

## Not Difference but Distance: Theological Anthropology on the Other

Lee, Jinhyon, S.J.

Lecturer at Sogang University, Graduate School of Theology

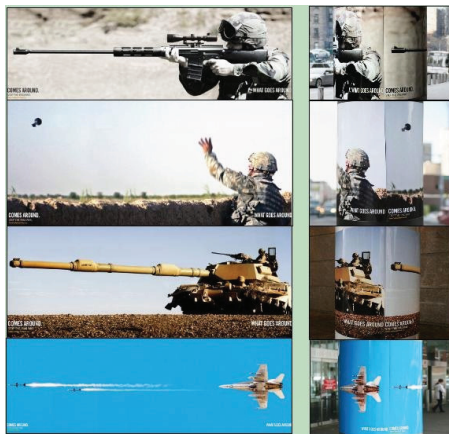
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## Prologue

It is not the matter of difference, but the matter of distance. The real issue of the otherness is not in difference but in distance. The history of war is the development of shooting range: sword, spear, arrow, gun, cannon, air raid, and missile. Now we do not see the face of the other. The others become anonymous enemies. The longer distance, the more casualties:



The longer distance, the more doubt;  
The longer distance, the more distrust;  
The longer distance, the more ignorance;  
The longer distance, the more division;  
The longer distance, the more exclusion;  
The longer distance, the more isolation;  
The longer distance, the more fears;  
The longer distance, the more hatred;  
The longer distance, the more violence.

**“What goes around comes around”<sup>1)</sup>** in the end.

“If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” (Gal 5,15)

One veteran who joined in the Korean War shared his memory of sudden encounter with an enemy in the woods at night.

Both of us aimed our gun at each other at the same time. There were only two: Only He and I. We kept standing under extreme tension. He was stiff with fright. I could

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1) Four posters were designed to wrap around poles, campaigning for an end to the war in Iraq, pointing to the Global Coalition for Peace web site. Grenades, rifles, missiles and tank guns come round the pole to catch up with the aggressor in each poster (developed at Big Ant International, New York, by creative director Alfred S. Park, May-June 2009). Hereafter the bold letters are emphasis made by the author of this thesis.

clearly see his eyes. He looked like just a teenager. I could not trigger. He also fixed his eyes on me. I also trembled with fright. He also could not trigger. We could not fire. After a few minutes, we retreated from each other in silence. I gave a sigh of relief. His deep breath of relief was heard afar. I think both of us could survive because we were close enough to look at each eyes.<sup>2)</sup>



When I stare at the other's eye, ironically I can see myself in her/his eye. The pupil of the other's eye reflects my face. When we encounter the other face to face, what happens is compassion rather than fear.

## 1. Love as the Desire for Connection

Everyone is unique and different from one another. Each one has their own personality which forms the distinctive identity from others. At the same time, however, everyone is lonely. It is the fundamental deficiency that no one can fulfil for oneself. For God "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen 2,18). Everyone pursues relationship in anyway whether it is familiarity, intimacy, strangeness, distance, even ignorance or hostility. No one is 100% ego-centric. Everyone without exception yearns to be connected with somebody. Our existence itself is interdependent on each other. All of us spend our energy to make communication with others. The energy is beyond the self-satisfaction and naturally towards mutual expression and giving. One calls the other "you" to overcome the separation of each other. That is the beginning of love.

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2) Story from a conversation with an elderly Korean sociologist during a protest against War in Iraq, Spring 2003; the picture on the right, 『문화일보』 (2004.08.26). <http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2004082601013101233002>(2019.03.15).

<i>Last time I saw you</i>	<i>So we wrapped our arms around each other,</i>
<i>We had just split in two.</i>	<i>Trying to shove ourselves back together.</i>
<i>You were looking at me.</i>	<i>We were making love,</i>
<i>I was looking at you.</i>	<i>Making love.</i>
<i>You had a way so familiar,</i>	
<i>But I could not recognize,</i>	<i>It was a cold dark evening,</i>
<i>Cause you had blood on your face;</i>	<i>Such a long time ago,</i>
<i>I had blood in my eyes.</i>	<i>When by the mighty hand of Jove,</i>
	<i>It was the sad story</i>
<i>But I could swear by your expression</i>	<i>How we became lonely two-legged creatures,</i>
<i>That the pain down in your soul</i>	<i>It's the story of the origin of love.</i>
<i>Was the same as the one down in mine.</i>	<i>That's the origin of love.<sup>3)</sup></i>

Human desire for the connection with others is strongly revealed when he suffers and becomes vulnerable. But the urge to connection emerges from an opposite direction, that is, the other is first rather than ego.

