A Person Imagines Forgiving a Subject. Three Perspectives on the Rest of Forgiving, Following Janklévitch, Derrida and Levinas: the Unpardonable of the Ipseity, “Outside the Subject”

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the relation between possibility and potentiality that exists in forgiving the Other’s death, following Jankélévitch’s philosophical assumptions, which claims that the Subject’s quality is changing depending on different moral roles and values that the Person takes in exercising the forgiveness itself. Therefore, I will evaluate to what extent, approaching the death of a Subject through the forgiveness that its author received from the Other, will prove to be a deconstruction of the Subject constructed through three possible identities of the Person, discussed by Jankélévitch as moral perspectives of the first (I), the second (You) and the third Person (the Other).

In the first part of the article, I will investigate the difference between pardonable and unpardonable that Jankélévitch discusses in Forgiveness. The working hypothesis is that the passing from the imprescriptible of the Forgiveness to the open interrogation, Should We Pardon Them? is caused by the recourse to a hermeneutical approach that presents the Other’s death unforgettable for the moral experience of the I. I have submitted this interpretation to a strategic formula, called the death on the third Person and the forgiveness on the first Person, a proper description for the only possible case that he admits as an authentic forgiveness, in which “the I” forgives the Other’s death caused by someone else. In the second part of the article I will closely observe the consequences of his perspective on the intimate connection between the experience of death and the phenomenon of forgiveness in Derrida’s philosophy, whose position I will recognise through the expression of the death on the first Person and the forgiveness on the first Person (defining that only I can forgive for anything caused to my person), as well as in

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Levinas’ philosophy, whose critical treatment I will synthesize through the expression of the death on the second Person and the forgiveness on the first Person. As a practical research, this article will conclude different manners to understand the Auschwitz’s phenomena through forgiveness, following Jankélévitch’s, Derrida’s and Levinas’ analysis on this subject, from both moral and metaphysical perspective.

Keywords: forgiveness, death, pardonable, unpardonable, moral values, the Other, Person, Auschwitz.

I. Theoretical Presuppositions and Main Stakes

“Each of us is the first who dies”2 (Ionesco3 1978). This simple statement is a way to recognize the individual formula of the Subject’s renouncing to the appearance of a plural Person: assumed under these terms, death is enunciated only as a metaphysical rest. If the partisanship with Jankélévitch’s statement is accepted, claiming that ethics is constituted by a moral register, than, the Subject’s finitude is regarded as a personal death, one that, when is caused by another, considers the otherness relation being part of the forgiveness phenomena. In the postmodern discourse, collective disappearance through death as a paradigmatic relation of Man-against-Man is defined as a meta-empirical tragedy, as Jankélévitch nominates the Auschwitz historical process. Hence, it is not a conventional critical treatment to consider this kind of moral discourse a potential source for the deconstruction of the postmodern Subject, one that privileges the Person’s value despite the Subject’s one, since it is the only one which expresses the authentic experience of death and forgiveness making recourse to three different instances of the otherness: I, You and The Other.4

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2 “Tout le monde est le premier à mourir”.
3 Jankélévitch himself quotes Ionesco in his philosophical analysis conceived in La Mort.
4 Jankélévitch is using the first three pronominal persons to distinguish three main perspectives belonging to the Subject and presented as its hypostasis: the first person, being the I, the second person, understood as You and often recognized in his writings by an alternative name, the Thou, and the third person, remarked as The Other, consecrated lately in Buber’s or Levinas’ philosophy. What I want to state from the very beginning is the fact that in my analysis, I prefer to refer to any of these persons in their metaphysical and moral quality; hence, receiving the
Conceived as a research of Jankélévitch’s moral philosophy and metaphysics, this article aims to present the consequences of his perspective on the intimate connection between death’s experience and the phenomena of forgiveness presented in Derrida’s and Levinas’ oeuvre. Through this critical treatment, I also intend to create a proper context to analyse the relation between Subject and Person. Therefore, I will evaluate to what extent, approaching the death of a Subject through the forgiveness that its author received from an Other, proves being, in fact, a construction process of three possible identities of the Person, discussed by Jankélévitch as three different perspectives:

The third and the second Person are my points of view on the Other (He or You) or the points of view of the Other on me (I, considered as second or third person of the Other), the two partners remaining two subjects distinguished one from the other both monadic and personal: the first person, who represents my point of view on my one, yours on your one and, generally, the reflexive point of view of anyone on itself. (Jankélévitch 1977)

