice guiding the transition from past to future, allowing the individual to move into alignment with the absolute telos through action, or to reject it freely¹⁹². It is here that an individual's free will comes into play, as the synthesis of actuality with potentiality is only achieved through the exercise of one's freedom, so as to will the intended possibility into becoming a concrete actuality¹⁹³. This ability to transition into actuality through striving in the aforementioned creative present allows the individual to actively engage in the fulfilment of their personal teleology via the exercise of will¹⁹⁴. Whilst the nature of this teleology will be examined and explained in subsequent paragraphs, it must be noted that it is essentially the ethical becoming of the individual brought about by their conscious alignment with the absolute telos¹⁹⁵. This model of existence according to Arthur Krentz is:

...a unity of opposing characteristics or polar tendencies – a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal. Whilst opposed to each other, these characteristics are essentially related to each other in one and the same person – an identity in difference. Existence itself lies in the fundamental tension between these characteristics and is a "striving" which shows the dynamism of existence for Climacus.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁹ Arthur Krentz, "Kierkegaard's Dialectical Image of Human Existence in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments", *Philosophy Today*, 41 no. 2 (1997), 280.

¹⁹⁰ Herman Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, (New York, USA: Ungar, 1965), 73.

¹⁹¹ Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, 72.

¹⁹² Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, 73.

¹⁹³ Kierkegaard, *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 169.

¹⁹⁴ Krentz, *Kierkegaard's Dialectical Image of the Human Person*, 282.

¹⁹⁵ Kierkegaard, *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 282.

¹⁹⁶ Krentz, *Kierkegaard's Dialectical Image of the Human Person*, 280.

This understanding of human existence posits the individual as an essentially free agent situated within a larger teleological framework that, nevertheless, can only be fulfilled through constant creative self-actualization. This person, as the product of this existential dialectic is an agent engaged in the fulfilment of a project that extends into eternity - hence their constant striving. As I will demonstrate in the latter parts of this reconstruction, it is these qualities that provide us with a compelling insight into the nature of the rebel, perhaps explaining the “who” along with the “why?”

In conjunction with this existential dialectic, the task of existence for this individual is explicitly stated by Climacus as being “infinitely interested in existence”¹⁹⁷, that is, engaged in the task of existence without recourse to mediation or detached contemplation, so as to avoid alienating oneself from their own personal reality. Written as a rebuke to Hegelian idealism, the task of being interested in existence is an attempt to avoid the perils of detachment inherent in the processes of mediation and abstraction, whereby the thinker retreats to the realm of pure thought in order to garner a higher perspective external to the paradigm of their own existence¹⁹⁸. But, as Climacus argues, instead of attaining this perspective, this individual only succeeds in pondering that which is possible, whilst also removing themselves from the immanent realities of existence¹⁹⁹. This retreat is antithetical to Climacus’ understanding of the subject’s task, as it detracts from the subjective reality of the thinker in order to ponder possibilities or truths that will remain external to the individual no matter how much pure logic is exercised in their interrogation²⁰⁰. For Climacus, there is no actuality outside of the subject, the only concrete reality is that of the subject who exists, anything else is mere possibility²⁰¹. Thus, the subjective thinker must only interest themselves with their own existence, concerning themselves with matters of choice and transformation, and coming to embody the absolute telos through their actions, thereby rejecting superfluous and ultimately inconsequential bouts of navel-gazing. On the task of existence Kierkegaard (writing under the pseudonym of Climacus) states that:

¹⁹⁷ Kierkegaard, *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 268.

¹⁹⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 267.

¹⁹⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 281.

²⁰⁰ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 278.

²⁰¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 278.

The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is more than cognitive, is his own reality, the fact that he exists; this reality constitutes his absolute interest. Abstract thought requires him to become disinterested in order to acquire knowledge; the ethical demand is that he become infinitely interested in existing.²⁰²

The imperative for existence, therefore, is to remain interested in only one's own subjective reality. It is from this task that Kierkegaard's ethics originates, arising from the individual who is engaged in the creative present, preferring the actuality of subjective existence as opposed to the neutered possibilities of speculative thought. As I will demonstrate, it is from this task of invested existence that emerges the entire apparatus of Kierkegaard's ethics.

This conception of existence engenders an understanding of truth that divorces itself from speculative reason. The subject, as one who is engaged fully in the task of existing, rejects the notion that truth is ascertained through detachment and mediation, instead, he/she opts to relate passionately to his/her own lived reality²⁰³. Not without irony, Climacus notes that the subject's use of abstraction to discover the truth only serves to divorce themselves further from their intended²⁰⁴. In the sections of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* dealing with subjectivity and the truth, Kierkegaard proposes that instead of relating to the truth as an object, one can only endeavour to exist *in* the truth²⁰⁵. From this distinction arises two alternative perspectives upon the truth; that of objective and subjective truth. As I have mentioned above, the pursuit of objective truth is characterised by abstraction and pure thought, here the truth is an object to which the knower is related, and as such, their relation to it remains speculative²⁰⁶.

In contradistinction to this, subjective truth is characterised by an individual's contemplation of their own relationship to the truth, here the concern is not whether one knows the truth, but rather whether one exists in relation to it, thereby shifting the structure of one's thought from alignment with an intended object, to the question of

²⁰² Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 280.

²⁰³ Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, 38.

²⁰⁴ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 170.

²⁰⁵ Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, 38.

²⁰⁶ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 173.

whether one relates to the truth itself²⁰⁷. This understanding of existence-in-truth is expressed by Kierkegaard scholar Herman Diem when he argues that:

From the course of our previous investigation it is clear that by “being” we can now understand nothing other than the concrete existence of the individual thinker, who as a concrete ego thinks the universal abstract ideal and at the same time exists through his thinking of it. Hence the point is not to think truth but to live in it.²⁰⁸

And:

This means that truth is no longer to be conceived as an objective statement about certain relations of being, but as a form of existence in which such relations are actualized.²⁰⁹

This understanding of truth rounds out the Kierkegaardian subject by demarcating an existential relationship to the truth. It is this relationship to truth, along with an accompanying moment of existential pathos that constitutes the first ethical movement made by the existing subject.

Kierkegaard’s formulation of the subject can in many ways be read as a direct rebuke to Hegelian idealism. Indeed, much of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is devoted to refuting or problematising many aspects of Hegel’s system, most notably the abrogating effect of idealist reasoning and the subsequent impact this has upon formulating, and then justifying, a coherent understanding of ethics. According to Climacus, to adjudge the ethical content of a particular act or person by the criteria of world-historical impact or significance is to remove the true distinction between good or evil²¹⁰. As mentioned above, the contemplation of external phenomena such as the impact of a given action in world history, is subject to the epistemic limitations of the thinker, meaning that the individual is once again only able to ponder this event as one who is observing a possibility²¹¹. In this way, the content of an act is to be determined by its consequence, a consequence that is susceptible to any number of historical

²⁰⁷ Diem, *Kierkegaard’s Dialectic of Existence*, 38.

²⁰⁸ Diem, *Kierkegaard’s Dialectic of Existence*, 38.

²⁰⁹ Diem, *Kierkegaard’s Dialectic of Existence*, 38.

²¹⁰ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 121.

²¹¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 139.

accidents and contingencies, which in themselves, have nothing to do with the actual ethical considerations motivating said action²¹². Additionally, the emphasis upon an outwardly observable effect abandons said action to judgement by convention, that is, to be assessed through the lens of whatever cultural framework happens to be in vogue²¹³. Naturally, Kierkegaard takes exception to this, arguing that assessing ethical actions through this criterion only serves to conflate the good with the socially acceptable, thereby positioning the ethical as a mere social phenomenon that is dictated by others, rather than an internal imperative ascertained by the individual. This sentiment is expressed succinctly in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* where Climacus claims:

The ethical as the absolute is infinitely valid in itself and does not need to be tricked out with accessories to help it make a better showing. But the world-historical is precisely such a dubious accessorium (when it is not the eye of omniscience, but the eye of a human being which is to penetrate it).²¹⁴

From this critique of Hegelian idealism and the over-emphasis on world-historical significance, there emerges a conception of ethical-subjectivity that separates itself from the flow of history and the preponderance of normative morality. It is Kierkegaard's willingness to separate the ethical from normative arrangements and consequentialist reasoning that provides a compelling platform for reading Camus' rebellion, suggesting that rebellion culminates in the individual – an individual who is, by nature, predisposed to it.

