ETHICS AS OPTICS OF THE DIVINE[1]

Ryan C. Urbano
University of San Carlos, Philippines

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้พูดถึงปรัชญาจริยศาสตร์แห่งความรับผิดชอบของเลวีนัส โดยหลักๆ แล้วจะเกี่ยวข้องกับงานสองชิ้นของเขาคือ “Totality and Infinity” และ “Otherwise than Being” ซึ่งถือว่าเป็นงานชิ้นเอกของเลวีนัส เลวีนัสได้พัฒนาปรัชญาจริยศาสตร์ขึ้นใหม่โดยให้ความสำคัญกับความรับผิดชอบต่อผู้อื่น (มากกว่า) โดยมิได้ละทิ้ง อัตตา หรือ “ตัวฉัน” ให้เป็นเหยื่อคุกคามของสุญนิยม ในทรรศนะของเลวีนัสนั้น อัตตา หรือ “ตัวฉัน” ซึ่งมีความเป็นผู้รับ ถูกกำหนดโดยความรับผิดชอบที่มีต่อผู้อื่นอย่างไร้ขีดจำกัด ตัวฉันตกอยู่ภายใต้ผู้อื่น ไม่ว่าจะโดยนัยตามตัวอักษรหรือโดยนัยเชิงสัญลักษณ์ และทรรศนะนี้เองที่ทำให้เลวีนัสเชื่อว่า “จริยศาสตร์ คือ การมองของพระเจ้า/สิ่งศักดิ์สิทธิ์” สำหรับเลวีนัสแล้วปัญหาเรื่องภาวะเหนือธรรมชาติและปัญหาเกี่ยวกับพระเจ้า และปัญหาที่ว่าอัตวิสัยลดทอนลงเป็นสารัตถะไม่ได้ ลดทอนลงเป็นภาวะที่กระจายอยู่ในทุกแห่งที่จำเป็นก็ไม่ได้นั้นต้องไปด้วยกันเสมอ

Abstract

This paper discusses Levinas’s philosophy of ethical responsibility. The discussion mainly relies on *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being*, two works Levinasian scholars unanimously consider as his masterpieces. Levinas develops a novel philosophical project which gives priority to the ethical philosophy of the Other without abandoning the notion of the subject to the imminent threats of nihilism. The subject for Levinas is one whose passivity and receptivity is such that it is constituted by its infinite responsibility to the Other. The subject is literally and figura-

tively *subjected* to the Other. This allows for his contention that "ethics is an optics of the Divine". According to Levinas, The problem of transcendence and of God and the problem of subjectivity irreducible to essence, irreducible to essential immanence, go together.

Levinas's philosophy is dominated by and preoccupied with a single vision. This vision is the self's inescapable responsibility for the Other. The Other is Levinas's term for the human other.[2] In many of his writings, he calls the Other as the stranger, the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the neighbor, terms which Levinas lifted from the Bible to stress the urgency of the self's ethical obligation towards another human being, and to acknowledge the non-Greek (Hebraic religion) sources of his philosophical enterprise. In some instances, the Other is also described as absolute alterity, infinite, transcendent, invisible, and enigma.

The Other consumed Levinas's life just as Heidegger was captivated and enthralled by the thought of Being. Levinas says: "There is something more important than my life. And that is the life of the other. That is unreasonable. Man is an unreasonable being".[3] Indeed, man's ineluctable obligation to his fellow man precedes deliberation and so "unreasonable". Before one can ignore or accept the responsibility, the Other has already made an ethical appeal and has pierced one's sensibility.

For Levinas, ethics and not ontology is *prima philosophia*. He subordinates ontology to ethics because the former effects a relation that reduces the Other to the comprehension of the thinking ego, stripping the Other of its singularity or distinctly human qualities.

Levinas maintains that genuine religion rests on and cannot be conceived apart from the self's responsibility for the Other. He is very emphatic on this claim and asserts: "There can be no 'knowledge' of God separated from the relationship with men. The Other is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for my relation with God. He does not play the role of a mediator".[4]

Ethics for Levinas is inseparable from religion so that unless the latter works within the matrix of ethical relationships, it fails to be authentic. A religion grounded solely in abstruse dogmas and excessive rituals have no meaning whatsoever in Levinas's perception because this disre-

gards the justice due to the Other. Without ethics, religion becomes an empty discourse and a meaningless ritual.

This paper discusses Levinas's philosophy of ethical responsibility. The discussion mainly relies on *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being*, two works Levinasian scholars unanimously consider as his masterpieces. Adriaan Peperzak and Richard Cohen hold the opinion that the former work stresses the transcendence of the other (ethical alterity) while the latter makes the responsible subject (ethical subjectivity) its central topic.[5] Both Levinasian scholars agree however that though the two works differ in emphasis, they still deal with the same concern and that is the ethical relation of the Same to the Other. This distinction made by Peperzak and Cohen only reveals Levinas's novel project of giving priority to the ethical philosophy of the Other without abandoning the notion of the subject to the imminent threats of nihilism.

Levinas defends a notion of subjectivity that runs contrary to Structuralism and Post-structuralism, according to which, the subject is constituted and is eventually dissolved by such external forces as language, myths and ideologies.[6] In his "Preface" to *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas says that his book is a "defense of subjectivity" "founded in the idea of infinity".[7] He refuses to accept the postmodern notion of the "death of the subject" because this averts one's ethical obligation to the Other.[8] He likewise disapproves of the notion of a modern autonomous subject because it bypasses alterity and obscures radical difference. As will be shown later in this article, the subject for Levinas is one whose passivity and receptivity is such that it is constituted by its infinite responsibility to the Other. The subject is literally and figuratively *subjected* to the Other.

The discussion of the main concepts and themes in the abovementioned works will be followed by an account of the connection between Levinas's ethics and religion, explaining the reason why for Levinas "ethics is an optics of the Divine". According to Levinas, "The problem of transcendence and of God and the problem of subjectivity irreducible to essence, irreducible to essential immanence, go together".[9] This link between ethics and religion will be made in the last section of this article.

Being without beings: The "There is"

The self, prior to its existence as a subject or *existent* and as one which has identity and determination, lays faceless and unknown in the there is (*Il y a*). It is immersed in and engulfed by the *there is*. "What we call the I is itself submerged by the night, invaded, depersonalized, stifled by it".[10] In the nocturnal chaos of the there is, the self lacks identity and is therefore indeterminate. It slowly acquires determination in its effort to realize itself by escaping the *there is* through assimilation, possession, consumption, absorption of things other than itself. It stabilizes and defines itself through these self-interested activities. The self "desire[s] to get out of itself, to rid itself of itself, to 'save' itself from the narrow confines of its material self-relationship, to disburden itself of itself".[11] But in its effort to give form to its existence, the self is still haunted and threatened by the *there is*. It still hears the rumblings of its previous anonymous existence in spite of its labors to leave it.

The *there is* is Levinas's term for anonymous existence, the form of which is the impersonal verb as in "it rains, or it is warm".[12] It refers to a state that, where all things are to disappear including the self, it still exists and "remains, like a field of forces, like a heavy atmosphere belonging to no one, universal, returning in the midst of the negation which put it aside, and in all the powers to which that negation may be multiplied".[13] The *there is* is "being in general", pure undifferentiated being.[14] Unlike Heidegger where Being is understood as a donation (*es gibt*) to which Dasein must hearken in order to be authentic, Levinas's *there is* is a milieu out of which the self emerges and acquires identity as a self. While for Heidegger Being encompasses everything there is in the sense that it confers meaning and worth to existence, Levinas's *there is* refers to a meaningless existence that enwraps the ego and from which the ego must evade. It is "existence without existents", Being without beings and "content without form". It is an anonymous, impersonal existence before the hypostasis of the individuated human subject. There is no consciousness to experience this anonymous existence and yet it is not to be equated with pure nothingness as if it is a substance that has been annihilated. One cannot approached the *there is* cognitively since one is immersed, steeped and bathed in it. Philip Lawton says, "In approaching the question of the *there is*, then,

Levinas attempts to describe, or at least indicate, in language a deduced experience that precedes language, precedes deduction, and precedes experience".[15]

If there is an appropriate description to the *there is* where it could be experienced analogically, it would be the silence and stillness of the night. Levinas, in alluding to the metaphor of the night to describe the *there is*, explains:

> In the night, where we are riven to it, we are not dealing with anything. But this nothing is not that of pure nothingness. There is no longer this or that; there is not 'something'. But this universal absence is in its turn a presence, and we do not grasp it through a thought. It is immediately there. There is no discourse. Nothing responds to us but this silence.[16]

This silence which the *there is* murmurs Levinas depicts as something frightening, a "mute, absolutely indeterminate menace".[17] The horror which the there is engenders is due, not to the fact that things are covered by darkness and so obscures vision, but to the fact that "nothing approaches, nothing comes, nothing threatens".[18] As the "dark background of existence", the *there is* is also a monotonous presence, insomnia, impersonal vigilance which strip consciousness of its subjectivity.[19]

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas names the *there is* as the *element* and he describes it as a state which is neither being, nothing nor becoming. The element is "wind, earth, sea, sky, air". It makes the inner or interior life possible. The ego is within element but it does not possess it. The ego feels the breeze of the wind, stands on earth, swims in the sea, is encompassed by the sky and breathes air but it does not use the element in the same way it fashions or creates things out of pre-existing materials. Levinas simply depicts the ego's relation to the element as "bathing". The ego is enveloped by the element and it is immersed in it.[20]

The element is one-dimensional; it has no width and length but only depth.[21] As depth it is "inextinguishable consummation", an uninterrupted, indeterminate, nocturnal space.[22] The element is formless, indeterminate, without beginning and without end. This explains why for Levinas

the element is impervious and refractory to thought because it is without qualitative determination and it is not an object which one can approach and determine by circling around it.