The Jewish Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas says that the revelation of the other's suffering face intrudes on the ego as an event, not as an object. The subjectivity of the ego can be revealed only by the invasion of otherness. At this moment the other's suffering becomes the suffering of the ego. The other's suffering body urges me to moral awakening and responsibility whether I reply to or reject it. Compassion comes out when a vulnerable part of the ego responds to the groaning and calling of the suffering other.<sup>4)</sup>

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3) John Cameron Mitchell and Stephen Trask(1999), "Origin of Love" [recorded by Stephen Trask & John Cameron Mitchell] on *Hedwig and the Angry Inch Original Cast recording* [CD], New York: Atlantic Labels. "The Origin of Love" is a song from the stage show *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* and subsequent film under the same title. The lyric of this song is based on Plato's *Symposium*.

4) After the painful experience of World War II, Levinas harshly criticised the violence of ego-centric Western ontology which had excluded the other. He boldly asserts ethics precedes ontology. For him the other's position is higher than me, which is more radical than Martin Buber's horizontal "I-Thou" relationship. In short, his philosophy is "**After You, Sir!**". Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. R.A. Cohen, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985).

## 2. Love as Coming Near with Compassion

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he **passed by on the other side**. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, **passed by on the other side**. But a Samaritan while travelling **came near him**; and when he saw him, he was **moved with pity**(ἐπιπογγύισθη).<sup>5)</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and **took care of him**. The next day he took out two denari, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I **come back**, I will repay you whatever more you spend. (Lk 10,30-35)

Here is one man who fell down on the road. He groans with pain but cannot speak. He barely manages to breathe. There is no one who sits by him. He has neither family nor friend. No one knows his name. No one knows what he thinks, what he feels or even who he is. He is totally left out of society. He has become isolated. He is almost dead. He is just an object, not a person. But he is crying out: “Is anyone out there?”

Why did they pass by on the other side? In the view of the priest and Levite, the wounded man is no longer a human with dignity. For them he is just a lifeless object like a log or a stone on the road: just something, not someone. “Passed by” indicates that he



Vincent van Gogh, *The Good Samaritan*  
(oil on canvas, 1890)

5) *σπένδα* inward parts of the body; intestinal pain; one's inmost self or feelings, heart; affection, love (because of God's tender mercy Lk 1,78); *τὰ σπένδα* entrails (Ac 1,18); *σπένδα* be moved with great pity or compassion; *σπένδα* (only in plural): to experience great affection and compassion with deep agony for someone. Here the best translation is “his heart went out to him”; Even its breaking sound (*σπένδα*) stresses the feeling of heartrending, i.e. “the sense of a great wave breaking over one.” Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* [Kindle], (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015).

is totally ignored and is forgotten from his intimate world. No one care for him. No one is interested in him. “On the other side” symbolizes our distancing and separating attitude without direct encounter with others. This easily leads to objectifying, judging and determining position without facing up reality as it is and real people as they are. As Peter Black says, “objectifying knowledge reduces the other to a ‘thing’, and things do not suffer, it stands to reason that one does not feel any obligation to them in justice.”

When we are on the other side, we easily tend to make hundreds of reasons to *keep away from* the wounded. “Am I useful for him?; I am not qualified to help him; I am neither a doctor nor a nurse; He is our enemy, I am afraid of public gaze; I am afraid of revenge; I cannot touch the bloody body because I should always be clean and holy because I am a priest; I am too busy; I am too young; I am too old...” We manipulate ourselves as well as others to run away from the horrible scene. In short, we have *fear*. “The essence of sin is the fear of the Otherness, which is part of the rejection of God.”<sup>6)</sup>

Furthermore, the contemporary media culture makes us easily stand up the other side and pass by without getting involved in the actual situation. Our rooms are filled with square windows such as TV and monitors. We hear and watch the live news of the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip, but it is usually treated as a video game. We are just couch potatoes. There are few who feel sad and angry with the Palestine tragedy. It is far from our daily concern like stocks and mortgage-loans. Too much information disturbs us in the vivid contact with others. Too many stimuli make us dull to feel empathy to the others (“Too much colour blinds the eye, too much music deafens the ear, too much taste dulls the palate, too much play maddens the mind, and too much

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6) John Zizioulas, “Communion and Otherness”, Orthodox Peace Fellowship *Occasional Paper*, No.19 (Summer 1994), 1.

desire tears the heart").<sup>7)</sup> Sometimes the *windows become obstacle* without showing the truth of the world as it is.