The notion of an overarching teleological imperative has been alluded to a number of times throughout this reconstruction. For Kierkegaard, the dialectical understanding of the human person involves a synthesis between the eternal and the finite, with the eternal being both the futurity of the individual, as well as the central purpose of their existence²¹⁵. This central purpose, or absolute telos, correlates directly with the striving born in the midst of the creative present. It is that which guides the individual's actions, yet nevertheless, remains outside of fulfilment and thus must always be moved

²¹² Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 121.

²¹³ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 120.

²¹⁴ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 127.

²¹⁵ Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, 72.

toward, although never attained²¹⁶. The absolute telos in Kierkegaard's thought is the existing self's relation to a higher absolute, it is the fulfilment of good for its own sake and it denotes a threefold reconciliation between the individual, humanity and the divine²¹⁷. Drawing from Platonic philosophy, the higher absolute (or God) is identified with the absolute good, meaning that the absolute telos is the good/God to which the individual strives to be in alignment with. It is this telos that is related to the individual on the level of the subject, however unlike the Platonic model it is not related with purely through the faculty of reason, rather, the individual relates to it by the simultaneous exercise of the immanent and transcendent aspects of their being, calling on imagination and feeling in conjunction with reason²¹⁸. The result of this is that one's relation to the absolute telos is expressed existentially as opposed to ideally, the expression is therefore a pathos, a moment of action freely chosen by the individual for its own sake. This sentiment is elucidated by scholar John Lippitt who argues:

...for Kierkegaard as for Plato, one makes that commitment to the Good just because it is good; not because it is means to ones ends – even the ends of achieving psychic harmony, or balancing one's immanence and transcendence. We can relate properly to ourselves only if we relate to the Good, but we can only do that if we relate to the Good for its own sake.²¹⁹

Once the teleological absolute has been identified by the individual, the process of metamorphosis can then begin. This Good, external, transcendent and divorced from the preponderant norms of society, yet inextricably linked to the subject, presents a narrative for the rebel's coming-to-be, and, as we shall see in the following paragraph, is the catalyst for an individual's transformation.

The individual's identification and subsequent pursuit of the absolute telos represents the beginnings of an irrevocable process of metamorphosis. Renouncing the distractions of aesthetic or idealist pursuits, the transformed individual's prime

²¹⁶ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 364-5.

²¹⁷ John Lippitt, *Narrative, Identity and the Kierkegaardian Self* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 54.

²¹⁸ Gregor Malantschuk, Howard Vincent Hong and Edna H. Hong, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*, (Wisconsin, USA: Marquette University Press 2003), 93.

²¹⁹ Lippitt, *Narrative, Identity and the Kierkegaardian Self*, 56.

concern is only to relate to the good with every fibre of their being²²⁰. As Kierkegaard himself notes, outwardly there may be no observable changes, indeed this person may continue to maintain a façade of outward passivity or nonchalance, yet inwardly their entire constitution has changed²²¹. The task of the individual is the pursuit of the Good through action, willed for no other reason than its own sake, with the distinction between an absolute and relative good, being that the former is willed for-itself, and the latter is willed for the sake of something else²²². This does not mean that the transformed individual forgoes all relative goods, Kierkegaard himself is quite adamant that both must be pursued simultaneously, indeed, he claims that the absolute good must be pursued absolutely and that relative goods must be pursued relatively, yet the distinction remains that a person will willingly suffer the destruction of all worldly goods on behalf of an absolute with no pretensions of happiness or reward, something that is not true of a relative good²²³. As Niels Thulstrup notes:

Yet the expression must not simply consist in a direct or conspicuous externality, for in that case the whole thing will result in a monastic movement or in mediation. The individual must therefore accomplish his task by simultaneously relating himself absolutely to the absolute telos and relatively to relative ends – but of course without mediating them.²²⁴

The abovementioned caveat against mediation refers to Kierkegaard's unease with the abrogating effect of pure thought on ethical action - his subject, instead of ascertaining the nature of this relationship through the mediations of pure thought, exists in relation to it, thereby preserving its immediacy²²⁵. Here the beginnings of an ethical reading of rebellion are once again revealed, with the rebel perhaps being one who has identified the transcendent good and has chosen to pursue it absolutely despite the perils inherent to such an undertaking.

The internal nature of an individual's transformation, whilst potentially inconspicuous in the purview of wider society, may nevertheless instigate a series of actions

²²⁰ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 347.

²²¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 346.

²²² Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 353.

²²³ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 337.

²²⁴ Thulstrup, *Commentary to the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 337.

²²⁵ Thulstrup, *Commentary to the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 337.

seemingly offensive and contradictory to the normative environment of said society. Given Kierkegaard's contention that ethics is rooted in the subject's relation to a higher absolute, it may be the case that the mandates of this higher absolute offend the sensibilities of a society given over to conformity and conventionalist behaviours. Indeed, Kierkegaard goes as far as saying that ethical action is more likely to be derided than honoured, as the world has never been truly good and that therefore a truly ethical action will to some extent go beyond these accepted limits, prompting revulsion, horror or confusion from onlookers as the pathos of the individual clashes with the corruption of society²²⁶. Thus, the desired reaction for an individual undertaking ethical action should be that they are stigmatized as opposed to lauded, Kierkegaard states as much in his notebooks whereby he claims that:

The fact still remains that never has anyone of ethical greatness been honoured and esteemed as long as he was living, because then the world would also have to be good. It is only by debasing himself that one actually succeeds in being honoured and esteemed while he is living. The fact that someone is actually a genius does not help.

We see here that ethical action can often occur despite conventional beliefs and normative arrangements, as the demands of a political order are not, in themselves equivalent to the good, and, furthermore, that an individual is not obliged to them in the same way as the absolute telos. For Kierkegaard, this incommensurability between ethical teleology and constructed normativity, when coupled with the moral degradation of society, necessitates that actions made in alignment with the absolute telos are more likely to be condemned as opposed to lauded²²⁷. When applied to rebellion the similarities are obvious. By nature, the rebel is an individual whose actions are a challenge to the status quo - they have identified an unethical part of a given social or political order, and, despite a commonly held acceptance of this injustice, decides to risk ostracisation and alienation for the sake of ethical teleology, thereby embodying this opposition between ethical action and social acceptability.

²²⁶ Soren Kierkegaard, Gregor Malantschuk, Howard Vincent Hong and Edna H. Hong, *Soren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers* (Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press 1967), 419.

²²⁷ Kierkegaard, *Soren Kierkegaard's Journals*, 419.

So far, our discussion of the existential dialectic, the task of existence, and the absolute telos, has helped to establish the groundwork necessary for understanding ethics in Kierkegaard's thought. Here, Kierkegaard's primary concern is with existing ethically, meaning that the ethical is rooted in the ontological constitution of the human person, denoting a synthesis between the absolute telos (i.e. the Platonic form of the good or God), the individuals striving, and one's choice in the so-called "creative present"²²⁸. Under this formulation, the ethical can be thought of as a pursuit of the absolute good undertaken exclusively by an individual who relates to it via action²²⁹. The ethical as an essential, non-contingent absolute, cannot become "known" through abstraction or mediation, instead, it is related to by the individual, who endeavours to exist in relation to it through their actions²³⁰. Thus, the individual can be said to exist ethically in their eternal pursuit of the absolute telos. Furthermore, the ethical is neither taught, nor subject to change, and can only be manifested in the subject. This notion is encapsulated in the following passage taken from *the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*:

The ethical is, on the contrary correlative to individuality, and that to such a degree that each individual apprehends the ethical essentially only in himself, because the ethical is his complicity with God. While the ethical is, in a certain sense, infinitely abstract, it is in another sense infinitely concrete, and there is indeed nothing more concrete, because it is subject to a dialectic that is individual to each human being precisely as this particular human being.²³¹

The ethical is therefore an absolute related to by the individual through action. It is neither given externally, nor dictated normatively. For rebellion and the rebel this further reinforces my conjecture that the former is inherently related to the subject, and that the value recognized at the outset of their undertaking is nothing more than the absolute telos itself.