The importance of *there is* in Levinas's philosophy is that, for Levinas, consciousness and individual existence are a hypostasis. Consciousness arises out of this anonymous general existence or being. It is from the *there is* that the self builds a home and secure possessions through its labors. In doing so, the ego begins to form its own identity. The *there is* is the medium and the milieu where things for enjoyment are situated. It is the "common fund or terrain" which cannot be possessed by any self.[23] It envelops and contains things but which in itself is not contained and enveloped. From and within the elemental, the self lives, appropriates and possesses things.

The emergence of the self from the *there is* serves as Levinas's strategy for escaping Heidegger's notion of Being. If Levinas is to move beyond Being in order to affirm the Other, he has to find a concept that does not preclude him from achieving his purpose. And he finds this in his notion of the *there is*. Davis says that the *there is* "plays a vital strategic role in Levinas's escape from what he calls the 'climate of Heideggerian philosophy, since it forms the basis of his attempt to cast off the tyranny of Being".[24] The *there is* also provides a context in which there is a real encounter between the self and the Other.[25] As was already pointed out in Heidegger's ontology, Dasein is solitary whose primary relationship is with Being and not with others. The existence of others in Heidegger's philosophy is presumed as part of Dasein's being-in-the-world. Dasein's being in the world is also its being-with-others.

Another importance of the notion of the *there is* is that, through it, Levinas is able to come up with the idea that the ego, in its effort to achieve self-sufficiency, is always menaced by this anonymous existence because of the uncertainty it brings to the ego's future. Also, through the there is, the self is separated from the infinite and so renders the ego atheistic.[26] The ego is *a-theistic* in the literal sense of the word. It is *not-God*, not the infinite.

From Anonymous Being to being: The Separated Ego or Self

This section elaborates Levinas's notion of an ego which is master of itself and of the world that it inhabits. It explains further Levinas's concept of the Same whose concrete expression is the ego and its totalizing activities. Levinas calls the world of the ego as interiority, inner self and psychism.

From the *there is* emerges the ego whose essence is to persist in its own being. For Levinas, relatively agreeing with Spinoza, all beings are driven by their essence to strive to become themselves. Every being is attached to and lives for itself. Each is innately egoistic and inclines towards narcissism. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas takes time to describe the egoistic character of the self, which he describes as enjoyment, nourishment and love of life. Enjoyment is for Levinas the primordial existence.

The ego, as was already discussed in the preceding section, is like the there is in which it is immersed. It is faceless, anonymous and without an identity. But it slowly and gradually arises from its anonymity by engulfing objects in *there is* in order to establish itself as separate ego. Levinas describes this process of assimilating and taking possession of things in the there is as "living from". The ego, being corporeal and endowed with sensibility, lives from "'good soup', air, light, spectacles, work, ideas sleep, etc".[27] It is concerned with the worldly necessities of life. Things from the sensible material world are "swallowed, used, enjoyed, integrated in knowledge or practice" in order for the ego to endure in its being.[28] Hence, *living from* establishes the ego's identity. The ego absorbs the other in order to constitute and maintain itself as the Same. It retains itself as the Same as it changes by appropriating things to itself.[29]

Levinas regards life in its elementary form as happiness and enjoyment. Suffering is possible because life is happiness in the first place. It "presupposes a self whose natural tendency is to enjoy the world".[30] He says:

> The life that is life from something is happiness. Life is affectivity and sentiment; to live is to enjoy life. To despair of life makes sense only because originally life is happi-

> ness. Suffering is a failing of happiness; it is not correct to say that happiness is the absence of suffering. Happiness is made up not of an absence of needs, whose tyranny and imposed character one denounces, but of satisfaction of all needs. . . . Happiness is accomplishment; it exists in a soul satisfied and not in a soul that has extirpated its needs, a castrated soul.[31]

Moreover, though the ego realizes that it lives in a strange world where things are either subservient or indisposed to it, still it does not find these things radically opposed to its existence. The world is still pleasant and a source of enjoyment to the ego. As Davis explains: "The strangeness of the world is its charm, a cause of happiness. *Jouissance* names the process by which the subject makes itself at home in an environment where otherness is not a threat to be overcome, but a pleasure to be experienced".[32] Levinas explains this point crisply:

> The primordial relation of man with the material world is not negativity, but enjoyment and agreeableness [agr?ment] of life. It is uniquely with reference to this agreeableness-unsurpassable within interiority-that the world can appear hostile, to be negated and to be conquered. If the insecurity of the world that is fully agreed to in enjoyment troubles enjoyment, the insecurity cannot suppress the fundamental agreeableness of life.[33]

For Levinas, the world is fully available to the ego for its nourishment. It gives the ego a way of gratifying itself. The world as other is transformed into the Same and this for Levinas is "the essence of enjoyment".[34] As enjoyment, the self is at home in the world. It enjoys its economic life. The world, which the self inhabits, is a world where it finds enjoyment and not merely derives its sustenance. Enjoyment is spontaneous and it has no other goal except enjoyment itself.

> Life is not the naked will to be, an ontological *Sorge* for this. Life's relation with the very conditions of its life

> becomes the nourishment and content of that life. Life is *love of life*, a relation with contents that are not my being but more dear than my being: thinking, eating, sleeping, reading, working, warming oneself in the sun. Distinct from my substance but constituting it, these contents make up the worth [prix] of my life. When reduced to pure and naked existence, like the existence of the shades Ulysses visits in Hades, life dissolves into a shadow. Life is an existence that does not precede essence. Its essence makes up its worth [prix]; and here value [valeur] constitutes being. The reality of life is already on the level of happiness, and in this sense beyond ontology. Happiness is not an accident of being, since being is risked for happiness.[35]

The ego absorbs and consumes the things in the world. It "lives from" the world. Things are consumed and absorbed not for any utilitarian purpose like survival and the satisfaction of a need but for the sake of enjoyment. "To enjoy without utility, in pure loss, gratuitously, without referring to anything else, in pure expenditure–this is the human".[36] The essence of existence is enjoyment. This kind of life manifests not only the physicality or concreteness of the ego but also its self-centeredness, which for Levinas is a kind of innocence. This is an unconscious egoism devoid of any malice. Wyschogrod explains this poignantly:

> In acknowledging man as need Levinas is maintaining dialectically that from the point of view of a developed ethical consciousness man is hopelessly guilty, but from the point of view of natural man he remains innocent. Natural man thus behaves no differently from fallen man, but natural man simply has not experienced the conditions that make his behavior be nonethical behavior. He has not yet encountered the upsurge of the Other.[37]

What the ego incorporates in enjoyment is not the Other but the other. The former puts up a stand before the transcendental ego and re-

fuses to be included in the world the ego constructs for itself. The latter is absorbed into the Same and is the "source of jouissance' or enjoyment. The Same, as it assimilates the Other, "confirms totality" while the resistance of the Other "reveals infinity".[38] Levinas emphatically makes a distinction between the other and the Other.

> The other metaphysically desired is not "other" like the bread I eat, the land which I dwell, the landscape I contemplate, like, sometimes, myself for myself, this "I", that "other". I can "feed" on these realities and to a very extent satisfy myself, as though I had simply been lacking them. Their *alterity* is thereby reabsorbed into my own identity as a thinker or a possessor. The metaphysical desire tends toward *something else*, toward the *absolutely other*.[39]

The ego finds enjoyment in the world because, as a bodily living entity, it has sensibility. Sensibility is the ego's way of first engaging with the world of things. It is the ego's mode of enjoyment. Sensibility is even enjoyment itself.[40] The ego, as sensibility, has needs which it must satisfy. It has affectivity and sensation which renders it to encounter and enjoy the contents of life.

Levinas makes a careful distinction between need and desire. Need is natural while desire is spiritual. The former, he says, can be satisfied by something finite that the ego lacks, while the latter is insatiable because it intends the infinite. As corporeal, the ego seeks satisfaction for its needs by appropriating the world to itself while remaining within itself.[41] "It would coincide with the consciousness of what has been lost; it would be essentially nostalgia, a longing for return".[42] Need converts the "*othe*r into the *same* by labor".[43] Desire, on the other hand, moves towards that which cannot complete it. It desires the Good, which as desired does not fulfill it, but deepens it.[44] It is the desire for the "alterity of the Other and of the Most-High".[45] Desire is nourished by its hunger. It wrenches the ego from its self-sufficient existence and directs it to the beyond–the Other.[46] Thus, it is the Other's egression that answers the deepest desire, which propels the ego to goodness. Levinas however argues that a need resides

in desire. Need is the primary movement of the Same and as such it surmounts, suspends and obliterates the alterity of the world.[47] "The human being thrives on his needs; he is happy for his needs".[48] While this is true for the primordial natural life, the ethical life is animated by desire for the Other which as Infinite awakens this very desire in the self. Need and self-gratification is what characterizes the natural self while desire and responsibility for the Other is what constitutes the subjectivity of the ethical self.