On the contrary, the Samaritan courageously **comes near** to him. It is the change from something to someone, from the man to the wounded man. Indeed there is He! ("*Il y a*", Levinas). As soon as he sees the wounded man, his response is *spontaneous*. Despite that there is no previous personal connection, he *approaches* the wounded man. It is a chance and anonymous encounter, but he neither thinks too much nor hesitates too long. Ethnic hostility is not his concern. Surely he has his own unique identity and belongs to a certain group, but at the moment of encountering with the person in crisis, he is not imprisoned in the boundary of region, nation, religion, ideology, political party, social position, or '**they and we**'. "When he 'sees' he is 'overcome with compassion,' he sets about fulfilling in a most extravagant way the duties of mercy and hospitality".<sup>8)</sup> He is just a man of compassion and man of action. The most crucial fact is that the Samaritan **stayed with** the wounded man during the night. He showed boundless hospitality to the man. The next day, however, he left the man in another person's care. He also recognized well his own limitation and discerned the time of saying goodbye. He does not attach himself to the man. He respects the man's space as well as his own space. Being too close also makes tension and conflict. In terms of that, the genuine relationship needs **space**, not distance. The Good Samaritan is the typical model of loving the neighbour. Love of neighbour is to be concerned about and to care for this kind of marginalized people. The genuine love has the internal freedom. Love does not define the boundary between us and them or friend and enemy. Love does not stand up or pass by on the other side. Love is not bound by the duties of the official position like priesthood, or is not screwed down to rules such as 'ought to' and 'ought not'.

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7) 五色令人目盲, 五音令人耳聾, 五味令人口爽, 馳騁畋獵令人心發狂, 難得之貨令人行妨 (老子, 道德經, Lao Tzu, *TAO-TE CHING*, 12).

8) Byrne, *The Hospitality of God* [Kindle].

Above all Jesus tells us this story. He gives a parable responding to the testing question of a lawyer: “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”<sup>9)</sup>

Jesus asks back what he already knows. The lawyer knows well the first commandment in the Law which the OT mentions several times. “You shall **love the Lord your God**<sup>10)</sup> with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and **love your neighbor as yourself**”(Lk 10,27).<sup>11)</sup> Jesus simply tells him that to do what he knows is the life-giving: “Do this, and you will live.” In his story of the Good Samaritan, as replying to the question of the full-confident lawyer, “who is my neighbor?” Jesus suggests the model of neighbour who does mercy to the alien and even to the enemy. Jesus indirectly teaches him that compassion is the most essential element of loving God and neighbour as a precondition to inherit eternal life. Like the priest and the Levite, the lawyer might just know ‘about’ love. All of them cannot feel someone as a human being let alone coming to him to ‘do’ love. Love is not the matter of knowing ‘about’ the other, but the matter of knowing how to be ‘with’ the other and how to ‘do’ for the other. True and good love is to refrain from the objectifying knowledge of intellectualism which is divorced from eros or elemental passion. It tends towards uniting the knower with the known and the lover with the loved.<sup>12)</sup> Jesus again stresses practice: “Go and do likewise”(Lk 10,37). He urges him to live love. In the end Jesus himself takes responsibility what he says. That is the most radical love: the Cross.

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9) Lk 10,25; cf. Mt 19,16; Mk 10,17. ‘Eternal life’ is one of the main themes in the Gospel of John. Interestingly the OT never mentions of it, instead there is frequent use of ‘everlasting covenant’ (NRSV, NIV) or ‘eternal covenant’(NJB).

10) Dt 6,5; 11,1; 13,3; 30,6; Josh 22,5; 23,11; Mt 22,37; Mk 12,30; cf. 1Jn 4,8.16 (God is love)

11) Lv 19,18; Mt 19,19; 22,39; Mk 12,31.33; fulfilment of the law(Rm 13,8-9; Gal 5,14); Jm 2,8; cf. Lv 19,34(love the alien); Mt 5,44(love your enemies); Jn 13,34; 15,12.17; Rm 12,10; 13,8; 1Jn 3,11.14.23; 4,7.11.12(love one another)

12) Peter Black, “The Broken Wings of *Eros*: Christian Ethics and Desire”, *Theological Studies*, 64 (2003), 114-115.