A central element in Kierkegaard's conception of subjectivity, ethics and action is the transformation of an individual undergone in a moment of existential pathos known

²²⁸ Diem, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence*, 73 & 74.

²²⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 347.

²³⁰ Malantschuk et al., *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*, 17-18.

²³¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 138.

as the “pathetic moment of resignation”²³². This pathos denotes an individual allowing themselves to be transformed by the notion of an eternal happiness, which, whilst often used interchangeably with the absolute telos throughout the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, nevertheless contains a number of distinct aspects in and of itself. Eternal happiness, as an aspect of the absolute telos, is willed for its own sake and is not subject to relative determinations like mere goods of fortune²³³. Due to this, eternal happiness is equally distributed amongst all humans, and therefore, it remains a possibility for all existing subjects²³⁴. The pathetic moment of resignation denotes an individual’s identification of an eternal happiness and their subsequent attempt to express their relationship to it in existence through passion²³⁵. In doing so it demands not only passion of thought to identify it, but also concentrated passion to exist in it²³⁶. An individual’s relationship to eternal happiness is thus expressed dialectically and pathetically, in that it is internal to them and therefore part of finite existence, but also eternal and immutable. Thus, an individual’s actions in the finite lifeworld are dictated by something external and absolute. This sentiment is summed up by Climacus:

The eternal happiness of the individual is decided in time through the relationship to something historical, which is furthermore of such a character as to include in its composition that which by virtue of its essence cannot become historical, and must therefore become such by virtue of an absurdity²³⁷

By virtue of this pathetic moment of resignation, worldly goods and privileges lose their significance for the subjective thinker, becoming secondary concerns to the pursuit of the absolute telos²³⁸. To exist pathetically in relation to one’s eternal happiness is to forgo aesthetic pleasures in favour of ethical actions, meaning that ethics in Kierkegaard involves a sacrifice of relative goods for the sake of absolute goods. The result of which, is that the individual having undergone this transformation is able to face true hardship in the name of eternal happiness and the absolute telos²³⁹.

²³² Thulstrup, *Commentary on the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 335.

²³³ Thulstrup, *Commentary to the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 335-6.

²³⁴ Thulstrup, *Commentary to the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 336.

²³⁵ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 346.

²³⁶ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 346.

²³⁷ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 345.

²³⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 353-4.

²³⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 362.

The existing subject thus seeks no consolations, they only wish to exist in relation to their own eternal happiness.

Continuing this discussion of resignation, we can now examine this concept through the lens of Camus' rebellion. Rebellion, when taken as an act of renunciation against a given socio-political order on behalf of ethical or moral principles, presupposes a willingness to undergo severe hardships in order to establish a more morally just order²⁴⁰. Additionally, an individual's propensity to rebel on behalf of a persecuted person whilst they themselves remain free of persecution, is perhaps indicative of a lack of interest in relative goods²⁴¹. Indeed, why should one sacrifice their own material wellbeing for the sake of some exogenous other? The similarity between this conception of rebellion and Kierkegaard's resignation is clear here, as the subject who has identified the absolute telos and the ideal of eternal happiness, is called to express existentially their relationship to this absolute through action²⁴². In turn, this denotes the renunciation of relative goods for the sake of the absolute on behalf of the hierarchical relationship between absolutes and relatives²⁴³. In these terms' rebellion can be defined as an act undertaken in light of the absolute telos (good/God) and one's eternal happiness, expressed in the historical realm through one's actions. Supporting this claim is the idea expressed by Kierkegaard (again under a pseudonym), that one's relation with this absolute will often serve to bring about severe hardships.

The pathos of the ethical consists in action. Hence when a man says that he has suffered hunger and cold and imprisonment, that he has been shipwrecked, that he has been despised and persecuted and scourged, and so on, all for the sake of his eternal happiness, this simple statement, in so far as it reports what he has suffered in action, is evidence of ethical pathos.²⁴⁴

As the above quote would suggest, the pathos of the ethical, which mandates both resignation and action by the individual, naturally leads to suffering for the sake of eternal happiness. Under such a conception rebellion would be an act of ethical pathos,

²⁴⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 2.

²⁴¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

²⁴² Thulstrup, *Commentary to the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 303.

²⁴³ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 353-4.

²⁴⁴ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 349-50.

a willing engagement with hardship and oblivion for the sake of the eternal. This line of inquiry will be pursued further in the comparative analysis section of this thesis; however, the rebellious impulses of Kierkegaard's ethics have been made abundantly clear.

The threefold discovery of the absolute telos, eternal happiness and the pathetic moment of resignation initiates a metamorphosis within the individual²⁴⁵. Essentially, this transformation will alter the priorities of the subject by revealing the arbitrariness of previously held desires in light of the absolutes that they are choosing to relate to²⁴⁶. Kierkegaard argues that this discovery, far from alleviating the suffering of the individual, or granting them happiness, is in fact more likely to lead them into further suffering for the sake of the absolute good²⁴⁷. Furthermore, one's discovery of these absolutes is revealed in transformation, as Kierkegaard asserts that if one has claimed to have encountered the absolute telos, yet hasn't changed, then they simply have not encountered it yet²⁴⁸.

This choice to stand in relation to the absolute telos, and, by extension one's eternal happiness, is perhaps a possible explanatory narrative for a rebellion's inception, given that it effectively describes a process of ethical becoming that culminates in an individual's willingness to face oblivion for the sake of something that is either being transgressed against, or yet to be realized. As Camus claims, once the rebel affirms a certain value through their actions thereby unshackling themselves from the various states of apathy or oppression that had hitherto shaped it, the pursuit of rebellion becomes an all or nothing endeavour involving an absolute commitment to its principles²⁴⁹.

In many ways, the journey that Kierkegaard describes is similar to this, demonstrating a similar absolutist commitment occurring in conjunction with an individual's transformation²⁵⁰. In this way rebellion is a medium through which an alignment with

²⁴⁵ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 350.

²⁴⁶ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 353.

²⁴⁷ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 349-50.

²⁴⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 352.

²⁴⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

²⁵⁰ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 352.

the absolute telos is expressed in material actions, willed for its own sake, without the hope of recompense. Kierkegaard describes the attitude of such a subject, claiming such a transformed individual will reflect the following exclamation:

No, let me rather know from the beginning that the road may be narrow, stony and beset with thorns until the very end; so that I may learn to hold fast to the absolute telos, guided by its light in the night of my sufferings, but not led astray by calculations of probability and interim consolations.²⁵¹

The apparent homology between Camus' rebellion, and Kierkegaard's narrative of the subject's ethical becoming is thus a promising avenue for further analysis of the rebellious subject and their journey from a passive by-stander to fully-fledged agent. Naturally, this will be explored in the upcoming comparative analysis.

The distinction between absolute and relative goods can further distinguish rebellious action as a commitment to the absolute when viewed through the paradigm of the existing individual. The individual's relationship to the absolute telos as it is described in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is an ongoing project or relationship that is manifested in one's actions, due to this, the project of relating to it will forever remain unfulfilled, as Kierkegaard himself maintains that there is no conclusion so long as the individual still exists – hence the individual's perpetual striving²⁵². Cessation then, is never achieved concretely or absolutely, and the outcome of any action will never be more than the uncertainty inherent in relating to the absolute telos²⁵³. The lasting duration of the ethical project readily intersects with the uncertain outcomes posited by the rebellious project, with the rebel refusing to impose an all-encompassing hierarchy in place of the one which has just been overthrown, forgoing the ideological comforts posed by the imposition of an absolutist system in favour of moderation and ambiguity²⁵⁴.

²⁵¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 362.

²⁵² Thulstrup, *Commentary to the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 221.

²⁵³ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 381-2.

²⁵⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 243.