The desire for the Other however is not possible if need, which is a natural inclination, is suppressed. As Levinas writes, "Having recognized its needs as material needs, as capable of being satisfied, the I can henceforth turn to what it does not lack. It distinguishes the material from the spiritual, open to Desire".[49] In other words, the self cannot open its arms to embrace the Other unless it has satisfied its biological and material needs.

It must be noted however that Levinas's notion of the ego as "living from" the world is in stark contrast to Heidegger's Dasein as "being-in-the-world". Living from nature does not denote that the ego consciously confronts the world and utilizes it for its own needs. It does not also mean that things from which the ego lives from are a "means of life".[50] It likewise does not mean that the ego is saddled by anxiety as a consequence of its awareness of its own death. Rather, living from nature is the ego's primordial immersion in the *there is* prior to making nature an object of representation and praxis. It is the ego's experience of nature at the level of sensibility before this experience is brought to the level of conscious intentionality. Levinas says: "The sensibility we are describing starting with enjoyment of the element does not belong to the order of thought but to that of sentiment, that is, the affectivity wherein the egoism of the I pulsates".[51] Or in the words of Peperzak, "Ego is concerned and takes care of itself before it becomes conscious of itself".[52]

Sensibility does not constitute the world as representation but it constitutes "the very contentment of existence".[53] Here, Levinas is rejecting Husserl's notion of a transcendental ego whose contact with the world is first and foremost an "objectifying relation" "mediated through representation".[54] The objectifying vision of the ego through representation precludes the appearance of the Other as a genuinely other to the self. But

in the level of sensibility, the presence of the Other is strongly felt and he is regarded with esteem and warm affection.[55] Peperzak makes an interesting remark on the significance of sensibility. He explains that "the importance of Levinas's description of sensibility lies in its overcoming the old dualism of body and spirit. In enjoying the world, I am a body that feels itself as an affected and affective, corporeal and sensitive I, not as a disincarnate, invisible, or ethereal consciousness".[56] Though sensibility, like representation, is reflexive and incorporates the other to itself, Levinas thinks that the ethical encounter between the self and the Other is principally in the sensible level of experience before it is raised to consciousness. The poverty of the Other wounds and painfully affects the ego at the level of sensibility rather than cognition.

For Levinas, the ego does not rise above the world as it seems in Husserl's transcendental ego. It has a body which assigns it to inhabit the world. Through the body, the ego labors in order to satisfy its needs. The body, having needs, is the ego's way of overcoming the alterity of what the ego lives from. "For a body that labors everything is not already accomplished, already done; thus to be a body is to have time in the midst of the facts, to be *me* though living in the *other*".[57] Levinas thinks that when the ego first relates with alterity, it does so not on the cognitive level but in the immediacy of bodily contact and experience. The body for Levinas is indigent and naked, and as such it derives nourishment from the world it inhabits. The body however is not an instrument that the ego uses in order to satisfy its needs. It is not like other things because it is the ego incarnating itself in the world. The ego as a body is already concretely involved in the world before it affirms and represents the world.[58]

The ego as "living from" exhibits its dependence on the things in the world. Although as enjoyment, the ego, like a Leibnizian windowless monad, has acquired independence and mastery of the world, it also relies on the world in the sense that its enjoyment is conditioned by it. The ego can only enjoy what is made available to it by the world. While it is true for example that in the enjoyment of food, sunlight, fresh air, shelter, etc., the ego becomes nourished, warm and healthy, and thus gains independence and self-sufficiency, it is also determined by the world in the sense that its identity is constituted by it. Levinas calls this "mastery in this dependence".[59] Hence, the ego is a master and a slave of what it lives

from.[60]

It was explained above that the ego needs to fill its lack or emptiness by appropriating things in the *there is*. It finds enjoyment in doing such activity. In spite of the ego's happiness and enjoyment, it is still disturbed, haunted by the rumbling and horror of the *there is*. According to Peperzak, "Sensibility is an incurable unrest dependent on the contingencies of a future that remains uncertain. After moments of happiness, in which we feel no care, the menaces of the world come back".[61] As one which has sensibility, the ego still finds its happiness insecure. Though the ego finds enjoyment in the elemental, yet its happiness lies in assimilating what is other than itself and never of itself. Levinas calls this "an enchainment to self, the very enchainment of identification".[62] Enjoyment, although it manifests the freedom and independence of the ego, is still an insufficiency, an independence based on dependence.[63] The ego is menaced by the insecurity and anxiety posed by the *there is*. And so it takes a slice or piece from the elemental in order to build its own home and accumulate possessions through labor.[64] "Labor" for Levinas "recoups the lag between the element and the sensation".[65] It "can surmount the indigence with which not need, but the uncertainty of the future affects being".[66] The ego, confronted by the uncertainty of the future, withdraws in a dwelling in order to find security and stability. This is what Levinas calls inhabitation and economy.[67] This is the economy of existence where things are ingested to the "establishment and maintenance of a house or home".[68] Hence, "The 'law' (nomos) of ego's 'home' (*oikos*) rules the universe".[69]

For the ego to escape the horror of existence it must acquire mastery through possession, recollection and representation of the things in the world by extending its domain in and dominion over them. "Possession masters, suspends, postpones the unforeseeable future of the element-its independence, its being".[70] Consciousness arises as a consequence of planning and annexing things, which actually refers to the ego's economic activities, in order to find security in the future and allay disquietude.[71] The indeterminacy of the *there is* from which the ego arises causes the ego to think and reflect about its own being. "The indetermination of the future alone brings insecurity to need, indigence: the perfidious elemental gives itself while escaping".[72] "Hence the subject contemplating a world presupposes the event of dwelling, the withdrawal from the ele-

ments (that is, from immediate enjoyment, already uneasy about the morrow), recollection in the intimacy of the home".[73] Without a home, the ego has no orientation and is drowned in the *there is*.[74]

From the above discussion regarding the notion of the self as enjoyment, Levinas is moving beyond Husserl in terms of prioritizing sensibility over representation. While Husserl emphasizes the intentional character of consciousness that founds subjectivity, Levinas rules this out saying that consciousness "is not the ultimate legitimation of subjectivity" and subordinates this to the intentional character of sensibility, which translates to responsibility for the Other.[75] This prepares him for his phenomenology of the Other, the existence of whom is encountered in sensibility. In his *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas reinterprets and extends further this notion of sensibility to a point where it is now understood as contact with the other's skin and proximity. There is now a deepening of the meaning from a notion of sensibility which allows the self to appropriate in the immediacy of the sensuous elements such as light, air, water, food, etc. to a notion where the self is now construed as sensitivity to the needs of the Other. In other words, sensibility in *Totality and Infinity* is understood within the context of interiority and enjoyment while in *Otherwise than Being*, sensibility is construed as the self's openness, embodied exposure, disposal, subjection, vulnerability, passivity and susceptibility towards alterity. The former notion of sensibility prepares for the latter notion since a self which does not enjoy and does not experience pain and suffering cannot be ethical or become responsible for the Other. As Levinas says, "only a being who eats can be for the other".[76] A being who knows and experiences misery is vulnerable to the miseries of others.

Levinas's discussion of the interiority of the self presages the approach of the Other from a dimension of height. The self, while enraptured by its delight of the world, cannot avoid the presence of the Other. Though the self is solitary and independent, it is suddenly confronted by the comportment of the Other who challenges his autonomous existence. Levinas's phenomenology of the self as interiority and economy is part of his strategy to leave the climate of Heidegger's thinking of Being. Levinas says: "To be I is to exist in such a way as to be already beyond being, in happiness".[77]

Levinas maintains that no real ethical relationship is possible if the

ego and the Other are not separate. "Separation . . . . is solitude, and enjoyment–happiness or unhappiness–is isolation itself".[78] "Egoism, en joyment, sensibility, and the whole dimension of interiority–the articulations of separation–are necessary for the idea of infinity, the relation with the other which opens forth from the separated and finite being".[79] Levinas's phenomenology of the self as enjoyment, as interiority, is necessary in order to punctuate the independence of the ego from any form of totalization. Unlike Hegel's philosophy where the self is a moment of and subsumed under an absolute self, which to Levinas's judgment is simply a neuter term that neutralizes alterity, the self as interiority is sovereign and master of his own dwelling. Only through the self's independence can Levinas establish the ethical relation between the self and the Other without constituting a totality.

For Levinas, the egoism of the ego is important for the possibility of ethical metaphysics. Egoism should rather be viewed as separation of desire and the desired so as to maintain the claim that the desired does not fulfill desire but deepens it. In Levinas's mind, desire provokes the ego to the elusive Other. Egoism, however, must not also be construed as an opposition to the Other or else this opposition assumes a neutral standpoint which would form a "totality encompassing the same and the other".[80] Levinas describes the egoism of the ego as "an incomparable unicity; it is outside of the community of genus and form, and does not find any rest in itself either, unquiet, not coinciding with itself".[81] Hence, man is a unicity which recoils from Being or essence.

