

# JEWISH STUDIES

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## Memories of the Immemorial: On Levinas's Concept of Anachronism

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**Abstract:** The French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas is known for his ethics of the other. The other is neither an object nor another subject relative to the self. The other as the other has a radical alterity, and there is an absolute asymmetry between the other and the self, which cannot be overcome by the epistemological correspondence or the ethical golden rule that allows us to exchange places. In order to understand this absolute asymmetry, this article starts with time, especially anachronism, which is an important concept used by Levinas to explain the temporal relationship between the self and the other. Anachronism is the temporal structure through which the other appears in the consciousness of the self. Anachronism is also the premise for the self to have an ethical relationship with the absent other, and the basis for other ethical relationships presupposed by the presence of the other. In addition, anachronism can also be used as an approach to understanding Levinas's religious thought, involving the relationship between God and man, and then revealing the religiosity of the ethics of the other. This article attempts to select relevant passages from Levinas's works to describe the basic characteristics of the concept of anachronism, return to its religious context, and then discuss the theological implications of anachronism.

**Key Words:** Levinas, Anachronism, The Other, Face, Responsibility