Rebellion then, embodies the spirit of this ongoing ethical striving, as it is neither a means to an end (such as wealth or power), nor is it completed once the shackles of the old regime have been cast off, instead it is guided by the constant realisation of the teleological imperative governing existence, and, as a result, should be considered an expression of one's absolute relation to the absolute telos. This is further, reinforced by the preponderance of rebellions undertaken on behalf of the other, which are, more often than not, carried out despite these so-called relative goods, given that death, hardship and destruction are hardly goods in themselves. In light of these aspects of rebellion, Kierkegaard's belief that one ascertains, then pursues the absolute good through action for no other reason than its own self-evident good, with no hope of completion or fulfilment, suggests that rebellion is motivated by transcendent concerns as opposed to mere self-interest, thus supporting my claim that for Camus the rebel manifests an existential-ethical project that is analogous to the one described by Kierkegaard in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

To date my analysis of Kierkegaard's ethical-existential system has focused almost exclusively on the individual and a potential narrative for the rebel's coming-to-be. However, as was the case with Levinas and Camus, Kierkegaard's understanding of ethics in regard to self-other relations must also undergo analysis. Indeed, at first glance Kierkegaard's framework appears to be somewhat self-centred, given its emphasis on the individual and their relationship to eternal happiness and the absolute telos. In turn, there is a lot less time devoted to sketching out an understanding of one's relationship with the other and their commitments to this figure. However, whilst there is indeed scant reference to one's obligations to the other in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (beyond those that may issue from the absolute telos), Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* can provide an in-depth explanation to this end. The most notable aspect of Kierkegaard's ethic in this text is an approach to otherness that is grounded in the notion of neighbourly kinship²⁵⁵. Here, the other is an individual possessing a shared kinship with the subject, by virtue of a shared subordination to the law of universal equality²⁵⁶. Because of this mutual subordination, the other is therefore equal to the self in all ways, with Kierkegaard going as far as recommending

²⁵⁵ Jamie Ferreira, *Love's Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard's Works of Love* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), 1.

²⁵⁶ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 4.

that the subject view the other with closed eyes so as to circumvent any false distinctions that may arise from perceived difference²⁵⁷. Kierkegaard's point here is to emphasise the arbitrariness of social and economic categorization, and that by sidestepping the objectifying tendency of the gaze, one can centralize a shared kinship over artificial difference. As the scholar Jamie Ferreira claims:

The irrelevance of worldly distinctions is affirmed in the attempt to make clear that the obligation is not conditional on one's particular temporal circumstances. The point is that one's temporal circumstances are irrelevant to one's obligation to love – they can neither make it easier or harder to fulfil²⁵⁸.

This form of equality is thus distinguished from political and/or social equality by its formulation as a shared obligation to one another, that is, the obligation to love on another. Therefore, the ethic of love calls on oneself to relate to the other through love as an equal that is cut from the same metaphysical cloth, without the expectation of reward or recognition²⁵⁹. When applied to Camus' rebellion this principle of kinship, neighbourly love, and equality in obligation may explain the centrality of the other when prosecuting a revolt. The shared kinship between the self and the other naturally obliges one to act on behalf of the oppressed, as the subjugation of one particular group predisposes a transgression against the divinely ordained rule of equality. In light of this shared obligation to one another, it is not enough for the prospective rebel to sit idly by whilst such a violation occurs, as observance without action would surely make the individual complicit in this transgression. Due to this, the rebel is thus called into action by their primordial responsibility to the other. When combined with one's commitment to the absolute telos, the notion of shared kinship thus provides a strong foundation for the occurrence of a given rebellion, as the rebel is one who acts in accordance with the absolute telos through the recognition of this duty to the other.

Kierkegaard establishes a precedent for potential legal transgressions by decoupling the ethical from the socio-judicial order. By rooting the ethical in the ontological

²⁵⁷ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 4.

²⁵⁸ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 9.

²⁵⁹ Christopher Arroyo and The Society of Christian Philosophers, "Unselfish Salvation: Levinas, Kierkegaard, and the Place of Self-Fulfilment in Ethics". *Faith and Philosophy* 22 no.2 (2005), 164

constitution of the subject, Kierkegaard endows the individual with the legitimacy to differentiate what is good from what is bad, or, in other words, what is right from what may be deemed socially acceptable²⁶⁰. This partition stems from the notion that the ethical is an absolute related to the individual and, furthermore, that it compels them to act in a certain way²⁶¹. Additionally, the absolute telos is untouched by the petty vagaries and preoccupations of a society, setting up a hierarchical relationship between what is eternal, and what is socially constructed. Just, or ethical action is therefore determined by the individual, placing ethics above the mediations of the law²⁶². As Kierkegaard scholars Gregor Malantschuk, Howard Hong and Edna Hong note in their analysis of this principle:

The distinction between good and evil can never be derived from external conditions. This distinction is an inner determination. As long as one has not arrived at becoming a “a self according to its absolute validity” one has no ethical standard to distinguish between good and evil. One then lives within relative determinants, which of course can be arbitrarily made absolute.²⁶³

Given this hierarchy between the internal absolute, and an arbitrarily imposed external law, the subjective thinker engaged in an act of ethical pathos becomes a suitable analogue for the rebel. The rebel, as one who is engaged in a project of renunciation against a socio-political order, affirms this hierarchy through the act of rebellion as, having identified an innate ethical compulsion, and, throwing off the shackles of legal convention, the rebel posits the legitimacy of the ethical absolute over and above the prerogatives of the state²⁶⁴. This is not to say that Kierkegaard denigrates or disregards the law, indeed he is quite adamant about the general legitimacy and usefulness of it, however there is a clear distinction between the eternal, absolute telos, and the relativity of legal constraints. I intend to explore Kierkegaard’s distinction further in the comparative section of this thesis, on account of this top-down reading of rebellion.

²⁶⁰ Kierkegaard et al., *Journals and Papers*, 403-4

²⁶¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 306

²⁶² Kierkegaard et al., *Journals and Papers*, 414

²⁶³ Malantschuk et al., *Kierkegaard’s Concept of Existence*, 34.

²⁶⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 2.

CHAPTER IV: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Concluding this thesis will be a comparative analysis dealing with three distinct, yet interconnected homologies between the thought of Camus, and the ethical frameworks of Levinas and Kierkegaard. Drawing on Camus' concepts of freedom, human dignity, solidarity, concern for the other and self-sacrifice I will compare these to the relevant philosophies of Levinas and Kierkegaard in order to advance an ethical reading. Specifically, this section will draw upon Levinas's mode of relating to the other and the very notion of otherness, in conjunction with Kierkegaard's concept of the self and the relation to an ethical absolute.

Section I involves an exploration of Camus' rebellion from a Levinasian perspective which will commence with an analysis of rebellion for-the-other through the ethical metaphysics of the self-other relation, before transitioning into four separate examinations of rebellion through the concepts of Glory, Justice, Fecundity and the Man-God.

Section II unpacks a Kierkegaardian reading of *The Rebel*, beginning with an analysis of the rebel as a possible analogue for Kierkegaard's existing individual. This section will also narrativize the becoming of the rebel through the application of the existential dialectic. Concluding this section will be three paragraphs dealing with; rebellion and the absolute telos, selfless rebellion, neighbourly love, and rebellion as an act of ethical pathos.

Section III will deal with Camus' concept of moderation as a regulatory mechanism through which to uphold the legitimacy of a given rebellion. In this section I will explore moderation through the lens of Levinas's philosophy, examining it through the notions of ethical heteronomy, anti-totalitarianism, the restoration of the individual against the state, the function of discourse and the heterarchical outcomes of otherness. It is my intention to draw from the full body of scholarship informing the preceding sections of this thesis, along with one additional source authored by Tal Sessler.

In the opening stanzas of *The Rebel*, Camus demarcates the central characteristics of rebellion, outlining the thoughts, processes and actions that ultimately culminate in a

revolt. Amidst this exploration of rebellion emerges the intriguing notion that rebellion breaks out at the mere spectacle of injustice, or in other words, that rebellions are motivated by an extrinsic concern for the other, quite separate to self-interest or built up resentments²⁶⁵. The principle motivating this aspect of rebellion is left equivocal beyond Camus' allusion to certain inalienable values possessed by the self and the other²⁶⁶. This notion, namely, that a tangentially related individual will embark upon a rebellion for the sake of an unknown other, naturally lends itself to a Levinasian reading, as this perspective helps explain, and then situate, the primordial ethics of the self-other relation residing at the heart of Camus' rebellion. Throughout *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas proposes that the other is the point of departure for the ethical relation, it is this other, who comes to the same from on high, separate and infinite, who initiates within the self a not-to-be-surpassed responsibility for their wellbeing²⁶⁷. Additionally, this ethical relation arises in the face-to-face encounter, which is conceptualized as a process of discourse that overcomes the plasticity of imposed categorization and reveals the other in their infinitude²⁶⁸. The result of which, is that the other through the face is encountered as an individual qua individual. It is in this encounter that one's responsibility for the other arises, upon hearing the others voice or outcry the same is called by other to responsibility²⁶⁹.