Subjectivity and the Face of the Other: Responsibility to-and-for-the-Other

This section gives an account of the notion of the Other who appears, confronts and challenges the egoism of the self-same. The self, in its encounter with the Other, becomes cognizant of the infinity of the Other. As infinite, the Other lies beyond the range of the self's synthesizing gaze. Levinas asked: "But how can the same, produced as egoism, enter into a relationship with an other without immediately divesting it of its alterity?"[82] It was seen in the previous section that the ego is naturally egoistic, with-

drawing and seeking refuge into a home it constructs in order to shelter itself from the dubious future and anonymous being. If this is so, then how is responsibility for the Other induced in the self as basically solitary, egoist, blind and "entirely deaf to the Other?"[83] How can a monadic ego truly encounter another person?[84] Here, Levinas proffers an ethical subject who is neither master, virile, sovereign nor autonomous but one who is a dedicated and generous servant to his fellow human being. He defends a selfless and affective subject who, by being faced by the Other, is summoned to sacrifice and give up his comfort and even his life for the sake of the Other. His notion of a subject whose identity is formed by obsessive responsibility for the Other supplants the hegemonic subject reduced to consciousness by Western philosophy. "The reduction of subjectivity to consciousness", Levinas observes, "dominates philosophical thought, which since Hegel has been trying to overcome the duality of being and thought, by identifying, under different figures, substance and subject".[85]

Ethics as Critique of the Freedom and Hegemony of the Self. The ego's self-absorption, its being at home and solitary in the world, is interrupted and opened up by the presence and approach of the Other. Levinas succinctly puts it this way: "The presence of the Other is equivalent to this calling into question of my joyous possession of the world".[86] He names as ethics this state of affair where the Other thwarts the self's enjoyment and freedom.[87] He construes ethics not merely as a theoretical and norm-giving discipline. He does not also understand it as a theory based on "rationalist self-legislation and freedom (deontology), the calculation of happiness (utilitarianism), or the cultivation of virtues (virtue ethics)".[88] Likewise, he does not think that ethics must be founded on "altruistic will, instinct of 'natural benevolence' or love" because this would imply that they are attributes inherent in the subject and this runs contrary to the self's egoistic nature.[89] For Levinas, the subjectivity of the self is shaped by and within the matrix of the ethical relation. Hence, ethics is more of a "face to face" meeting between the self and Other, where the latter, as an almost overwhelming presence (which Levinas calls '*the other in the same*'), stands as a critique of the "liberty, spontaneity and cognitive enterprise of the ego that seeks to reduce all otherness to itself".[90]

As a critique, ethics always keeps vigil of the possible threat posed by totalizing philosophical systems and the ways of life these systems en-

gender. It will see to it that the relation between the self and the Other is not subsumed under a unifying and mediating principle which issues from and still prioritizes the sovereign ego. Levinasian ethics also stresses the urgency and compelling responsibility that the self must immediately assume as a result of its passivity for the Other. This ethical exigency is enkindled by the Other's proximity to the self. Levinas criticizes previous ethical theories because they are preoccupied with matters concerning the validity and the justification of moral standards. These theories seem to overlook the necessity of responding immediately to the ethical demand exhibited by the Other. More importantly, these ethical theories hinge on human reason or freedom which, according to Levinas, tends to lapse into or even encourage egoism and eventually violence. Moreover, Levinas's ethics sheds light on the problem raised by some ethicists since Hume that the ought (moral obligation) cannot be derived from the is (fact). Viewed from within Levinas's ethics, this problem does not yet exist since it dwells on the plane of consciousness. Ethics for Levinas is prior to theoretical philosophy. It is "the immediate experience of another's emergence" which "contains the root of all possible ethics as well as the source from which all insights of theoretical philosophy should start".[91]

The presence of the Other, according to Levinas, makes the ego feel guilty and ashamed. But this culpability, as will be shown later in this section, does not necessarily obliterate the ego, for such effacing would constitute violence. For Levinas, the Other is the unexpected visitor or stranger who shakes and disturbs "the being at home with oneself".[92] The epiphany of the Other makes the ego ask whether in his happy existence, in his "being-in-the-world" or "place in the sun", he is not depriving the Other of his own rightful place in the world whom he has "already oppressed or starved, or driven out into a third world".[93] Unlike other beings, the Other defies representation in thought and thus cannot be assimilated into the ego's world (as in Husserl's transcendental constitution). The Other rather awakens the self to its real authentic existence-a life anchored in the ethical relation referred to by Levinas as metaphysical desire. The revelation of the Other poses a challenge to the ego's monadic existence and its power to engulf things outside of its own milieu. The Other represents an excess to thought, a transcendence and a "Good beyond Being". It is not a phenomenon falling within the noesis-noematic

phenomenological schema but an enigma, an entity that surprises and addresses the self that wallows in its complacent existence in the world.[94] He signifies an unreachable height that commands and demands infinite and unconditional responsibility.

Levinas says that the presence of the Other is the ego's source of meaning, liberating it from its previously egoistic existence. In an interview, Levinas enunciates the following: "My ethical relation of love for the other stems from the fact that the self cannot survive by itself alone, cannot find meaning within its own being-in-the-world, within the ontology of sameness".[95] This is because the Other is the heart of the same, the very psyche of the soul of the self.[96] The very structure of the self is its responsibility for the Other. The self is "one-for the other". If the Other is the heart of the self, the self is the lung and support of the Other.

Exposure. The ego finds its life weighed down by the *there is* unless it answers the ethical claim of the Other. It suffers from "ennui, that is, from enchainment to itself, where the ego suffocates in itself due to the tautological way of identity", failing to open its home and offer it to the Other.[97] The self, in its effort "to be" (or as *conatus essendi*), will become restless if it keeps on "equalizing difference" or otherness to itself.[98] This uneasiness or anguish however is due neither to the self's preoccupation with itself nor to its "existential 'being-for-death'", but due to its exposure and proximity to the Other which Levinas describes as "the anguish of contraction and breakup".[99] Levinas explains:

> This contraction is not an impossibility to forget oneself, to detach oneself from oneself, in the concern for oneself. It is a recurrence to oneself out of an irrecusable exigency of the other, a duty overflowing my being, a duty becoming a debt and an extreme passivity prior to the tranquility, still quite relative, in the inertia and materiality of things at rest. It is a restlessness and patience that support prior to action and passion. Here what is due goes beyond having, but makes giving possible. This recurrence is incarnation. In it the body which makes giving possible makes one *other* without alienating.[100]

For Levinas, hypostasis–the emergence of the self from anonymous being–is exposure to the Other.[101] And this exposure so strikes the self that it returns and contracts to itself, feeling the weight of responsibility inflamed by the Other. Exposure is the "risky uncovering of oneself, in sincerity, the breaking up of inwardness and the abandon of all shelter, exposure to traumas, vulnerability".[102] The recurrence of the self is not a process of self-conscious activity where consciousness reaches out to external objects and returns to itself fully aware of its own being.[103] This is Hegel's philosophical project. Rather, this recurrence is an assignation where the self's responsibility for the Other is unique and irreplaceable. The intentional nature of the self to grasp what is other than itself is deflected by the human Other (or what Levinas calls the 'inversion of intentionality')[104] and goes to affect the very core of the self and prompts him to acknowledge and respect that which it cannot be integrated into its being. Levinas makes use of a variety of terms to describe this condition where the Other affects the nucleus of the self. He says that the self is hostage, disturbed, interrupted, traumatized, beleaguered, persecuted, deposed, besieged, assailed, expelled, stripped, dislodged, attached, exposed, denuded, defeated, extradited, deported and subjugated.[105] All these can be summed up in a central theme in his second major work (*Otherwise than Being*): namely, substitution.

In *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas now sets up the precedence of the notion of a subject being affected in its passivity and susceptibility by the Other over the notion of a subject in *Totality and Infinity* as first and foremost sensuous and *jouissance*. The subject in the earlier work seeks to escape from the *there is* in order to constitute itself as a subject that enjoys its immersion in the world. But in the second major work, it is alterity or the Other that makes the ego recoil to itself in order to assume responsibility not only for itself but for the entire universe.[106] The ego is made to bear the weight of the world upon its shoulder like Atlas in Greek mythology. This is then the origin of his infinite responsibility to the Other. As will be explained in the paragraphs that will follow, the self is singled out, the reason of which it knows not, to put himself in the place of the Other (substitution) and to act as the very breath of his life.

The Face of the Other. Levinas argues that the Other discloses himself as a face. The face is the "way in which the other presents himself,

exceeding *the idea of the other in me*".[107] "The face approaches with a glance, a word, a gesture or a movement of the whole body. It addresses, expresses an appeal to, and makes demands of the Self".[108] The Other, which reveals himself as a face, touches the self to the very core of its being. The look of the Other pierces the heart of the self so that the self cannot evade the Other's call for help, generosity and sacrifice. This look is the look of the poor, the orphan and the widow that begs for mercy and compassion. The presence of the Other that strikes the very being of the self Levinas would call passivity, affectivity, vulnerability, persecution and trauma. Some of these themes would be elaborated later in this section.

