

The Burden of Time
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Time appears, for the human subject, as a peculiar puzzle. Levinas explores themes related to time throughout his philosophical career, and weaves together themes from religion and philosophy to unveil a striking and insightful way to think about time for psychotherapists. Levinas suggests that time is not something I possess, or some component of my existence, but a function of subjectivity. Even more, time is that which I am given in order to be for-the-other; temporality is, for Levinas, responsibility. But to the client who appeals to psychotherapy for assistance, the gift of time may function as much as a burden as it does a gift. To continue to exist, for the client in suicidal despair, may be a great labor. This paper will explore how time falls as a terrifying burden on clients in despair, and explore some of the ways Levinas's philosophy of time might help therapists think otherwise about this critical psychological dynamic.