When placed in the context of Camus' rebellion, Levinas's understanding suggests that the rebel is one who embraces this responsibility upon apprehending the other in their suffering, here, 'the face' (i.e. discourse), could be the outcry of the other against injustice, and the rebel is one who has heeded this call. This reading of rebellions inception would situate the beginning of an insurgency in the ethical heteronomy of the other, a perspective that orientates rebellion around the subject of oppression and the subject's innate compulsion to help. Rebellion from a Levinasian perspective thus emerges as a function of the ethical relation, suggesting that at the heart of Camus' rebellion lies the recognition of a fundamental responsibility for the other brought about by the primordial same-other relation. In turn, this would explain the solidarity

²⁶⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, (New York, USA: Penguin, 1951), 4.

²⁶⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 3.

²⁶⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

²⁶⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 296.

²⁶⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 197.

inherent in Camus' notion of rebellion, as it too, ignores arbitrary social divisions in favour of a metaphysical solidarity²⁷⁰.

Continuing this Levinasian reading of *The Rebel*, the notion of Glory can also enrich our understanding of rebellion. As described in chapter 2 of this thesis, Glory denotes the reorientation of a subject's consciousness towards the infinite and 'beyond-being-and-death', resulting in an internal metamorphosis that prioritises the wellbeing of the other over and above that of the self²⁷¹. Having encountered the other, the same is uprooted from their default state of egoistic enjoyment by virtue of the others presence, which in itself challenges the arbitrariness of the subject's freedom by virtue of their proximity, and their subsequent 'questioning'²⁷². Consequentially, the same is compelled into a radical responsibility that suspends their own self-interest²⁷³. Upon reading *The Rebel* the characteristics specific to Glory are also evident in Camus' formulation of rebellion, particularly when the rebel rushes to the defence of the oppressed, but hitherto unknown other, willingly facing down destruction, hardship and death for the sake of this person²⁷⁴. In this section the inception of the rebellious movement is attributed to the recognition of a certain inalienable and unitary value shared amongst the human species²⁷⁵.

Alternatively, a Levinasian perspective would suggest that it is instead rooted in our relation to the other²⁷⁶. This is not to say that unifying values and radical responsibility are in themselves incommensurable – in Levinas's work the others value stems in part from the all-encompassing paternity of 'the one' in conjunction with the infinite nature of their being²⁷⁷. Whilst in Camus the value is suggested to stem from our species insistence on meaning in conjunction with a Hellenistic conception of the lifeworld²⁷⁸.

The virtue of utilising a concept such as Glory to narrativize rebellions inception comes from the fact that it provides a causal explanation for this phenomenon. In such

²⁷⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

²⁷¹ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury) 1998, 131-2.

²⁷² Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 145.

²⁷³ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 133.

²⁷⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 3-4.

²⁷⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 3.

²⁷⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 199.

²⁷⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 214.

²⁷⁸ Srigley, *Camus Critique of Modernity*, 22-3.

an account rebellion would be the physical manifestation of Glory, representing the rebel's encounter with the other in their destitution and their acceptance of responsibility as first on the scene. Once this responsibility has been recognized the reorientation of consciousness provides an explanation as to the willingness of the rebel to either go against their own instincts of self-preservation or at least suspend them until the sanctity of the other has been reaffirmed through action. Due to the explanatory potential of Glory as a conceptual lens from which to view rebellion, and the uncanny homologies between the two, a Levinasian perspective can be employed to explain the origins of rebellion.

Along with Glory, the concept of Justice also has the potential to enrich our reading of rebellion. In Camus' formulation, the act of rebellion is bipolar, that is, involving a simultaneous movement of affirmation and negation²⁷⁹. The affirmative aspect is encapsulated by elements such as the aforementioned proclamation of values, the recognition of personal and collective worth, as well as the rebel's commitment to pursue their realisation²⁸⁰. The latter aspect, however, is an act of renunciation, whereby the rebel refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the existing socio-political order and thus commits themselves wholeheartedly to its destruction²⁸¹. Thus, there exists in rebellion a certain tension between these two poles. Levinas's understanding of Justice encapsulates, and reconciles this dualism, being a restorative endeavour that is intended to re-establish the primacy of the transcendent good in the face of the totalizing machinery of the state²⁸². Levinas understands Justice as involving the same basic metaphysical underpinnings of the same-other encounter, however unlike Glory it is a project that aims to contradict both totalization, and politico-ontological thematization by going beyond the auspices of the law²⁸³. In Levinas's words:

In reality justice does not include me in the equilibrium of its universality; justice summons me to go beyond the straight line of justice, and henceforth nothing can mark the end of this march; behind the straight line of the law the land of goodness extends infinite and unexplored, necessitating all the resources

²⁷⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 1.

²⁸⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 3-4.

²⁸¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 3.

²⁸² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.

²⁸³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.

of a singular presence. I am therefore necessary for justice, as responsible beyond every limit fixed by an objective law.²⁸⁴

What emerges here is a way to conceive of Camus' rebellion as an aspect of Justice, as both involve the affirmation of individual responsibility and the commitment to the transcendental good. Here, rebellion is a movement that seeks to go beyond the fixed limits of a morality that is produced by social or judicial mores in order to pursue goodness itself, in turn, this decouples the individual's ethical pursuit from the social, pushing one to go beyond what is imposed. Furthermore, Levinas's concept of Justice encompasses the negative aspects of rebellion, as the above-and-beyond pursuit of goodness justifies the destruction of the rebel's socio-political order, with the restoration of the individual's dignity taking precedence over political integrity. From such a perspective, Camus' rebellion embodies the principles of Levinasian Justice, actualising the ethical imperative by restoring the primacy of the individual beyond the limits fixed.

There is also a considerable degree of conceptual dialogue between Camus' rebellion and Levinas's Fecundity, with some of the restorative aspects of rebellion demonstrating a similar commitment to the preservation of otherness against a totalitarian order. Indeed, both *The Rebel* and *Totality and Infinity* espouse similar critiques of Hegelian and Marxist-Leninist philosophies on the basis that their understanding of the human-state relationship degrades otherness in their pursuit of either unity (for Camus) or totality (for Levinas)²⁸⁵. For Camus, the unitarian desire of Hegelian/Marxist states necessitates the elevation of an ideal citizen or person to the exclusion of all others, thereby providing the state with a mandate to exclude or destroy difference in order to fulfil this ideal²⁸⁶. For Levinas, the state seeks to neuter difference through thematization and the interposition of a third term, the result of which is that the state destroys alterity, thereby perpetrating violence against the same and the other²⁸⁷. Into this critique of totality come solutions from Camus and Levinas that share some remarkable similarities, they are, respectively, rebellion and Fecundity. Applying Fecundity to our study of rebellion, however, reveals the

²⁸⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 245.

²⁸⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 180.

²⁸⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 185.

²⁸⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 298.

restorative dimension of Camus' concept by demonstrating how the latter re-establishes the primacy of the other as a being of alterity²⁸⁸. In a similar manner to the above readings of rebellion, Fecundity enables one to view rebellion as an attempt to defend the alterity of the other. Indeed, if we proceed from the example of a rebellion originating from the face-encounter, in a situation whereby the state is persecuting this person in order to purge their perceived deficiencies, then the rebel is revealed to be actively engaged in defending the others alterity. Here, a rebellion is prosecuted in defence of the others' uniqueness, arresting the state in its totalitarian pursuit of unity, and opening up a space where the other is free to be themselves without fear of retribution or a state crackdown. From such a perspective Camus' rebellion represents a synthesis of Glory, Justice and Fecundity as it is actualised, where the descent into revolution is diverted by the rebel's commitment to pluralism and the transcendence of the other. What this reading suggests is that the rebel is someone who has a) encountered the other vis-à-vis the face-encounter b) accepted the radical responsibility for the others wellbeing and c) restored their right to alterity by pursuing a rebellion on their behalf despite the dangers inherent to this undertaking.