In consequence, treating the acceptance of death as an ethical event and forgiveness as a process, but associating the first one with the idea of instance and the second one with the significance of an interval, in the first section of this research I will analyse the consequences of the relation possible-impossible, as it appears in Jankélévitch’s philosophy, on defining the condition of forgiveness expressed in Derrida’s philosophical work as a genuine distance between the pure forgiveness and the unpardonable. According to Jankélévitch, any discourse about a potential forgiveness is based on forgiving one Person for something wrong caused to another Person – is the formula defined, with boldness, as the death in the third Person and the forgiveness in the first Person, an expression that contextually is very generous, allowing to the French philosopher to insert the difference between possibility and potentiality in any act of forgiveness.

Keeping the correspondence between giving a suitable expression to a Person’s formula and conceiving a philosophical argument for it in

same critical treatment as the Subject does, the Person will be referred to, during this analysis, using capital letters.
terms of forgiveness, I will evaluate Derrida’s critique addressed to the hyperbolical ethics of Jankélévitch, as it is named by its author, discussing Derrida’s perspective as an adjusted opinion to the death in the first Person and to the forgiveness in the first Person, in the sense of the I’s or the Ego’s forgiveness for what was done wrong against it. Nevertheless, a significant shift of paradigm is represented, starting from Jankélévitch’s argument, by the context in which an I must forgive a second Person for something committed to a third- thus, the interval from the death in the second Person to the forgiveness in the first Person, claimed by Levinas, becomes a suitable critic to Jankélévitch’s argument about forgiveness. Levinas assumes that this kind of relation leaves as a rest remaining outside a Subject that is placed, paraphrasing one of the author’s titles, between Totality and Infinity.


Apparently, Jankélévitch’s position consolidates an authentic paradox: if in Forgiveness the unpardonable as form of the absolute evil, assimilated as a metaphysical category, must be absolved of any gravity, in 1971, to the impersonal interrogation Should We Pardon Them?5, addressed by Hebrews to the Nazis, Jankélévitch answers by justifying the unpardonable6. The moral tension occurred between the pardonable and the unpardonable exceeds the uncertain inconsistencies of the syntheresis, of the burdened consciousness of the Subject and of any

5 I will consider Jankélévitch’s position from his article published in 1996, “Should We Pardon Them?”.
6 Significantly is, at first glance, the manner in which Jankélévitch is constructing his philosophical argument, making recourse to the time’s forgiveness, a problem that I will discuss in a further section of this article: “It is time to pardon, or at least to forget? Twenty years are enough, it would seem, for the unpardonable to become miraculously pardonable: by right and from one day to the next the unforgettable is forgotten” (Jankélévitch 1996, 553).
sanction applied to remind the total commitment of the Person through the formula of the ethical maximalism, all this mentions being proceeded aspects in *Le Paradoxe de la Morale*.

Consequently, from these assumptions, the following question might be derived: is the unpardonable a simulacrum for the moral refuse understood as denial? Moreover, is forgiveness’s negation implying the abolishment of The Other as an Identity, placing its representation outside the Subject, as Levinas said?

On the one hand, I consider that the difference between pardonable and unpardonable is assimilated by the relation possible-impossible developed by any act of forgiveness. This distance is caused not by the contrasts of death’s experience, distinctly resented from the religious and metaphysical context to the bio-politic and moral accents, but by the manner in which Jankélévitch prefers to explain the plausibility of forgiveness and its impossibility through the Subject’s value both as an interval and as an instance.

Jankélévitch distinguishes the instance, as an ethical event allowing to understand forgiveness as a personal relation of the Subject with an Other defined as Person, from the interval, as a proper dimension for the Subject’s ethical virtues that accomodate it with its finitude through self-forgiveness and preparation for death. The impossibility is affirmed at the instance’s level. The Subject, in its evolution, is exposed as Person, each time being surprised in rising in interval in which the virtues, under the exercise of what Foucault recognised being practices of the self, develops, in time, the I meant to live, love and forgive, events presented as possible to happen only in one instance. Hence, forgiveness is instantaneous, interpersonal, implicitly receiving the otherness in any reconciliation phenomena, constituted into an interval, since it needs time. Anything that forgiveness assumes from outside the Subject is placed outside the legal codes and integrated into a moral of Person.