The self encounters the face in sensible experience but it also transcends that experience.[109] The face of the Other is not a phenomenon that can be turned into an object of representation. It is not the physical face that one sees because it is beyond perception and cognition. The Other as the face is not exposed to the thematizing gaze of the self but approaches the self from outside its horizon. The Other appears not according to the self's initiative or illumination but according to its own light.[110] "The relation with the face is not an object-cognition. The transcendence of the face is at the same time its absence from this world into which it enters, the exiling [dépaysement] of a being, his condition of being stranger, destitute, or proletarian".[111] Thus, as someone who appears outside of the self's vision, world, home and horizon, the status of the Other is then "absolute". He is not limited or confined by the self's synthesizing knowledge because he absolves from it. He continually slips away from the self's intellectual grasp. And as such, he is homeless, a total stranger who deserves to be taken care of. The Other is also not just a mere exteriority which lies outside of the self; the Other "approaches me not from outside but from above".[112] For this reason, the Other is not wholly in the ego's site but he is transcendent.[113]

Although the face is opaque to physical and intellectual vision, it is nevertheless the living presence and expression of the Other who continually unmakes and eludes the thematization of the Same. "The face is a living presence; it is expression. The life of expression consists in undoing the form in which the existent, exposed as theme, is thereby dissimulated".[114] Precisely as expression, the face defies the power of the self to contain the Other in its thought, for the Other "is incessantly and infinitely

withdrawing and surpassing its revelations".[115] The face reveals, and so the self wants to make it present in its consciousness. And yet the more the self attempts to represent it, the more it withdraws. This impossibility of catching up manifests the infinity and radical alterity of the Other. The face of the Other evinces indigence and defenselessness and so it begs and summons the self to deeds of kindness and generosity. And because the face expresses misery and helplessness, the face of the Other commands the self to respond by doing something to relieve the Other of his suffering. Paradoxically, this command makes the Other lord and master in his frailty. "The Other qua Other is situated in a dimension of height and of abasement–glorious abasement; he has the face of the poor, the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, and, at the same time of the master called to invest and justify my freedom".[116] As Levinas describes:

> This gaze that supplicates and demands, that can supplicate only because it demands, deprived of everything because entitled to everything, and which one recognizes in giving (as one "puts the things in question in giving")–this gaze is precisely the epiphany of the face. The nakedness of the face is destituteness. To recognize the Other is to recognize a hunger. To recognize the Other is to give. But it is to give to the master, to the lord, to whom one approaches as "You" in a dimension of height.[117]

For Levinas, the epiphany of the Other evokes a command: "you shall not commit murder".[118] It is the first ethical injunction as soon as the self encounters the Other. Levinas claims that the ego cannot assimilate, absorb and comprehend the Other in the same way it negates the non-human other.[119] The ego can only negate the non-human other partially; otherwise, it cannot enjoy what it assimilates completely.[120] The ego cannot totally absorb the nonhuman other. It partially preserves and neutralizes the otherness of the nonhuman other in order to absorb it. In the case of the human Other, it is the only being that the ego can kill because it resists total annihilation or negation.[121] Though by reducing the Other to the Same, the Other may be murdered and the command defied, but before this horrible act can be done, the Other already orders the prohibi-

tion of murder. Murder, to Levinas's mind, is the self's refusal to recognize and respect the radical alterity of the Other. It is the utter disregard of the Other's paralyzing power over the self's power to annihilate. As Levinas explains:

> To kill is not to dominate but to annihilate; it is to renounce comprehension absolutely. Murder exercises a power over what escapes power. . . . I can wish to kill only an existent which is absolutely independent, which exceeds my powers infinitely and therefore does not oppose them but paralyses the very power of power. The Other is the sole being I can wish to kill.[122]

The very reason why the Other cannot be contained or integrated into the Same is that only the Other is the being whom the Same wants to kill. The Same cannot murder a being which easily succumbs to its wishes. But the Other, as infinitely transcendent and infinitely foreign and one whom the Same wishes to kill, cannot be annihilated by the murderous power of the self because it exceeds its powers infinitely.[123]

The Other opposes and disarms the ego of his freedom, power and imperialism. As naked and destitute, the Other poses a defiant stand against the ego's sovereignty not with violent force but by its frailty. Levinas describes it as a "resistance of what has no resistance–the ethical resistance".[124] It is a force of infinite transcendence "stronger than murder" and "convinces even 'the people who do not wish to listen'".[125] To oppose power with power is to subscribe either to the Hobbessian state of nature wherein man is at war with other men, the Hegelian dialectics of master and slave relation where there is a struggle for recognition, or the Sartrean notion of Being-for-itself which culminates in absolute power, freedom and reason. In these three philosophies, the Other is viewed as a threat to the ego's existence. When seen within the Levinasian ethical project, these three philosophies is "ethically dangerous" because it reduces the primordial ethical relation to that of struggle and war instead of welcome and peace.[126] In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas says: "The whole of this work aims to show a relation with the other not only cutting across the logic of contradiction, where the other of A is the non-A, the negation

of A, but also across dialectical logic [Hegel], where the same dialectically participates in and is reconciled with the Other in the Unity of the system".[127] Furthermore, the Other's resistance is not only nonviolent but it also calls the ego to responsibility and invests it with freedom. It does not limit the freedom of the self because his freedom has not yet emerged. Instead it promotes his freedom by arousing its goodness.[128] As Levinas says, the "absolutely other–the Other–does not limit the freedom of the same; calling it to responsibility, it founds it and justifies it".[129]

Election and Passivity. Levinas contends that the self's responsibility to and for the Other is already established prior to the self's existence. The responsibility is already assigned before the self is born. The responsibility for the Other does not only precede one's birth but also one's freedom and commitment. This is so because freedom "already presupposes a theoretical consciousness, as a possibility to assume, before or after the event, a taking up that goes beyond the susceptiveness of passivity".[130] For Levinas, responsibility is placed on one's shoulder from an immemorial past, "a past more ancient than every origin, a pre-original and anarchical past" and "a past more ancient than any present, a past which was never present".[131] This responsibility from an anarchical past is already assigned to the self in creation. The self is already created as an ethical being and its subjectivity is precisely this responsibility for the Other. Levinas says: "The miracle of creation lies in creating a moral being".[132] The subject was not created and then was given freedom in order to decide whether it should assume responsibility for the Other or not. Rather, its very subjectivity is its subjection to the other. Being a creature, the self is "more passive than the passivity of matter" in the sense that it bears responsibility for the Other from nothingness "before hearing the order".[133] Passivity implies the vulnerability of the self to the Other to the point of being accused, traumatized and persecuted. This means then that the self is not the cause and origin of responsibility. Moreover, passivity also connotes that the self has "nothing at its disposal that would enable it to not yield to the provocation" and appeal of the Other.[134] The self is already singled out prior to its encounter with and even what is legally due to the Other.[135] Peperzak has this to say about Levinas's passivity of the subject:

> This passivity without choice can only be thought of as patience and pain or suffering, for otherwise–as enjoyer–I would myself still be the focus and neither handed over nor dedicated to the other. My suffering must even be–at least partially–meaningless. For were I able to grasp its meaning, I would be able to integrate it into my consciousness in the form of some piece of knowledge.[136]

Passivity implies accusation. The obligation imposed by the Other on the self makes the self guilty. It is as if the self owes the Other a debt without really incurring it. But this debt actually has its roots in the self's dependence on the Other. Since the Other defines the subjectivity of the self as a "being-uniquely-responsible for the Other", it then follows that the self is indebted to the Other.[137] "My relation to the Other", James Richard Mensch poignantly describes, "individualizes me".[138] Moreover, the responsibility of the self to the Other increases to the measure in which the self fulfills this obligation. The self cannot really pay off the burden of its guilt. More is demanded of him than what he can accomplish. This is an accusation which the self does not deserve. This unearned accusation Levinas calls persecution. The self is persecuted against his will. He is one who lives for the Other and has no complete possession of his own life. All these can be summed up as substitution. In substitution, the self is totally responsible for the other, not only for the other's misery but also for his crimes-even for the outrage that the other initiates against the suffering subject.[139]

Levinas describes the passivity of the self to the Other as maternity. "Maternity in the complete being "for the other" which characterizes it . . . is the ultimate sense of this vulnerability".[140] This best describes the way the self bears and serves the Other. Like a mother, the self carries the Other without thought of reward or reciprocity. It is purely giving, nourishing and sacrificing. The self nurtures the Other in the same way that a mother selflessly takes care of her child.

According to Levinas, the Other is 'the first one on the scene' and he orders the self even before the self recognizes him.[141] Prior to the self's awareness of the Other, responsibility for the Other is already firmly insti-

tuted as if the self is obsessed, persecuted, wounded, and accused by the Other. The Other already provokes and inflicts the self with responsibility before the self can respond either by acceptance or refusal. The self is singled out to serve the Other and he is irreplaceable in his obligation to the Other. It cannot renounce its irreplaceable responsibility because to do so would mean giving up its own being.[142] Its own being, it must be noted, is a result of its responsiveness to alterity. He is exposed and vulnerable to the Other's call for help. In a very touching expression, Levinas says:

> In the exposure to wounds and outrages, in the feeling proper to responsibility, the oneself is provoked as irreplaceable, as devoted to the others, without being able to resign, and thus incarnated in order to offer itself, to suffer and to give. It is thus one and unique, in passivity from the start, having nothing at its disposal that would enable it to not yield to the provocation. It is one, reduced to itself and as it were contracted, expelled into itself outside of being. The exile or refuge in itself is without conditions and support, far from the abundant covers and excuses which the essence exhibited in the said offers. In responsibility as one assigned or elected from the outside, assigned as irreplaceable, the subject is accused in its skin, too tight for its skin.[143]

This responsibility placed on the shoulder of the self before its birth is what Levinas calls "unjustifiable election". The self is chosen to take care of the Other, the reason of which is oblivious to the self, except that the self's "election is in the subjection.[144] Election refers to the self's unforeseeable and singular or unique obligation to the Other.[145] It is the 'Good', Levinas says, that elects the self to serve the Other.