Rounding out this analysis of Camus' thought through the lens of Levinas's philosophy is the comparison between the former's rebel, and the latter's notion of a Man-God. As I have mentioned throughout the preceding chapters of this thesis, the rebel is one who comes to the aid of the destitute and persecuted other²⁸⁹. The rebel, by accepting the call for aid, and the ensuing responsibility that arises from it, comes to shoulder the burden of the others suffering by either joining their struggle as an ally, or substituting themselves for this person. This notion is clearly articulated by Camus when he states that '...from the moment that a movement of rebellion begins, suffering is seen as a collective experience – as the experience of everyone'²⁹⁰, which suggests that there is a degree of intersubjective substitution inherent in a rebellion. This facet of the rebel mirrors Levinas's notion of the Man-God, in that the latter likewise assumes responsibility for the other and willingly substitutes themselves for them in a state of disinterested, or unconditional generosity – in this way the Man-God comes

²⁸⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300 & 301.

²⁸⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

²⁹⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 9-10.

to substitute themselves for the other in their suffering²⁹¹. The transition from the default status of enjoyment to the Man-God is initiated by the self-same ethical encounter, that is the moment one apprehends the other, the ensuing crisis of being or moment of questioning, and the acceptance of responsibility as the aforementioned first one on the scene²⁹². This transition from bystander to rebel, therefore, is explained in its entirety by the above Levinasian reading of rebellion. Additionally, the state of being that is the Man-God, like that of the rebel, is transformative, that is, it arises out of an initial movement that precipitates the transition from sovereign ego to the generous protector²⁹³. The Man-God of Levinas, along with Camus' rebel, are the logical culmination of this movement, marking the moment from which the subject is lured from their solitude into the realm of the intersubjective, having assumed the burdens of the persecuted, the suffering of the other thus becomes the suffering of the rebel. By reading *The Rebel* in such a manner, we can also explain one's willingness to confront danger, as the Man-God is no longer bound by their former egoism and they are no longer subject to the same petty concerns of the subject, instead, they are reorientated towards states of being such as Glory, Justice etc.²⁹⁴ Due to these similarities, the being of the rebel may be read as typifying the substitution articulated by the Man-God.

At first glance the rebel can be read as Camus' attempt to further develop the absurd man encountered in the *Myth of Sisyphus*. Indeed, both works utilise the absurd as a common point of departure for their respective expositions, with the rebel representing a concerted effort to reconcile this existential state with ethical and political existence²⁹⁵. However, Camus does not offer any further in-depth exploration of personhood beyond some allusions to individual experience and choice, concerning himself not with what constitutes the subject themselves, but rather with what the subject does upon accepting the absurdity of their own existence²⁹⁶. Kierkegaard's existing individual can provide some explanation to this end, as his existential-ethical model of existence intersects neatly with many of the rebel's key characteristics. The

²⁹¹ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 52 & 53.

²⁹² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 204.

²⁹³ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 53.

²⁹⁴ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 52.

²⁹⁵ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 56

²⁹⁶ Foley, *Albert Camus*, 55.

subject of the pseudonymously authored *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is a dialectical being invested completely in the process of becoming, constantly attempting to reconcile the finite and the eternal, in conjunction with the relative and the absolute²⁹⁷. This being has access to the eternal through their own individual relation to the absolute telos yet enacts these directives in the historical realm²⁹⁸. From this perspective the rebel is one who enacts the ethical imperatives handed down from the absolute telos in the world of everyday existence²⁹⁹. The Kierkegaardian rebel, therefore, is one who undergoes a metamorphosis as they come into relation with the absolute through their own actions in time, achieving through their rebellion a finite act that is also absolutely justified. The benefit of such a perspective is that it demonstrates that the rebel is not only shaped by their experience of the absurd, but that they are also guided by the recognition of an absolute, an absolute that drives the rebellious impulse. Additionally, utilising a choice-based model of ethical fulfilment that locates itself within the individual serves to link the actor and the principle by way of their very ontology.

A Kierkegaardian analysis of the rebel centres on the fulcrum of choice and becoming in relation to the prosecution of a rebellion. As an existing individual related to the absolute telos, yet existing in a specific spatio-temporal context, the movement from docility to rebellion warrants further explanation. For Camus, the rebel recognises a value outside of themselves worthy of protection, by committing themselves to this principle the rebel then chooses to manifest it via a revolt, and thus a rebellion begins³⁰⁰. For Kierkegaard, however, the rebel's becoming would be intimately linked with the nature of one's being, far from being an oddity or indeed an arbitrary choice made on behalf of some relative consideration or concern, the outbreak of a rebellion is the moment that the individual experiences the pathetic moment of resignation, that is, the moment they move into alignment with the absolute telos and the possibility of an eternal happiness³⁰¹.

²⁹⁷ Kierkegaard, *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 268.

²⁹⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 142.

²⁹⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 353.

³⁰⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 2.

³⁰¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 359.

As described in the Kierkegaard chapter, the pathetic moment of resignation is the recognition of the possibility of one's eternal happiness, a moment whereby relative goods i.e. goods willed on behalf of some other peripheral good, lose their significance as the mindset and priorities of the individual change. In turn, the subject undergoes a metamorphosis, having been brought into relation with the eternal happiness the directives of the absolute telos supersede all other concerns³⁰². Here, the instincts for self-preservation, comfort, wealth and acceptance pale in comparison to the absolute telos and thus ethical action becomes the prime directive over and above anything else³⁰³. For the rebel, the pathetic moment of resignation is where the rebellion comes into being, it is the experience of the absolute telos that overcomes peripheral concerns and thus spurs them into action. By harmonising rebellion with the pathetic moment of resignation, the choice to rebel becomes a matter of constitution, with the predisposition toward rebellion becoming an existential matter as opposed to a materialistic or social one. The rebel, therefore, is not merely a product of a given set of social conditions but is instead someone who is caught up in a moment of becoming, gesturing towards a universal explanation for rebellion as opposed to a particular one. The benefit of which, is that it perhaps explains the seemingly permanent occurrence of rebellions throughout history. By virtue of these factors, a Kierkegaardian reading of rebellion may be beneficial in contextualising the act of rebellion as a moment of becoming for the individual.

A Kierkegaardian reading of *The Rebel* may also explain the avowedly selfless nature of rebellion due to the hierarchical relationship it imposes between absolutes and relatives. Specifically, this refers to how the individual's relationship to the absolute telos renders relative concerns insignificant in the lieu of the absolute good³⁰⁴. Given this distinction between goods that are good only in relation to other benefits that they confer, and goods that are good in and of themselves, ones pursuit of an existence that coheres to the absolute telos can explain the elements of rebellion that run counter to an individual's self-interest³⁰⁵. From the perspective of Camus, a rebellion will often transcend arbitrarily imposed divisions such as class, race, or nationality, forging inter-

³⁰² Thulstrup, *Commentary on Kierkegaard's*, 337 & 338.

³⁰³ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 349-50.

³⁰⁴ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 353.

³⁰⁵ Thulstrup, *Commentary on Kierkegaard's*, 336.

class, inter-race or even international solidarity amongst the dissidents³⁰⁶. However, it follows that one's commitment to a rebellion often mandates relinquishing certain privileges be they economic or otherwise, on behalf of the other - hence the collective unhappiness of revolt³⁰⁷. Furthermore, a successful rebellion that stays true to its own founding principles will reject imposing a new status quo based upon inverting the former power structure, this occurs despite the new-found privileges of the insurgents and their resentments towards their former masters³⁰⁸.

These aspects of rebellion are readily explained by conceiving of the rebel as one whose relationship to the absolute telos has rendered their relative concerns obsolete in comparison to the absolute good. Having allowed themselves to be transformed by the absolute telos, and, having fulfilled this in the pathetic moment of resignation, the rebel has transcended the baseness of the power struggle in favour of the absolute. Here we see that the rebel is justified on both sides of the struggle, as their recognition of the absolute-relative distinction explains their initial choice to forgo worldly pleasures in order to pursue a rebellion, along with their subsequent refusal of the victor's privileges. In addition to this, the rebel's actions are also grounded metaphysically as opposed to socially, a fact that may help explain why authentic rebellions tend towards an ideal of solidarity in difference as opposed to establishing some new hierarchy or totality³⁰⁹. This Kierkegaardian examination of rebellion suggests that the selfless aspects of the rebellious pursuit are motivated by the individual's pursuit of the absolute good over the relative, which enables both their resignation to hardship, and their reticence to enjoy the spoils of victory after the fact. In such a reading the rebel's selflessness is thus borne from their pursuit of the absolute.