### 3. Love as Touching Body

Jesus not only comes near to the people but also touches them with his body. The Gospel vividly describes body-touching. Jesus usually heals the sick by touching their body. The people also touch Jesus' body.<sup>13)</sup>

She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to **bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair**. Then she continued **kissing his feet and anointing them** with the ointment (Lk 7,38; cf. Jn 12,3).



William Blake, *Mary Magdalene washing Christ's feet* (1803-05)

This scene is very sensual because the highest part of a woman's body touches the lowest part of a man's body. It is a kind of sexual expression in terms of close connection with each other. This seems to be a woman's challenge to the taboo of masculine society. But there is the deeper level of intimacy and trust between two persons. Her behaviour comes from the genuine compassion of *eros*, not erotic love.

There is no word for *eros* in the Greek Bible except in the Proverbs with a negative meaning (7,18; 30,16). Despite its prevailing description of erotic love in Hebrew,<sup>14)</sup> the Greek version of the Song of Songs never uses the term. According to Origen, "the Scriptures only substitutes *agape* for *eros* to prevent the weak and uninformed from thinking about carnal desire and passion."<sup>15)</sup> *Eros* has been imprisoned for a long time in Christianity.

13) Mt 9,21; 14,36; Mk 3,10; 5,28; 6,56; 8,22; 10,13; Lk 6,19; 18,15; 24,39; cf. Jn 20,27

14) The feminine noun אַהָבָה ([ahavah]) bears phonetical similarity with its Greek equivalent, ἀγάπη describes the love of husband toward wife (Gen 29,20). God's 'love' is designated by the same word (Deut 7,8; 2Chr 2,11). אַהָבָה occurs frequently in the wisdom literature and a few times in the latter prophets. Proverbs uses the word in its most abstract form: "love covers all sins" (Prov 10,12). The word is used in several familiar verses of the Song of Solomon. The prophets use this word as well.

15) Black, "Broken Wings of *Eros*", 110; cf. "[Christ] my *eros* is crucified" (St. Ignatius of Antioch).

Regardless of any kind of oppression or self-denial, when one and the other become close enough to the extent of touching each other, their bodily existence inevitably encounters the issue of sexuality.

But it is not necessarily dangerous though there is the vulnerability of being abused. As Plato says sexual passion is a first manifestation of *eros* which can lead us onto God.<sup>16)</sup> “With the help of *Eros*, we fly from ignorance to knowledge, from the material to the spiritual and to the contemplation of Beauty and Goodness itself.”<sup>17)</sup> Gregory of Nyssa explains that the desire for divine Beauty burns with the single flame of the Spirit because it has been wounded in the soul by the arrow of love.<sup>18)</sup> The wings of *eros* carry us toward the love of God and the neighbour. The Pope also emphasises the genuine ‘searching for’ love which begins with *eros* and unites it with *agape*.

True, *eros* tends to rise ‘in ecstasy’ towards the Divine, to lead us beyond ourselves ... The experience of a love involves a real discovery of the other, ... No longer is it self-seeking, ... instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation for sacrifice. ... Love looks to the eternal. Love is indeed “ecstasy”, not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God.<sup>19)</sup>

In fact, to profess the full humanity of Christ is to affirm his desire as *eros*. The naked body of Jesus in his infancy and his death on the cross reveals his full physicality and sexuality associated with *eros*. The vulnerability of Jesus’ body can be found in many passages of the Gospels such as his temptation in the wilderness (Mk

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16) Arther H. Armstrong – Robert A. Markus, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1964, 52; quoted by Black, “Broken Wings of *Eros*”, 107.

17) Black, “Broken Wings of *Eros*”, 109.

18) Ysabel de Andia, “Eros and Agape: The Divine Passion of Love”, *Communio*, 24 (Spring 1997), 40.

19) Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* [1st Encyclical Letter, 2005.12.25], 5-6. [www.vatican.va/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html)(2019.03.15); cf. Mt 10,39; 16,25; Mk 8,35; Lk 9,24; Jn 12,25.

1,13), the exhaustion of his journey (Jn 4,6), and his agony in Gethsemane (Mt 26,38). Jesus weeps (Jn 11,35), is scared (Lk 22,44), and cries out (Mk 15,34). Jesus has lived out the limit of humanity with his own body. The human Jesus also struggles with the deficiency that his corporal desire arouses (Lk 4,2.13).