> The Good cannot become present or enter into a representation. The present is a beginning in my freedom, whereas the Good is not presented to freedom; it has chosen me before I have chosen it. No one is good vol-

> untarily. We can see the formal structure of nonfreedom in a subjectivity which does not have time to choose the Good and thus is penetrated with its rays unbeknownst to itself. But subjectivity sees this freedom redeemed, exceptionally, by the goodness of the Good. The exception is unique. And if no one is good voluntarily, no one is enslaved to the Good.[146]

For Levinas, election is not a privilege but "the fundamental characteristic of the human person as morally responsible. Responsibility . . . is a principle of individuation".[147] It is not the Heideggerian anxiety over one's death that singularizes the self but its assumption of responsibility instigated by the face of the Other. Being already chosen to be responsible for the Other before one's birth signifies not prestige but responsibility. The self must take up this challenge that gives worth and dignity to his being.

Subjectivity and Substitution. For Levinas, the subjectivity of the subject is its subjection to the Other. The self is one-for-the Other, built and structured to respond to another human being. This is what is precisely meant by the self's radical passivity to the Other. Once the Other appears on the scene, the self is immediately responsible and no one can take his place. Right there and then, the self is summoned to responsibility even to the point of substituting for the Other. Levinas writes: "I can substitute myself for everyone, but no one can substitute himself for me. Such is my inalienable identity of subject".[148] The self's irreplaceable substitution for the Other, its being accused by the Other is what, according to Levinas, makes the self unique.[149] This excessive responsibility of the self for the Other, however, does not negate the identity of the self. It is not "a flight into the void, but a movement into fullness" which establishes the subjectivity, identity and unicity of the self.[150] As Levinas explains:

> It is, however, not an alienation, because the other in the same is my substitution of the other through responsibility, for which I am summoned as someone irreplaceable. I exist through the other and for the other, but without this being alienation: I am inspired.[151]

Subjectivity for Levinas is not primarily consciousness. The "appearance of being is not the ultimate legitimization of subjectivity".[152] As Jeffrey Kosky says, "The subject is not, finally, reducible to the field or the event wherein beings are deployed in their being.[153] Levinas remarks, "consciousness, knowing of the self by the self [*savoir de soi par soi*], is not all there is to the notion of subjectivity. It already rests on a 'subjected' condition" which is "the very sub-jection of the subject . . . obsessed with responsibility for the oppressed".[154] Levinas rejects Descartes' central claim "I think, therefore I am" and replaces it with an accusative statement "Here I am".[155] The latter expression signifies an unconditional offering of oneself to another. This means that the self as sensibility already encounters and is already affected by the other at the level of sensibility before the other becomes an object of consciousness.[156] As Critchley says, "The ethical relation takes place at the level of sensibility, not at the level of consciousness. The Levinasian ethical subject is a sensible subject, not a conscious subject".[157] In fact, subjectivity is the Other in the Same. "The other in the same determinative of subjectivity is the restlessness of the same disturbed by the other".[158] Furthermore, this subjectivity is a condition of being hostage to the Other.[159] The self as hostage does not only mean that the self must answer the call and satisfy the hunger of the Other but it also implies that the self is responsible for the behavior and misdeeds of the Other, including those acts that persecute other persons including the self.[160] According to Michele Saracino,

> The term hostage is a powerful image for Jews and Christians alike, for one cannot help but think of the moments in which Abraham's son, Isaac, and God's son, Jesus, are held hostage for others. Importantly, these situations are not ones of simple exchange. It is . . . sacrifice . . . beyond a symmetrical substitution or equal trade.[161]

To be hostage to the Other is a deposition that draws the self out of its home to meet and welcome the Other even to the point of offering his comfort and life.[162] The real meaning of subjectivity is subjection to the other.[163] Subjectivity is synonymous to responsibility. Such responsibility is non-reciprocal or assymetrical. The self cannot demand from the

other the same responsibility he gives to him. As such, responsibility is disinterested and non-transferable. No one can take the place of the self's responsibility for the Other.[164] The subject, before it can form an image of the Other, is already affected and shocked by the Other's presence. The outward movement of its consciousness in order to apprehend and possess the exterior is reverted by the Other. Before the ego can exercise its sovereign will, it is already persecuted by the Other.[165] For Levinas, "The other individuates me in the responsibility I have for him".[166] This varies from Heidegger's notion of subjectivity because it is death that individuates Dasein.

The self's responsibility for the Other does not happen by chance; rather, it is placed in the subject and takes the form of an accusation. Levinas says, "I have not done anything and I have always been under accusation–persecuted".[167] The self does not know the reason why, except that from the very beginning he is already de-posed from his home as a subject. "It is a withdrawal in-oneself which is an exile in oneself, without a foundation in anything else, a non-condition. The withdrawal excludes all spontaneity, and is thus always already effected, already past".[168]

For Levinas, the form that the subject's subjection to the Other assumes is that of sensibility or sentience. This sensibility is a vulnerability and passivity towards the Other. Sensibility is proximity to the Other and it is the foundation of intentionality.[169] Hence, for Levinas the self is an embodied subject capable of being affected and vulnerable to the needs and sufferings of the Other. As Critchley describes: "The ethical subject is an embodied being of flesh and blood, a being that is capable of hunger, who eats and who enjoys eating".[170] For Levinas, responsibility is concrete. The self is incarnated so that it can support the material needs of the other. The self in hypostasis builds a home in order to welcome and play host to the stranger who knocks at the door. As Levinas explains, sensibility

> has meaning only as a "taking care of the other's need", of his misfortunes and his faults, that is, as a giving. But giving has meaning only as a tearing from oneself despite oneself, and not only *without me*. And to be torn from oneself despite oneself has meaning only as a being torn

> from complacency in oneself characteristic of enjoyment, snatching the bread from one's mouth. Only a subject that eats can be for-the-other, or can signify.[171]

The intimate relation between the self and Other is what Levinas calls proximity. Levinas describes proximity in the following way:

> Proximity is thus *anarchically* a relationship with a singularity without the mediation of any principle, any ideality. . . . The relationship of proximity cannot be reduced to any modality of distance or geometrical contiguity, nor to the simple "representation" of a neighbor; it is already an assignation, an extremely urgent assignation–an obligation, anachronously prior to any commitment. . . . This formula expresses a way of being affected without the source of affection becoming a theme of representation. We have called this relationship irreducible to consciousness obsession.[172]

In other words, proximity, although it puts into contact the self and the Other, does not reduce the contact into a union where the independence or separation of both is annihilated. It is a difference which is "non-indifference".[173] This explains why Levinas calls the Other as the *stranger* because he is outside of the ego's intentional grasp and a *neighbo*r because he touches the very sensibility of the self.

One's responsibility for the Other, according to Levinas, is not motivated by a debt the former owes to the latter. Such a motivation manifests the ego's need to persist in his being. The motivation is not intrinsic but extrinsic to the self although the Other as the infinite is already in the finite self.[174] What the Other does is that it awakens the self to its responsibility. But this awakening is "produced concretely in the form of an irresistible call to responsibility".[175] This concrete responsibility means "To give, to-be-for-another, despite oneself, but in interrupting the for-oneself, is to take the bread out of one's mouth, to nourish the hunger of another with one's own fasting".[176]

As already noted above, Levinas says that the infinite is already

contained in a thought that exceeds and cannot contain it. The prefix "*in*" of infinite both signifies that the infinite is inside the finite self as well as *outside* of it.[177] How is this possible? The infinite is already in the finite because, as already explained, somebody from an immemorial past placed it there. The self is already made responsible to Other prior to its creation or birth. The infinite is at the same time outside of the finite self because the self is not the reason or the cause of the infinite Other's existence. The infinite Other is in fact the reason for the finite self's being. It must be remembered that the subjectivity of the subject is its subjection to the Other. It is the Other that constitutes the very subjectivity of the self, a subjectivity that is "a passivity more passive than all passivity". Thus, the self is passive and vulnerable to the disturbance of the Other. This passivity and vulnerability, however, is not tranquility because it is a passivity and vulnerability of a hostage.[178]

The self's responsibility to the Other, just like desire, is infinite and insatiable. It is infinite because the more the ego responds to the Other, the more the responsibility deepens. As Levinas says, "The debt increases in the measures that it is paid".[179] Levinas quotes Dostoyevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov* to stress this point: "Each of us is guilty before everyone, for everyone and for everything, and I more than the others".[180]

For Levinas the relation between the self and the Other is not reciprocal but asymmetrical. The self's responsibilities to the Other is not equal to the responsibilities of the Other to the Same. To construe the relation as reciprocal would place both in the same category or genus which implies a totality. Reciprocity is equality and this makes both sides of the equation identical. Such identity is not ethical but ontological. The asymmetrical relation between the self and the Other is due to the self's irreplaceable substitution (or unicity) for the Other. The self can substitute for the Other but no one can substitute him in his responsibility for the Other. The self alone bears this responsibility upon himself and cannot place this burden on others. The self's responsibility is unique and non-transferable. For this reason, Levinas argued that responsibility is excessive, infinite and irreplaceable. As such, the responsible self cannot demand the same amount of responsibility from the Other. To do so, Levinas says, "would be to preach human sacrifice" and it is "criminal".[181] One's responsibility cannot be universalized (as in Kant) otherwise the respon-

sible self would just be something abstract and not a concrete one. The responsible subject is "me", unique and particularly elected to respond the approach of the Other.