Continuing our Kierkegaardian analysis of Camus' *The Rebel*, the phenomenon of rebellion may also have roots in the ethic of Neighbourly love. Neighbourly love in Kierkegaard encapsulates a model of self-other relations predicated on the shared familial bond of humanity, an idea that argues for a common parent in the Judeo-

³⁰⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 10.

³⁰⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 10.

³⁰⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 226.

³⁰⁹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 231

Christian God³¹⁰. From the perspective of Kierkegaard, the prime duty arising from this shared kinship is the commandment of ‘love thy neighbour’, a directive that compels one to disregard any divisive social constructs and embrace the unity that binds them to the other³¹¹. Such an understanding of the self-other relation predisposes a radically equalitarian view of otherness, suggesting that the only valid way to understand the other is as a similarly constituted brother or sister amidst a society of equals³¹². It follows from this ethical principle then, that one should reject any artificially constructed differences such as social caste, race, gender etc. on the basis that they are falsehoods placed on top of the ‘real’, that is, kinship. Thus, the ethic of Neighbourly Love is blind in its implementation³¹³. When applied to Camus’ rebellion, Neighbourly love provides the Kierkegaardian rebel with further justification for their actions, complementing the directives of the absolute telos by endowing the sufferer with an innate worth that demands protection³¹⁴. By witnessing the suffering of their neighbour, the rebel understands that the bonds of kinship have been violated by the perpetrator’s actions, in turn, the directive of the absolute telos would be to re-establish the integrity of these bonds by calling the subject-rebel to the others aid. From this perspective there emerges a twofold justification for rebellion.

First is the ethical compulsion to ‘love thy neighbour’³¹⁵ and second is the existential mission to exist in relation to the transcendent good through one’s actions³¹⁶. This understanding meshes well with Camus’ initial description of the rebel as one who is driven by the recognition of an inalienable value residing at the heart of the human person, as it too posits such a value, but it also goes a step further by grounding it within a tangible principle of kinship whilst also reconciling it with the rebel’s personal teleology. Finally, the ethic entailed by neighbourly love quite readily explains the limitations Camus places on rebellion, namely, the extension of the rebellious principle to the master who is the very subject of the rebel’s ire³¹⁷. In doing so, the rebel is limited by their own principle as neighbourly love is universal, not

³¹⁰ Ferreira, *Love’s Grateful Striving*, 1

³¹¹ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 4

³¹² Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 4

³¹³ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 9

³¹⁴ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 9

³¹⁵ Ferreira, *Loves Grateful Striving*, 4.

³¹⁶ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 350.

³¹⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

particular, and due to this, the master's transgressions cannot exclude them from this consideration.

This Kierkegaardian reading facilitates a perspective that conceives the rebel as an existing individual, and their rebellion as an act of ethical/existential pathos. Ethical, or Existential Pathos in *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is understood as a transformative act undertaken by the individual, predicated on passion, it consists in concerning oneself exclusively with the absolute telos and embodying its directives³¹⁸. By engaging in this action, the subject transitions from passive to active, ignoring external interferences by focusing solely on themselves and their relationship to the absolute telos³¹⁹. Through this process the individual is transformed, allowing themselves to experience the aforementioned pathetic moment of resignation and renege on their previous commitments to worldly goods³²⁰. Alongside this resignation comes one's absolute commitment to a given action – whatever form this may take. As Kierkegaard (aka Climacus) notes in his exposition upon this pathos:

The essential existential pathos in relation to an eternal happiness is acquired at so great a cost that it must from the finite point of view be regarded as simple madness to purchase it, which view comes to expression often enough in life, and in a variety of ways³²¹.

And:

The absolute direction (respect) toward the absolute telos, expressed in action through the transformation of the individual's existence.³²²

When applied to the rebel, ethical, or existential pathos (the two terms are used interchangeably), denotes the very act of rebellion. Rebellion here is not simply one action amidst others, but rather it is a profoundly ethical movement precipitating an individual's transformation. Rather than being arbitrary or completely context-dependent, it is a directive ascertained from the very form of the absolute good i.e. the

³¹⁸ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 386.

³¹⁹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 386.

³²⁰ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 387.

³²¹ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 346.

³²² Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 347.

absolute telos. Indeed, such a perspective is complementary to Camus', as he likewise posits a similarly transformative dimension of rebellion, claiming that the rebel becomes willing to face the hardship of an insurrection on behalf their subordination to a higher set of values or motivators, thereby echoing Kierkegaard's absolute telos and the resignation denoted by pathos³²³. Furthermore, Camus argues that the rebel's recognition of these factors engenders an attitude of all or nothing, that is, to act and defend, or to perish in the attempt, with either of these outcomes justified by the values posited at the insurrection's outset³²⁴. In a similar manner the suffering of ethical existence is a reality for Kierkegaard, yet the subject is nonetheless satisfied in their relationship to the absolute telos. In this way the rebel should be understood as an existing individual caught up in an act of existential pathos.

For Camus, what differentiates an authentic rebellion from its fallen counterpart revolution is the former's adherence to moderation over the latter's absolutism³²⁵. Moderation is described as a regulatory principle guiding the actions of the rebel, one that preferences the pragmatic acceptance of pluralism, limitation, acceptance and dialogue over absolute liberty or absolute justice³²⁶. In the context of the rebellious endeavour moderation is born from the rebel's own act of value-affirmation and their avowed commitment to uphold these values even when they are offered the role of the executioner. The rebel, therefore, cannot seek to affirm a set of inalienable human values on behalf of the oppressed, yet deny these self-same rights for the vanquished, mandating their rejection of state-sanctioned murder in lieu of clemency³²⁷. A Levinasian perspective may further our understanding of this concept by revealing that moderation is rooted in the ethical heteronomy of the other³²⁸. By virtue of the metaphysics driving the same-other encounter, the other comes to the same from the commanding position of 'height' despite their destitution, this initiates the birth of a radical responsibility for the others wellbeing and thus the ethical face-relation is borne³²⁹. When applied to moderation this form of relation sheds light on the

³²³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 5.

³²⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 4.

³²⁵ Camus, *The Rebel*, 243.

³²⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 231.

³²⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 223 & 224.

³²⁸ Tal Sessler, *Levinas and Camus: humanism for the twenty-first century*, (London, UK: Continuum), 2008, 54.

³²⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34-5.

underlying forces regulating an authentic rebellion, suggesting that the same-other relation driving the rebellion in the first place – one that posits the innate ethical value of the other – is in fact the same self-other relation, only applied in reverse. This demonstrates a certain coherency in the rebel’s actions, specifically, that moderation is not so much a counterpoint to the initial rebellious impulse, but rather the logical conclusion emerging from the universal ethical heteronomy of the other writ large. Such a reading of moderation suggests that the rebel who resists their totalitarian impulses will commit themselves to extending the same ethical consideration to all as opposed to just the previously oppressed.

This is not to say that there is no justice or retribution once the existing power structure has been shattered, but rather that the beneficiaries of the previous system won’t be condemned to death on account of their former positions. The Levinasian commitment to the other then, founds moderation in one’s face-relation with the other, it is the other side of the rebellious coin in that it is applicable to the vanquished as well as the oppressed. In turn, this prompts the rebel to preference the human subject over matters of revenge or principle.

Moderation also evidences a Levinasian perspective through its function as a safeguard against totality, preferencing pluralism over and above enforced homogeneity or adherence to an ideological principle. For Camus, a rebellion devolves into a revolution once one’s respect for the others value and alterity collapses in the face of a utopian pursuit³³⁰. The danger inherent in this pursuit is that the state will enforce a set of criteria or ‘ideals’ to which all others are measured, with this so-called ‘ideal citizen’ then becoming the mechanism through which to adjudge the worthiness of one’s life³³¹. From this, the state can then sanction the murder or mistreatment of certain groups based on their supposed conformity with this ideal³³². Moderation, however, counteracts this by inverting the relation between idea and citizen, placing the welfare of the existent other over the fulfilment of the principle. The outcome of which, is the preservation of plurality against totality³³³. Having rooted moderation in

³³⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 229.