We desire what is lacking in us as well as what is natural to us. ... ever since we were cut in half by Zeus and only patched by Apollo. Desire has its origin in our birth, which is the primordial experience of separation from the unity and harmony of the womb. ... Love is the desire for self-completion by the desired or loved object.<sup>20)</sup>

That desiring of objects or persons to fulfil ourselves is expressed with bodily energy, that is, sex. Eros as sexual passion is one of the physical expressions to overcome the separation of each other. Sexual expression is the strongest communication between two partners. It is not only the physical touch and intercourse but also the conversation and consensus which contain the emotional and mental exchange. Both share their own whole being with each other. It is the unforgettable experience of union in terms of the most powerful mutual understanding. However, sex is such a fierce fire that needs disciplined control.<sup>21)</sup> It is also the most vulnerable part which can be easily hurt and abused. We cannot completely fulfil our sexual desire. It is regardless of the number of genital intercourses. Healthy sex can be transformed into the powerful energy which leads us to altruism and communion, while unhealthy sex brings selfishness and misfortune. There is always “the risk of letting desire and longing and even justice get out of control.”<sup>22)</sup> Today sex is twisted and perverted in the name of sexual revolution or freedom (commercialization of sex). Due to its vulnerability to the power and the market, sex is easily exposed to the danger of being exploited by an unequal and unjust relationship.

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20) Black, “Broken Wings of Eros”, 108-109; cf. “The Origin of Love”; Plato, *Symposium*.

21) Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 4.

22) Black, “Broken Wings of Eros”, 107.

Everyone has their own unique sexuality which forms the different identity from another. Therefore, it cannot be merely repressed and condemned. The sexual energy is beyond self-satisfaction and tends naturally towards mutual expression and giving. Those who are in love forget themselves and to do everything for the others. Peter Black suggests a “committed erotic justice”<sup>23)</sup> characterized by passion and compassion against the deceptive eroticization of power which makes its victims to be fearful, passive, secretive, uncreative, and passionless.<sup>24)</sup> In a genuine sexual relationship with a loving person, one tries not to objectify or possess the partner, which means that one respects the other person as an end, not means. In the scene of the anointing woman, Jesus does not reject, resist, or even judge her, but allows her to do what she desires and accepts her *as she is*.

#### 4. Love as I Am and as You Are

If we are close enough, we meet each other as ‘I an’. Jesus frequently calls himself ‘**I am**’ (ἐγώ εἰμι).<sup>25)</sup> In the first case, Jesus calls himself ‘the bread of life, the light of life, the sheep gate, the good shepherd, the witness, and the true vine’. Jesus does not say “I am like a ...” but always says “I am **the** ...” also this is not just a metaphor. Jesus as the incarnated Word becomes available for each of us. The place of complement in “I am the...” can be filled with various titles for the unique relationship between Jesus and each of us. However, the more fundamental relationship is in **I am** without complement. This expression can be seen when Jesus reveals himself essentially: the dialogue with the Samaritan woman(4,26), on the water(6,20),

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23) This word reminds of the film “The Girl in the Café” which describes how the personal intimate desire (sexual passion as micro love) expands to the egalitarian common good (social justice as macro love).

24) Black, “Broken Wings of Eros”, 107.

25) *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* grouped these affirmation into three forms(1423-24). This thesis categorizes them in two.

foretelling his death(8,24.28), washing the disciples' feet(13,19), and when he is arrested(18,5-6.8). Jesus' divine identity especially stands out when he proclaims "before Abraham was, **I am**"(8,58, he does not say 'I has been'). This is the absolute presence, which indicates there is neither past nor future but only the eternal present. Jesus always reveals himself to each of us as "I am" here and now. He also asks to each of us: "But, who do you say that I am?"(Mk 8,27.29) It is not a general question, like "what do you think of me?" but the personal question: "regardless what people say and even what Peter answers, **who on earth is Jesus as 'I am' to you here and now?**" When a being encounters the Being, something happens. It is existential rather than ontological. The "I am" encounter leads to the deeper mutual understanding and acceptance. When we encounter each other as "I am" and as 'you are' without complement, we cannot help putting aside our social position, our pride, our common sense, our logic, and even our understanding of faith. It is the closest relationship for true love. It is the sacred moment. Therefore, **to love your neighbour as yourself is to love as I am and as you are.**

## Conclusion

"If your picture isn't good enough, you're not close enough." (Robert Capa)