On the other hand, the overtones of this interpretation are more subtle. Jankélévitch was associating the tragic, in *Le Paradoxe de la Morale*.

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7 “Between the anonymity of the third person and the tragic subjectivity of the first person […]; between the death of the other, which is far away and indifferent,
Morale exclusively to the consciousness’s forms of existence. In this manner, if we constantly assume the symmetry and the consubstantiality between forgiveness and love, any unpardonable represents a construct opposed to love, involving a minimum ontic level and a minim ethical level: since not the smallest evil was committed, but the extreme one, the unpardonable is the only possible under this circumstances. The risk of not instituting the unpardonable would imply the possibility to reject the Person’s value and the double approximation of the moral refuse, described by the French philosopher as a process in two steps. Firstly, it is mentioned as a possibility to assert evil as good, evil that is not only excluded from any form of unpardonable, but it is also defined as source of a confusion of absolute moral values\(^8\). Secondly, it is approximated as a vector for a bad will, potentially assumed as a rhetorical effect or, in the worst case, as the minimum evil or a necessary one\(^9\). Therefore, I consider that the unpardonable, defined by Jankélévitch as possibility, is nothing else than a simple denial. Or, to be more specific, a moral denial\(^{10}\).

**II.1. A Person Imagines Forgiving a Subject**

Beyond this aspects, researching the significances that Jankélévitch gave to forgiveness assumed as a moral construct postulated between interval and instance, from where derives its species – the unpardonable

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\(^8\) “The conflict of values exists simultaneously in itself and in the bad will of the man” (To be consulted, on this concerning, Jankélévitch 2005, 13-56).

\(^9\) Jankélévitch continues arguing that “the good is that thing which one responds to affirmatively, and, if it is responded negatively, it means that the so-called good is a disguised evil”.

\(^{10}\) Apparently, this would be the third type of moral refusal that Jankélévitch processes, although initially there were discussed only two forms of denial: the 1\(^{st}\) refusal, a denial of supernaturalistic morals, in which repression, imaginary and suppression of immoral desires are developing and the 2\(^{nd}\) refusal, which is taken as refusing the refusal of idealistic morality, developing an ascetical ambivalence. What Jankélévitch claims from the outset is that morality is essentially refusal, even though any refusal is not necessarily moral.
and the impossibility to forgive –, I consider that a suitable explanation for Jankélevitch’s change of perspective from the imprescriptible of the Forgiveness to the relaxed discourse of “Should We Forgive Them?” might be represented by a hermeneutical approach that makes the Other’s death unforgivable for the moral experience of the I. It is what I called, in creating an adequate order for the three authoritarian figures for writing about forgiveness – Jankélevitch, Derrida and Levinas – the sequence surprising death at the third Person and forgiveness at the first Person. This is the moral equation through which I think that Jankélevitch develops his theory about the unpardonable.

Through death in the third Person, the I as a Subject understands the Other’s identity in a paradoxical sense of the abstract and anonymous death, one that reflects the potentiality of its own death, even if it is approached impersonally and conceptually. Although “the third Person is a principle of serenity, of distance”\textsuperscript{11}, of instituting a hermeneutical neutrality, the first Person is certainly a source of anguish. Between death at the third Person and forgiveness at first Person, the consciences are authentically communicating, the Subject’s identity representing the finitude of the first one through the finitude of the second one. In this manner, one can regard the Other’s death as his one. The Other, even if it is not regarded as a Person, remains a Subject and, in the name of its identity the unpardonable appears:

This point of view, that is barely constituted as a point of view, because it renounces at perspective and optical distance, represents, in fact, the lived experience of one’s own death, in which the object of the consciousness and the Subject of “to dye” coincide. (Jankélevitch 1977)

Time develops all the moral possibilities, both positive and negative, playing the role of a neutral construct in producing forgiveness: time cannot forgive. This is the manner in which the chances of the pseudo-forgiveness start, being, \textit{de facto}, conflicts of representation. The forgiveness of any action morally convictable by a