³³¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 185.

³³² Camus, *The Rebel*, 185.

³³³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 224.

the ethical heteronomy of the other, we can now examine how this insistence upon pluralism and difference is shaped implicitly by a Levinasian conception of otherness. The other for Levinas is a being of radical alterity, separated and infinite, it is a being that transcends the attempt to know it by shattering all ontological paradigms of understanding³³⁴. By virtue of this constitution the other remains forever different, and, despite the attempted interposition of the 'third term' the other will inevitably shatter a particular framework of understanding by revealing itself in its infinity through discourse i.e. the face³³⁵.

When applied to the study of Camus' moderation the other is thus the engine driving the rebel's resistance against totality, it is the status of the other-qua-other that not only produces the pluralism which is to be preserved, but also the existents place above the ideal. Here totality cannot be imposed as it violates the other's very nature, even the perfect utopian conception of the citizen is not equal to the radical alterity of their being. A Levinasian perspective of otherness thus reveals the other as the key driver for moderation - it is the embodiment of a rebellious principle that centralizes the other in its pursuits and commits itself to preserving the self-same ethic throughout its unfolding. The result of which, is that moderations resistance against totality is borne from the nature of the other, with the inversion between other and idea achieved by way of their constitution.

Moderation can also be understood as a restorative project undertaken against the encroachment of the totalitarian impulse³³⁶. Specifically, the operation of moderation as a regulatory concept that privileges the other as difference over the ideal is perhaps indicative of a wider restorative mission. From a Levinasian standpoint, the political serves to neuter the subject of their alterity through the abolition of difference³³⁷. In other words, by thematising the other³³⁸. This reductive endeavour does violence to the other, severing them from their alterity and removing them from their default state of self-reference, thereby reducing them to a satellite of the knowing conscious³³⁹. The

³³⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 38-9.

³³⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 73.

³³⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 196.

³³⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 225.

³³⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 46.

³³⁹ Treanor, *Aspects of Alterity*, 5.

other in this sphere becomes an object of the political, essentially, they are reduced to a classification. This critique is echoed by Camus, who states that the demand for unity issued by revolutionary states rests upon the presumption of a ‘universal malleability’³⁴⁰. Namely, that the human is merely a product of material circumstances or history, and that with a certain degree of forcible intervention people can come to cohere with a higher ideal³⁴¹. Naturally, this leads to the state preferencing the ideal over the actual, with any outliers considered to be defective or deficient³⁴². Camus goes on to argue that this is contrary to the dictates of rebellion, that human nature is essentially beyond the thematising gaze of the state, and that moderations centralization of difference is a way of restoring true otherness against this tendency³⁴³.

The same mission is also apparent in Levinas, whereby Fecundity seeks to open a dimension beyond totality by viewing the subject as the vestibule of the future, that is, a transcendent being whose freedom allows them to actualize a future beyond the knowing purview of the state³⁴⁴. The interiority of the human person coupled with their freedom places them beyond the factual or the material, and as such the mission of Fecundity is to open up a space where this potentiality can come to the fore³⁴⁵. Moderation embodies this mission by upholding the sanctity of a human nature that is beyond the knowable, mandating that the rebel acknowledge that their limit is to be found in the other, and that there is a facet of human nature that will never become a fiefdom of the political³⁴⁶. Thus, moderation is the rebel’s enactment of Fecundity after they have successfully prosecuted their rebellion, it is the notion that the human, or the other, should take precedence over totality.

Camus argues that an authentic rebellion’s resistance to totality is facilitated through discourse with the other, stating that the foundation of moderation is a clear conversation shared between equals, which in turn, fosters a shared sense of mutual

³⁴⁰ Camus, *The Rebel*, 195.

³⁴¹ Camus, *The Rebel*, 195.

³⁴² Camus, *The Rebel*, 182.

³⁴³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 239.

³⁴⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300 & 301.

³⁴⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 301.

³⁴⁶ Camus, *The Rebel*, 195.

solidarity and purpose³⁴⁷. Moderation, therefore, is an intersubjective undertaking involving a mutual exchange between various standpoints, one that achieves its equilibrium through the other³⁴⁸. To resist totality, is to acknowledge that one's sovereignty ends in the other, and vice versa. Camus' formulation on how to achieve this limitation evinces a striking similarity with Levinas's preferred method of self-other relations. Returning to the event of the encounter, one's apprehension of the other's face denotes a process of discourse that will challenge and subvert the subjects default state of relaxed sovereignty and enjoyment³⁴⁹. After which, the same enters into a 'crisis of being', and is called to responsibility, before becoming engaged in the aforementioned projects of Justice, Glory and Fecundity³⁵⁰. The fulcrum of this relation, though, is discourse, with Levinas claiming that whilst the phenomenological apprehension of the other is static and therefore susceptible to thematization and/or objectification, the process of discourse is spontaneous and intersubjective, meaning that it can overcome the plasticity of a purely visual mode of interaction³⁵¹. Thus, discourse is 'an original relation with an exterior being'³⁵².

Viewing moderation through such a paradigm indicates a common ground between the function of the other in Levinas and Camus, with the ethical relation being the driving force through which the rebel ascertains their limits by entering into discourse with the other, the rebel is no longer able to objectify or thematise this person as an embodiment of one ideal or another, instead clear lines of communication are established via the face-relation and the limits so integral to rebellion are founded. Furthermore, the challenge to the default status of enjoyment or dominance gestures towards a metaphysical foundation for moderation, as the other by virtue of their spontaneity/alterity is able to impose these limits by virtue of how they are constituted. Here, moderation is the outcome of the of the primordial relation shared between the same and the other, it is nothing less than the point of equilibrium brought about by apprehending the 'face' of the other. Moderation, therefore, can be explained quite

³⁴⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, 225.

³⁴⁸ Camus, *The Rebel*, 225.

³⁴⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 76.

³⁵⁰ Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 132.

³⁵¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

³⁵² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

effectively through the application of an ethical-metaphysical framework such as Levinas's.

From the above analysis of Camus' conception of moderation, it is clear that this ideal utilises otherness as a safeguard against the replacement of one hierarchy with another. In order to arrest the devolution of a rebellion into a revolution, moderation advocates that the other form the limit from which one can curtail their absolutist impulses³⁵³. Thus, instead of a hierarchical relation between victor and vanquished, there is only self and other³⁵⁴. What this demonstrates is a possible metaphysical foundation underlying moderation, as this insistence against installing hierarchies on the basis of fabricated or materialistic categories, such as winners or losers, bourgeois or proletarian, suggests that the only categories worth accounting for are those of the subject and the other. Once again, Levinas's model of the same-other encounter can explain the philosophical framework underlying these anti-hierarchical properties, indeed, the heterarchical nature of the same-other relation is predicated on the notion that the other remain alternate and infinite, they are an anathema to thematization and therefore immune to the interposition of a classification that would order them in relation to another³⁵⁵. In such a philosophy, the same does not categorize or order, they merely interact with, and assume responsibility for, the other.

Constituted as the absolute other, a Levinasian perspective would suggest that Camus' moderation is predicated on otherness qua otherness, that the rebel's refusal to recreate a society of masters and slaves originates in the face of the other as opposed to one high-minded principle or another. Here, the rebel is seeking only to engage with the other ethically, finding a limit in their acknowledgement that the other is infinite and therefore beyond objectification. By situating the other as the driving force for this anti-authoritarian principle, we thus return to the original principle of rebellion as one that is against the order of master and slave, as opposed to just an attempt to invert the pre-existing relationship³⁵⁶. The Levinasian perspective, founded in the other, can also explain why Moderation is somewhat anarchical, as its underlying conception of

³⁵³ Camus, *The Rebel*, 223.

³⁵⁴ Camus, *The Rebel*, 226.

³⁵⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50-1.

³⁵⁶ Sharpe "The Invincible Summer", 588.

human relations, coupled with its metaphysics of the encounter, seems to suggest that ordering principles are an innately unfounded and irrelevant in comparison to the two primordial categories of same and other. Due to these apparent homologies, a Levinasian reading suggest that moderation, like rebellion itself, is rooted in the same's encounter with the other.

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