Capa's famous words apply aptly to human relations: "If your relationship isn't good enough, you're not close enough." Jesus teaches and lives how to be close enough to the other and touch the other. The other is not the object to be judged or grasped, but the eternal mystery which is only revealed by encountering and serving with the open ego. The face-to-face encounter ultimately gives rise to profess the absolute other "God." If the Otherness is understood more positively, it is the joy of becoming close to the other who is approaching from a distance. Conversely it is also the delight of finding the true ego through getting near to the mystical otherness. The

first word of Confucius is about the joy of friendship(*philos*). “Is it not delightful to welcome a friend **coming near** from a distance?”<sup>26)</sup>

For Jesus to love neighbours is to come near to them and touch them with compassion. His mission is to deliver God’s compassion and His hospitality. Jesus closes between God and the world. God as the absolute the other plunged into the world by emptying himself(Phil 2,6-8). God’s self-renunciation and his self-giving love incarnated in human Jesus became a huge gift for human salvation. God overcomes the distance and comes close to us: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were **far off** have been brought **near** by the blood of Christ”(Eph 2,13). In short, God is in the middle of the ups and downs of fellow human lives. It is the emotional God who laughs, weeps, and reviles while chattering with us, the dirty God who tumbles all about with us in the muddy water, and the weak God who suffers with the despairing people by throwing Himself in and amongst the hopeless situation. This is how God loves us, in that the Word of God became flesh and lived among us(Jn 1,14). God so loved the world that he gave his only Son(Jn 3,16). In this way God first loved us before we loved God(cf. 1Jn 4,10,19). This love can be confirmed and completed only through the love of brothers or sisters(1Jn 4,20-21) and the practical love of neighbours(Mt 25,35-40), which lead us to come closer to the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is **among you**. (Lk 17,20-21); Cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God **has come near** to you.” (Lk 10,9).

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26) 有朋自遠方來不亦樂乎 (論語 *Analects* 1:1b).

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## 달라서 문제가 아니라 멀어서 문제다: 타자에 관한 신학적 인간학

이진현 S.J.

달라서 문제가 아니라 멀어서 문제다. ‘길 반대쪽으로’ 멀어질 때 타인은 타자가 된다. 폭력의 역사는 멀어짐의 역사이다. 거리가 멀어질수록 폭력 수단의 세기는 강해지고 폭력 주체의 죄의식은 약해진다. 멀어서 사람으로 안 보인다. 저만치 떨어진 타자들은 얼굴 없는 익명의 피해자, 비인격적 사물로 격하되어 버린다. 서로 다른 주체가 서로의 얼굴이 보일만큼 다가갈 때, 각 주체는 상대방 타자의 눈동자에 비친 자신을 발견하게 된다. 서로가 충분히 가까워질 때 타자는 타인이 된다. 비로소 주체는 타자를 대상적 사물이 아니라 또 다른 인격 주체로 보게 된다. ‘그가 있는 곳에 이르러’ 그를 바라볼 때 ‘네가 아프니 나도 아픈’ 연민이 올라온다. 레비나스에 따르면 타인의 고통 받는 얼굴이 내 주체성을 일깨운다. 그래서 윤리는 존재론보다 앞선다. 그리스도교적 이웃 사랑은 연민으로 다가가 접촉하고 돌보고 떠나는, 즉 서로의 거리를 좁히면서도 서로의 공간을 존중하는 역동성을 가진다. 이 글은 루카 복음의 ‘착한 사마리아인의 비유’(10,29-37)를 중심으로 관계에 있어서 타자와의 다름보다 거리가 더 중요한 문제임을 ‘타자에 대한 신학적 인간학’의 관점으로 살펴보았다.

**주제어:** 다름, 거리, 접근, 접촉, 공간.

Not Difference, but Distance: Theological Anthropology on the Other

Lee, Jinhyon S.J.

It is not the matter of difference, but the matter of distance. The real problem with the other is not in difference but in distance. The history of war is the development of shooting range. We do not see the face of the other. The others become anonymous enemies. The longer distance, the more casualties. If your relationship isn't good enough, you're not close enough. The other is not the object to be judged or grasped, but the eternal mystery which is only revealed by encountering and serving with the open ego. The face-to-face encounter ultimately gives rise to profess the absolute other God. If the Otherness is understood more positively, it is the joy of becoming close to the other who is approaching from a distance. Conversely it is also the delight of finding the true ego through getting near to the mystical otherness.

**Key Words:** difference, distance, approach, touch, space.

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논문 투고일	2019년 3월 31일
논문 수정일	2019년 5월 7일
논문게재 확정일	2018년 4월 25일

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