\textsuperscript{11} In the absence of a published English translation of Jankelevitch’s volume, \textit{La mort} (1977), all the further quotes from this oeuvre represent my own translations.
moral consciousness, without thinking and also forgiving its consequences represents, according to Jankélévitch, a defensive mechanism of the Subject that is not assumed, in this case, as a Person. The absence of the integrated consequences, as well as the recourse to the temporality of forgiveness is privileging the development of a failed act of the absolution of the sins, called pseudo-forgiveness, in which, even if the unpardonable is excluded, the possibility of forgiveness is kept. Apart from temporising and integration, Jankélévitch is criticizing a third form of the fallible representation of the forgiveness, and that is the intellectualisation process, regarded as an operational sense donation for a evil-disposed act in a different context. The intellectualisation is based on different speculations of the moral negative action: in consequence, it cannot be assumed as an instance, since it supports exculpation by reconciliation and excuse, and not by forgiveness. Not least, the depersonalisation of forgiveness is called liquidation, meaning overlooking One’s mistake to Another. The simple omission means avoiding an inter-Personal relation. Otherwise, at this level, a Person imagines forgiving a Subject.

Inconsistencies of this argument appear, following Jankélévitch’s theories about forgiveness order, in the final assumption expressed in his treatise: “when a murder can neither be justified, nor explained, nor even understood, when, with everything that could be explained having been explained, the atrocity of this crime and the overwhelming evidence of this responsibility are obvious, then, there is nothing left to do besides forgiving” (Jankélévitch 2005, 106). What I found relevant is the association of this mention with the previous statements, generating together an absolute form of the unpardonable: because forgiveness is absolute, than, the unpardonable is deconstructed and annulled. I certify, for the moment, the importance of placing both Absolute Evil and Absolute Good on the same horizon of possibility:

Both, in a sense, occur “outside” the realm of normative ethics. They both take place in the instant, as an exception to the regular order. As soon as forgiveness is accomplished, Evil could appear again, and vice versa: “Love is stronger than evil and evil is stronger than love; each is stronger than the other!”(Jankélévitch 2005, 164). In the event of forgiveness, one sees the Good appear, but this Good is impermanent, and Evil can always appears on the horizon, and indeed must
remain there, if there is to be anything called forgiveness. Forgiveness is impossible or nearly impossible in this conceptualization. But this is the aporia, or impossibility, which in Jankélévitch’s argument will always haunt forgiveness. (Lupo 2010, 26)

II.2. Forgiving the Fact-of-Having-Been-Made. A Self Expressed by Person, Not by an Idem

Later, in his essay dedicated to the concentration camps, Jankélévitch expressed the ontological void through the disappearance of the hominism. Hence, “forgiveness died in the concentration camps” (Jankélévitch 1996, 556), being no other difficult moral image that a moral consciousness must imagine. Why forgiveness become, at this level, utopic, and moreover, what kind of representation is addressed to the Subject’s identity if it remains only a chimera? I consider that the proper answer is offered by the same logic of Jankélévitch’s argument: if the forgiveness belongs to the instance, not to the interval, than, it must be assumed exclusively as an interpersonal relation, from monad to monad, from Subject to Subject, only in this way being transferable from Person to Person. In other words, it is possible to assert that a Jew forgives a Nazi, but it is impossible that universalising, one might assert that all the Jews forgave all the Nazis. The unpardonable’s possibility is given by the impossibility of both the singular and the inter-personal. The death in the third Person and the forgiveness in the first Person are possible only into a relationship between an I and a Him: this is the forgiveness whose manifested power is expressed only between two persons, being the exercise of one regarding to the other’s face. Here, Derrida imposes the universalisation of the impossible forgiveness, not the universalisation of the unpardonable, taking into account a collective Subject, like Jankélévitch does. I will return to this issue in the course of the two sections of the article.

What I want to lay on, however, is a significant aspect that seems to have escaped from the rigorist and classic exegesis dedicated to Jankélévitch’s texts. I have never met and read a critical argument associating the Auschwitz’ process to the instance, and not to the interval. Most of the critics assumed the ethical perspective that
Jankélévitch addressed to this historical event as a critical treatment applied to a mechanism developed in time, but implicitly considered as an interval. But, analysing the manner in which the French philosopher understands the instance as an ethical event, we might obtain a new approach, one that is not leaving the inter-Personal relations outside the Subject: if genocide is an instance, a personal relationship defined as an unjustified report of Man-against-Man, and if forgiveness is assumable only by a Person reporting to Another, than, it is clear why each Subject can forgive exclusively the mistakes committed to itself, not having the right to solve, forget and forgive injustices, crimes and atrocities against other Persons.