The Other's destitution makes the self question its own existence as regards his contribution to the Other's misery even if the self is not directly and consciously involved. This shows how powerful the Other is despite his weakness. In the face of the Other, the self's freedom is questioned and he is summoned to surrender it in order to preserve it. But this relinquishment of freedom is not in line with Hobbes' (and, to a certain extent, Hegel's) conception where individual freedom is subordinated to the State. Such a renunciation is self-serving because one gives up one's liberty in order to have peace and consequently preserve one's being. As Peperzak explains:

> The incentive to peace remains selfish-striving toward a secure life in mutual exchange with other humans. The self-interested repression of violence secures rational coherence and association. Reason and politics fight every possible anarchy.[182]

Levinas thinks that this notion of freedom subordinated to the ideals of the State is bound to create trouble and violence because it is not grounded on a selfless or disinterested ethical relation. For him, freedom is given up not to the abstract goals of the State but to the Other who is concrete. In this sense, the freedom of the self is not dissolved into a blind acquiescence to an anonymous power as in Heidegger, which is still a vestige of ontology.

Language and Proximity. The ethical relation between the self and the Other is not a perceptual or visual encounter. Instead, it is a linguistic event.[182] The Other who discloses himself as the face Levinas designates as "*primordial expressio*n" or language whose first word is "you shall not commit murder".[184] The face is not something that the self sees but someone to whom it speaks. This close encounter and contact between the self and the Other through language, Levinas names proximity. Proximity is the pre-original approach of the Other that establishes non-cognitive and non-spatial intimacy of the self with the Other. It is

non-cognitive because the ethical encounter takes place at the level of sense and affective experience. It is also non-spatial because it preserves the distance between the two. Otherwise, this relation is reduced into a unity or synthesis which constitutes a totality.

The face as expression or language is a signification that signifies an ethical command. His presence speaks the language of an ethical appeal, of prayer or supplication.[185] The Other beseeches the self to recognize and respect him. This in turn instigates the self to express the language of greeting, a "hello" which signifies a blessing and availability.[186] The self is beckoned to offer himself and say "Here I am". Through language, the Other opens and offers himself to the self. The Other who approaches communicates to the self and this touches the self's sensibility. In language, the self finds that it cannot assimilate the Other in its world. The self discovers through language that he does not inhabit the world alone and that there are others who also share this world with him. Language is the place where different worlds come together. Hence, it becomes the birthplace as well as the matrix of the ethical relation. For Levinas, language "announces the ethical inviolability of the Other".[187] Its essence is hospitality and goodness.[188] As an ethical event, language welcomes the Other. The following lines from *Totality and Infinity* best capture this notion of language as ethical and therefore communal:

> Language is universal because it is the very passage from the individual to the general, because it offers things which are mine to the other. To speak is to make the world common, to create commonplaces. Language does not refer to the generality of concepts, but lays the foundations for a possession in common. It abolishes the inalienable property of enjoyment. The world in discourse is no longer what is in separation, in the being at home with oneself where everything is given to me; it is what I give: the communicable, the thought, the universal.[189]

When Levinas claims that the face is language and speech, the kind of language he refers to is the primordial expression he calls Saying. This is non-thematizing and non-violent language prior to conceptualization

and philosophizing. Conceptual and discursive language Levinas calls the Said. It is the language that dominates Western philosophy. Hence, language "as saying is an ethical openness to the other; as that which is said–reduced to a fixed identity or synchronized presence–it is an ontological closure to the other".[190]

In language, the one who is usually given attention is the subject who speaks and the content of his words, the Said. The Other, the person spoken to, takes secondary importance. Moreover, "In the realm of the said, the speaker assigns meanings to objects and ideas".[191] This is a process which identifies, names, or labels things. Levinas challenges this view of language by reversing it so as to emphasize the Other. For him language does not only disclose being or represent things, but it also solicits concern.[192] "The activity of speaking robs the subject of its central position; it is the depositing of a subject without refuge. The speaking subject is no longer by and for itself; it is for the other".[193]

Levinas insists that the Said should be referred back to the Saying; otherwise the self would overlook its "essential exposure to the Other without which there would be neither utterance nor meaning".[194] He says:

> Antecedent to the verbal signs it conjugates, to the linguistic systems and semantic glimmerings, a foreword preceding languages, it [saying] is the proximity of one to the other, the commitment of an approach, the one for the other, the very signifyingness of signification.[195]

For Levinas, the Saying is what conditions the possibility of the Said.[196] It is Saying which exposes the self "to the Other as a speaker or receiver of discourse".[197] It is the site where contact with the Other takes place because it "uncovers the one that speaks, not as an object disclosed by theory, but in the sense that one discloses oneself by neglecting one's defenses, leaving a shelter, exposing oneself to outrage, to insults and wounding".[198] Moreover, Saying does not only expose the self to the Other but it also assigns the former to the latter. Saying is an assignation, an encounter, where the self is separated from its inwardness and is exposed towards the Other. Thus, the self is de-posed or de-situated from its interiority because "the saying tears the ego from its lair".[199]

The Said, on the other hand, thematizes Saying. It is the verbalization of Being, which is the realm of ontology.[200] The Said, according to Levinas, betrays Saying because it transforms the ethical contact of the self with the Other into a theme or object of knowledge.[201] Once the ethical relation becomes an object of thought, the Other is no longer treated as absolute alterity and this denies the justice and respect due to him. For Levinas, the Said could not exhaust the meaning of Saying. Saying always overflows the Said. And yet, Levinas argues, it is only through the Said that one can have access to and express Saying.[202] Thus the Said is indispensable since without it there would be no philosophy.[203] Also, without the Said, no society, justice, judgment or moral norms would be possible.[204]

The Saying and the Said occur at different temporal levels. The realm of the Saying is diachronic time where the self encounters the Other prior to its synchronizing and thematizing vision. Diachronic time is the realm of transcendence and infinity. It is time outside of Husserlian phenomenology where the past is gathered into the simultaneity of the present by retention (or memory) and the future by protention (or hope). Most importantly, it is also the time where the self as passivity and sensibility is opened to the ethical supplication demanded by the face of the Other.

Happening in a different temporal plane, is the realm of the Said. This realm is synchronic time where the Other is represented as a theme in the mind of the ego. Here, the Other loses its singularity or uniqueness because it is reduced into a general concept. Synchronic time is the realm of totality and immanence. It is the time of Being where beings or entities become manifest and where they are gathered together by a synthetic vision (of retention or protention) that reduces them to concepts and themes or a Said.

The importance of the distinction Levinas makes between Saying and the Said could be seen in the issue that Derrida raises in his essay *Violence and Metaphysics*[205] against Levinas's reliance on ontological language to propound an ethical metaphysics.[206] Derrida points to the contradiction implicit in Levinas's thought because in describing the Other as Infinite, for example, Levinas makes use of inherited philosophical language.[207] Simmons succinctly explains it this way:

> Levinas who desires to replace ontology with ethics, relies, at least in *Totality and Infinity*, on terms which are permeated with ontological connotations such as 'being', 'truth', 'objectivity', and 'in-finite'. In other words, Levinas cannot transcend the philosophical tradition because he is using its language.[208]

This language does violence to the Other because it assimilates alterity into the ego. "Since language is thematizing, violent, and appropriative, our first encounter with the Other will be thematizing, violent and appropriative. Thus, the first relationship is not ethical".[209]

In other words, Levinas cannot escape the very language he attempts to overcome. If the Other is unthematizable and oblivious to thought, then philosophical language is impossible. But Levinas answers that the original approach of the Other is a Saying which, when stated in propositions (Said), betrays the ethical encounter. The ethical encounter happens in a diachronic time where the self strongly feels the weight of the Other's ethical plea. Although the Said is indispensable because it is necessary for order, law and justice, the Saying must be preserved because it is the heart of ethical relations. There should be a constant unsaying or deconstruction of the Said in order to allow the Saying to "circulate as residue or interruption within the said" and avoid the complete reduction of the otherwise than Being to ontological language.[210] This movement from the Said to the Saying, which should be the task of ethics as first philosophy, point to a beginning where the subject, prior to the birth of his consciousness as well as his freedom, is exposed to the Other, capable of being affected by and therefore respond to the Other's ethical appeal.[211] As Levinas would say: "saying is to be responsible for others".[212]

The Heideggerian play of unconcealment and concealment is a dialectic that still belongs to ontology (or Being) and hence, of synchronic time. In order to break away from this dialectics of perpetual uncovering of the Unsaid from the Said, Levinas redirects philosophical questioning from repeatable time to an immemorial time of the Saying where the Said is constantly examined and re-examined so as to bear witness to the infinite and transcendence.