The Person is a product of the moral intimacy, the problem of forgiveness opening, at this level of our interpretation, the hypostasis of the Subject as Ipseity.

In his *Philosophie première*, Jankélévitch asserts that “this fleeting *Itself* [*Lui-Même*], melting and fluid, is nothing, not even itself [*Soi*] – it is *Ipse*, a Self-expressed in Person, not *Idem*” (Howells 2001, 96). Ipseity develops the fact-of-having-been-made, a fact that it is not forgivable. Therefore, the Subject’s condition implies in forgiveness the representation, the identity and the condition of the Person. Pain or injustice caused by any death reminds the responsibility that the I has both for the Person and the Subject’s principles. This is why forgiveness belongs to the Subject’s ipseity, and “everything remaining outside it”, as Levinas says, makes the object of the otherness and of the interval.

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12 On the other hand, Jankélévitch states that the pain does not affect the I, but affects what is mine.

13 In “Le pure et l’impure”, Jankélévitch explains that regretting is not an attitude adressed by the person’s ipseity. Any regret is a remorse without object, a sort of coloquial and normal attitude that implies no interiour transformation, no personal humility, no confession. Jankélévitch agrees that remorsement has a specific optimism, one that is based on the fact that whatever was done can be erased, by time, leaving no wounds, no rest, no pains. But, related to time, any done thing [*factum*] can be undone, only the fact-of-having-been-made [*fecisse*] is unbreakable, unforgettable. See Vladimir Jankélévitch, “Le pur et l’impure”, in *Philosophie morale*, ed. Françoise Schwab, Paris, Flammarion, 1998, pp. 711-12.
III. Derrida and the Final of “the Hyperbolical Ethics”: The Unpardonable, from Forgiving Something to Forgiving Someone. Death in the First Person and Forgiveness in the First Person

Derrida is the one who gives to the pure and to the impure claimed by Jankélévitch a particular significance in the context of forgiveness: distinguishing the excuse, the forgiveness and the reconciliation represents giving different senses to the pure and to the impure in the context of a sin’s absolution. Derrida often associates the forgiveness with a calculated social practice, that multiples the Subject’s representation through confession, exoneration, public excuse, withdrawal of certain representations from a community’s context, in the terms of postmodern geopolitics. Discussing humanity’s crimes as human actions and reactions, Derrida describes Jankélévitch’s perspective on unpardonable as a question of limits. The Hegelian tonality is, at this level, regained and contextualised in a proper manner:

In an analogous fashion, Hegel, the great thinker of “forgiveness” and “reconciliation” said that all is forgivable except the crime against spirit, that is to say, against the reconciling power of forgiveness. (Derrida 2001, 34)

Derrida observes Jankélévitch’s intention to dissociate, in this context, the intention to forgive by the forgiveness’ exigencies, noting that in the case of the Jews and the Nazis, no one asked for pardon to no one.

Derrida proposes, in consequence, the deconstruction of the logical condition of consciousness’ dialogue as forgiveness: supposing the necessity of asking for pardon14 in order to offer and occur pardon – this is the moment when the hyperbolical ethics15 of Jankélévitch, accepting

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14 “In order for us to forgive, it is first necessary – is it not?, that one comes to us to ask for forgiveness” (Jankelevitch 2005, 157).

15 Derrida explains the hyperbolical ethics of Jankélévitch in an interview in 1998: “Jankélévitch, who is a French philosopher of Jewish Russian origin, wrote a philosophical book on forgiveness, on the Jewish-Christian-Greek history of this concept. This book, written in the early sixties, did not deal with the Shoah or the Holocaust. It was a philosophical book on the ethics of forgiveness, on the concept of forgiveness, on the heritage of this concept. A very strong book, which,
the partisanship of love’s imperative and forgiveness disappears – “ethics beyond ethics, there perhaps is the undiscovered place of forgiveness” (Derrida 2001, 36). If the impossibility of a fair punishment is annulling the possibility of forgiving a criminal, the unpardonable coming, according to Jankélévitch, from the irreversibility of a state of a fact, Derrida proposes reconsidering the givens of the forgiveness, associating Jankélévitch’s errors with Arendt’s ones. Two seem to be the givens of the forgiveness, radically interpreted:

Forgiveness must rest on a human possibility – I insist on these two words, and above all on the anthropological feature which decides everything (because it will always be about, at the end of it, knowing if forgiveness is a possibility or nor, or even a faculty, thus a sovereign “I can” and a human power or not); The human possibility is the correlation to the possibility of punishment – not to avenge oneself, which is something different, to which forgiveness is even more foreign, but to punish according to the law. (Derrida 2001, 37)

Following an opposed direction to Jankélévitch’s one, the history of forgiveness begins with the unpardonable. The ambiguity of forgiveness is dependent, from Derrida’s perspective, by the complement of the action: do I forgive Someone or Something? The Object – being the Something – is not consuming in forgiveness the Person, since forgiving Someone involves, through the unpardonable, the impossibility of forgiving your own Self (in a Christian rigorous monotheism, God gives forgiveness to all those who forgave the sins of their sinners). In other words, for Derrida, the forgiveness’s deconstruction is the construction of the Subject: forgiveness is possible only when the Person is tempted to forgive the unpardonable. Forgiveness is not dependent by the instance, but by an ethical condition of potentiality. Even though “crime against humanity is a modern example of the unpardonable” (2001, 33), pure forgiveness is always fallible in an empirical and pragmatic inscribing itself in a certain manner within the Judeo-Christian tradition, recommended what Jankélévitch himself called a hyperbolical ethics of forgiveness, that is the absolute commandment to forgive evil: even if evil is stronger than forgiveness, forgiveness must be stronger than evil. Thus, he maintained a certain prescription of absolute forgiveness.” (Derrida, 1998, 3).
context: the pure forgiveness is outside the Subject, but not properly in the sense expressed by Levinas. Forgiveness conserves, for Derrida, a main tension between the transcendental and the empirical: despite the fact that ideally, it is associated with a pure action, it will always be manifested impure. The pure and the impure’s opposition constructs the impossibility and the probability of any conciliation:

Forgiveness is not, it should not be, normal, normative, normalizing. It should remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality. (Derrida 2001, 32)

Hence, the temporality announced by Derrida is not an instance, but an interval, and forgiveness, as empirical fallibility, cannot be recognized from Subject to Subject, but from Person to Person, from Person to normalized Subject, accepted and punished socio-politically. In Derrida’s opinion, in the forgiveness moment has no secret, at least not an internalised one by the Subject, or an unsecularised one.

Obviously, Jankélévitch avoids calling the Individual in constructing the Subject’s identity as a Person, which is, in my point of view, a contradictory movement to the forgiveness philosophy proposed by Derrida. Furthermore, Derrida himself hides a paradox developed in his argument for forgiveness. At the beginning, he accepts the possibility that a Person forgives someone’s mistakes, which does not exclude continuing the punishment through instance and juridical instruments. Forgiveness belongs to an Individual but the sanction is applied to a Person, reminding the injustice relationship of two human beings with the same rights, thus, the relationship between two Persons. Despite the fact that Derrida sustains at the beginning of his essay that forgiveness without punishment and forgiveness without strength are the most desirable forms of the pardonable, inspired from the Jewish ethical treatment, he affirms that converting the secret to a principle is an exigency of founding democracy:

Make of this trans-political principle a political principle, a political rule or position taking: it is necessary also in politics to respect the secret, that which exceeds the political or that which is no longer in the juridical domain. This is what I would call “democracy to come”.
To put it otherwise, forgiveness is beyond law, transcendental, and this is why, only the punishment, the sanction, the retribution and the inter-relational can be normalized.

However, both Jankélévitch’ and Derrida’s perspectives remain significant:

In Jankélévitch’s argument, forgiveness still finds a place as event of life, even if is a rare one, meanwhile Derrida assumes forgiveness as postponement or hiding. It is never empirically recognised. If in Jankélévitch’s philosophy the instance allows the possibility of forgiveness, in Derrida’s one it is already denied from the main condition of defining itself. (Lupo 2010, 28)

In consequence, I consider that it is the secret’s fundament the one which confers Derrida’s interpretation a proper background of action for death at the first Person and forgiveness at the first Person: here, nothing remains outside the Subject, except the normalising’s condition, the legal interval. This kind of forgiveness is impossible because it has to be subsequent to its own death, a requirement which is from the beginning compromised. In a way, following Jankélévitch, who did not realised the partisanship that he has encouraged between the Individual’s value and the forgiveness phenomena, otherwise never recognised, Derrida assumes:

The tragedy of the I awakes an echo in Ourselves, but We sends constantly to the solitary experience of an I (...), the I that will die alone, confronting that personal death that anyone must die on its own. (Jankélévitch, 2005, 27)

IV. The Paradox of the Forgiving’s Time: Levinas’ Argument and the Formula of Death in the Second Person and the Forgiving in the First Person. Returning to Jankélévitch: What Remains Outside the Subject?

Levinas follows both Derrida and Jankélévitch. He admits that ethics is the temporality’s result, treating Jankélévitch not as a Christolocentric (Udoff 2013, 6), as he seems for Derrida, but as a philosopher who transfers the contents of the Jewish ethics to the
ancient Greek one. Levinas seems more attached to Jankélévitch through his *Treatise on the Great Virtues*, in which Jankélévitch’s ego-tropism proposes, each time, the I as the one who has to prefer the Other despite his own Self. In fact, what connects Levinas and Jankélévitch in the philosophy of forgiveness is the metaphysics and the moral of the second Person.

Jankélévitch asks:

Why would Your existence be, *a priori*, more precious than mine? Or why would be my existence, *a priori*, less valuable than yours? Why should be the second Person more important than the first one? And, especially, why existence, which is good as long as is someone else’s existence, might become bad if it would integrate me? (Jankélévitch 1968, 9)

The forgiveness from Person to Person becomes, in Jankélévitch’s treatise, matured at another level: it is the I’s forgiveness for a You, realised through duty and right, so, through love. We shall see in the next section of this article why “rights without duties mean what the I calls the You without a You. A You is an I without duties. An I is a You without duties” (Jankélévitch 1986, 72) and why is a certain perspective more familiar to Levinas to express, through forgiveness, what remains outside the Subject.

For Levinas, the I is responsible for the You till the substitution of one with another, and this is how it is explained any ethical impersonal relation as an exteriority. Through a subjectivity’s process, the Other becomes the I: therefore, the forgiveness problem, in Levinas’ terms, is expressed in an ethical discourse called under the next formula: the death on the second Person, the forgiveness on the first Person. The death’s problem is laying on the Other’s right to exist. Hence, I consider that on forgiveness issue, Levinas interprets “the subject as a hostage and the subjectivity of the subject as a substitution breaking with being’s essence” (Levinas 1998, 84). The Other is outside the Subject, as his death also remains; moreover, even if one is not possessing the consciousness of the Other’s death, one might claim his responsibility. Under this terms, it is easy to understand why, I can forgive Someone’s death caused by an Other, since that Someone become’s intimate for the I as a You. From my point of view, Levinas exposed his theory with high
loyalty for Jankélévitch’s perspective expressed in Treatise on Death: “I later, You now and He now; You later and He later”\textsuperscript{16} – this are times of death, recognised as times of forgiveness. Otherwise, the author of Totality and Infinite confesses that:

The paradox of pardon lies in its retroaction; from the point of view of common time it represents an inversion of the natural order of things, the reversibility of time. It involves several aspects. Pardon refers to the elapsed instant; it permits the subject who had committed himself in a past instant to be as though that instant had not past on, to be as though he had not committed himself. Active in a stronger sense than forgetting, which does not concern the reality of the event forgotten, pardon acts upon the past, somehow repeats the event, purifying it. But in addition, forgetting nullifies the relations with the past, whereas pardon conserves the past pardoned in the purified present. The pardoned being is not the innocent being. The difference does not justify placing innocence above pardon; it permits the discerning in pardon of a surplus of happiness, the strange happiness of reconciliation, the felix culpa, given in an everyday experience which no longer astonishes us. (Levinas 1969, 283)

Not accidentally, Levinas’s perspective dedicated to recovering the Other’s time through reaction affirms its understanding as belonging to a privileged You, in the second Person’s quality, discussed by Jankélévitch: “You represents, indeed, the first Another, an Another immediately Other and a Non-I in the tangency point with I, the proximate limit of otherness” (28). As Jankélévitch recognises in the forgiveness paradox a moral paradox, in the same manner, Levinas is considering forgiveness as the host of a contradictory movement of recovering the Other’s Person through its own Self, represented as an I. For Levinas, forgiveness is a moment, being exactly what Jankélévitch would understand through instance, but recovering the Other in the forgiveness’ act is an interval, and in this regard, the author keeps a declared loyalty for Jankélévitch’s philosophy\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{16} Jankélévitch, in his Treatise..., continues, explaining that since they are about someone’s death, the three evoked times constitute the object of an authentic reflection. (Jankélévitch, 32)

\textsuperscript{17} “The paradox of the pardon of fault refers to pardon as constitutive of time itself. The instants do not link up with one another indifferently, but extend from the
In consequence, what remains outside the Subject? Exactly what lies behind it as a continuity given to a beyond: on the one hand, we find subjectivation, on the other hand, we remark the moral absolutism of values, both preferred by Jankélévitch as a determined condition for the absolute character of forgiveness itself. At this level, Levinas is elaborating his own paradox, defining forgiveness as what remains outside the Subject and not into it, allowing the continuous connection of the Self as an I with the Other: forgiveness ensures this fidelity coming from outside, a forgiveness developed as a right and as a duty.

V. The Subject after the Forgiveness, the Forgiveness after the Subject. Conclusions

Trying to elaborate a Subject’s deconstruction through discussing death’s and forgiveness’s experiences as reactive phenomena, attached to a moral perspective of interpretation, applied in Jankélévitch’s, Derrida’s and Levinas’ philosophies, I have observed in what manner the critique of the Subject itself changes, depending on the report established between the Ipseity and the forms of its Person. Despite the hypostasis of the normal, normative and normalising that forgiveness presents, the main consequence of this critical process is represented by

Other unto me. The future does not come to me from a swarming of indistinguishable possibles which would flow toward my present and which I would grasp; it comes to me across an absolute interval whose other shore the Other absolutely other – though he be my son – is alone capable of marking, and of connecting with the past. But then the Other is alone capable of retaining from this past the former Desire that animated it, which the alterity of each face increases and deepens even more profoundly.” (Levinas 1969, 283).

“Why is the beyond separated from the below? Why, to go unto the good, are evil, evolution, drama, separation necessary? Recomencement in discontinuous time brings youth, and thus the inanition of time. Time’s infinite existing ensures the situation of judgment, condition of truth, behind the failure of the goodness of today. By fecundity I dispose of an infinite time, necessary for truth to be told, necessary for the particularism of the apology to be converted into efficacious goodness, which maintains the I of the apology in its particularity, without history breaking and crushing this allegedly still subjective concordance.” (Levinas 1969, 283).
the fact that, on the one hand, ethics is constituted on metaphysical solid principles of instituting the Subject, proposing a moral engagement (from the ethical minimalism or extremism to the ontological minimalism, following Jankélévitch’s terminology); on the other hand, ethics is assumed in this context of the Subject’s deconstruction in complementarity with aesthetics, not presenting this two domains in a traditional contrast. “Aesthetics is polychromy, picturesque, variety (as space), ethics is undogmatic seriousness (as time). By this aesthetics, Jankélévitch is connecting his ethics” (Ianosi 1996, 189).

Therefore, giving right to Jankélévitch, the tragic belongs only to the spheres of the moral consciousness. In light of all previous exposures, arguing in what extent are justified the three grids of interpretation of the Person in terms of death and forgiveness – Jankélévitch’s one, through death on third Person and forgiveness on first Person, Derrida’s one, through death on the first Person and forgiveness on the first Person, and Levinas’ one, through death on the second Person and forgiveness on the first Person – I proposed in the present article not only an unconventional manner to criticise the report between ethics and metaphysics, different from the classic or Christian interpretations of the Person, but also a pertinent evaluation of the three Persons, distinguished, two by two, monadic and personal, *quod erat demonstrandum*. In consequence, it is my personal belief that a proper interpretation of Jankélévitch’s philosophy through the continuations proposed by Derrida and Levinas is significantly contributing at creating a new perspective on the postmodern Subject’s condition.

As a matter of fact, how could we discuss about “the office of deaths as an office like any other”, following Jankélévitch’s metaphor, putting the forgiveness before death as a nucleus of the Subject’s and Person’s authenticity, without confusing them? Otherwise, assumed in a postmodern key, trifled between rationality’s eccentricities and prejudices of the common sense, speculated in ISI articles and conferences, the context of death would be only the pretext of a footnote, while, beyond all this aspects, “the obituary event triggers, like a simple retirement, a chain of appointments, changes and promotions”. At least, this kind of approach is a familiar manner to discuss about forgiveness as a metaphysics of death.
REFERENCES