Skepticism. At this point it is significant to introduce the role skep-

ticism plays in the philosophy of Levinas. Skepticism, according to Levinas, is philosophy's "legitimate child".[213] The history of Western philosophy has shown that skepticism periodically recurs and this, according to Levinas, indicates that philosophy cannot exhaust the truth about everything. Levinas says:

> Philosophy is not separable from skepticism, which follows it like a shadow it drives off by refuting it again at once on its footsteps. Does not the last word belong to philosophy? Yes, in a certain sense, since for western philosophy the saying is exhausted in this said. But skepticism in fact makes a difference, and puts an interval between saying and the said. Skepticism is refutable but it returns.[214]

Indeed, skepticism cannot escape its contradictory assertion but it performs an important role by constantly reminding philosophy of its ethical origin and task which is to continually unsay what has been said. It redirects philosophy to a transcendent (diachronic) time where alterity and infinity is otherwise than Being. As Levinas says: "Skepticism, which traverses the rationality or logic of knowledge, is a refusal to synchronize the implicit affirmation contained in saying and the negation which this affirmation states in the said".[215]

The skeptic's claim that truth is not possible is refuted at the level of logic and rationality because the assertion implies that it is not possible that truth is not possible. But it is precisely this sphere of thought which skepticism attacks and this spares skepticism from the refutation. The contradictory remarks of skepticism are only contradictory in the realm of the logical Said but not so in the skeptical Saying.[216] The periodic recurrence of skepticism in the history of Western thought, according to Levinas, would just be "pure nonsense" if its critique of the Said is to be refuted under the auspices of logical thought since skepticism inhabits in and judges from the realm of the Saying.[217] The approach of the other as Saying cannot be totally congealed in a Said for the Other continually recedes from synchrony and thematization.

Levinas is not saying that the skeptic's claim is true. What he

means, according to Peperzak, is that the

> 'truth' that attempts to pronounce itself in skepticism is rather the necessity…of recalling (*dédire*) the Said, and of replacing it by a new Saying (*redire*) that is just as little a final Saying as the previous one was. The enigma of transcendence, which can never become evident, does not come into its own by synoptic expositions in which time stands still but only by continual attempts through new speeches to rectify the unavoidable contradictions of speaking.[218]

The Third Party. For Levinas, the ethical or face to face relation is not merely a private or exclusive affair between the self and the Other.[219] The face as expression and as language opens up to the rest of humanity which Levinas calls the third party.[220] The third party is the neighbor of the self's neighbor and represents every person. He is the neighbor of every Other.

> The third party is other than the neighbor, but also another neighbor, and also a neighbor of the other, and not simply his fellow. . . . The other stands in a relationship with the third party, for whom I cannot entirely answer, even if I alone answer, before any question, for my neighbor. The other and the third party, my neighbors, contemporaries of one another, put distance between me and the other and the third party. . . . It [third party] is of itself the limit of responsibility and the birth of the question: What do I have to do with justice? A question of consciousness. Justice is necessary, that is, comparison, co-existence, contemporaneousness, assembling, order, thematization, the visibility of faces, and thus intentionality and the intellect, and in the intentionality and intellect, the intelligibility of a system and thence also a copresence on an equal footing as before a court of justice.[221]

The emergence of the third party which is revealed in the face of the Other disturbs the intimacy and asymmetrical relationship between the self and the Other. This is so because the third party demands for justice. The neighbor and the third party simultaneously call to and demand for responsibility from the Other. It is the third party which prompts the self to weigh, evaluate, compare, calculate and think which for him needs most his attention and service. The arrival of the third party is the inception of justice, symmetry, philosophy and law. It is the third party that divides the attention of the self. If there were only the self and the neighbor, then there would have been no problem, for in this situation the self has undivided attention for the Other. But the surfacing of the third party limits the self's unbounded care for the Other and poses problems as regards priority as well as the nature of relationship between the Other and the third party.

Because of the third, the self now becomes a judge for he must compare, calculate, correct, order and treat others as equals. This now necessitates the rational organization of society and the creation of laws in order to carry out justice. The entry of the third legitimizes the state, politics and philosophy. It corrects the asymmetry in the relation of the self and the Other. It also upholds the welfare of the self because his responsibility is no longer solely for others but also for himself since he is also a neighbor to others.[222]

> To be sure . . . my responsibility for all can and has to manifest itself also in limiting itself. The ego can, in the name of this unlimited responsibility, be called upon to concern itself also with itself. The fact that the other, my neighbor, is also a third party with respect to another, who is also a neighbor, is the birth of thought, consciousness, justice and philosophy.[223]

Conclusion: Ethics as Beyond Nature or Ontology and Towards God

This final section will discuss the movement of the ethical relation between the Same and the Other towards transcendence. Levinas names

this ethical bond religion.[224] Religion presupposes an ethics that points in the direction of God. It is an ethical proximity that manifests God's presence. In this proximity, God leaves only a trace which cannot be traced at all since it redirects the self to his responsibility to the Other. "Divinity", William Paul Simmons writes, "is experienced through the trace".[225]

Levinas asserts that "the dimension of the Divine opens forth from the human face".[226] He says that "the Other is not the incarnation of God, but precisely by his face, in which he is disincarnate, is the manifestation of the height in which God is revealed".[227] God therefore is revealed in the human face as the Good beyond Being and yet the human face is not God's embodiment. "The alterity of the face 'points' to God's transcendence, but without being its incarnation, symbol, or self-expression".[228] God instead leaves a trace in the face of the other person whose face summons the self to responsibility. What Levinas is saying is that ethics provides an opening towards the Divine because the Other "resembles God" and he is "closer to God than I".[229] Ethics, in the words of Cohen as he interprets Levinas, is the "authentic entry" to God.[230] It leads to a vision of God because "responsibility", as Kosky elucidates, "would be the image of God in man".[231] But this vision is "without image, bereft of the synoptic and totalizing objectifying virtues of vision, a relation of intentionality of wholly different type".[232] This "relation of intentionality of a wholly different type" is not the Husserlian noesis-noematic correlation, but the intentionality of desire inflamed by the ethical appeal of the Other.

For Levinas, God is only accessible through responsibility for the Other. God as Infinite is refractory to human thought. He cannot become an object of conscious representation. As Levinas remarks: "There is witness . . . only of the Infinite. The infinite does not appear to him that bears witness to it. On the contrary, the witness belongs to the glory of the Infinite. It is by the voice of the witness that the glory of the Infinite is glorified".[233] For Levinas, the self who is addressed by the Other through his ethical appeal bears witness to Divine transcendence. The self's responsibility to the Other is the living testimony of God's presence. As Wyschogrod says, "The one who, in self-giving, says to the Other, 'Here I am', placing the self at another's disposal, bears witness to the Infinite.[234]

Levinas employs the word *illeity* or he-ness to name this incom-

prehensible God. God is designated as this third person demonstrative pronoun in order to preserve his transcendence as well as to show respect to Him. *Illeity* "designates something present but at a distance, such as 'that great man over there' or anything to which one refers with respect".[235] For Levinas then, images or concepts of God arrived at through intellectual vision or proof would be artificial since they reduce God's transcendence to immanence. God's withdrawal from the clutches of man's intellectual grasp is instead God's way of redirecting man's gaze to the Other. As Levinas explains: "A God invisible means not only a God unimaginable, but a God accessible in justice. Ethics is the spiritual optics. The other is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for my relation with God".[236]

In saying that ethics enables the self to bear testimony to the presence of God through its infinite responsibility to the Other, Levinas does not imply "that religion is reducible to ethical intersubjectivity . . . but rather that intersubjectivity is raised to religion, that is to say, raised above its own ontological possibilities".[237] This means that God is neither identical with the ethical relation, nor is He the being or the foundation of this relation. Ethics is rather a spiritual optics, an optics of the Divine. It makes visible the invisible, reveals the infinite in the finite and manifests transcendence without incarnation. Though the ethical is the space through which God reveals, the face of the Other does not function as a mediator between the self and God. God remains transcendent and wholly Other. He is other than and outside of Being. To construe God as someone who dwells in the Other is an infringement of his *illeity*.

For Levinas, ethics is not only first philosophy. He also considers it as "first theology".[238] Theology, according to Michael Purcell, "is both ethical in content and ethical in origin".[239] The realm of the ethical face to face is the condition that makes theology receptive to revelation. Discourse about God and His revelation, Purcell says, "can have no other point of departure than in the subject who is capable of asking the question about God, or the subject for whom God can become a possible question".[240] Morever, "the question of God cannot be asked without raising the prior question of the one who is able to ask the question of God. Theology begins as theological anthropology; and to reflect on the human person is already to be involved in an ethical enterprise.[241]

Levinas has already pointed out that human subjectivity is responsibility and deference to the Other. It is a subjectivity constituted not by a satisfaction of a natural need but by a metaphysical or spiritual desire. Man's basic structure is not merely a *conatus*, a perseverance in being but an inescapable love for the Other. Levinas says: "The metaphysical desire has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can complete it. It is like goodness–the Desired does not fulfill it, but deepens it".[242] This metaphysical desire is an eschatology which is a "relationship with a surplus always exterior to the totality".[243] Wyschogrod explains the transition from the natural life to the religious life in Levinas thought in this way:

> Once need is established phenomenologically as belonging to natural man, Levinas has prepared the ground for *homo religiosus*, who remains man as need but who cannot fulfill his need in natural existence. It is the need for transcendence that characterizes fully human ethical existence. This transcendence . . . is founded in the experience of other persons.[244]

For Levinas, the true life "is not a *conatus* but disinterestedness and *adieu*".[245] It is a life of selfless giving to others motivated by a desire for God. Levinas asserts that his ethical philosophy is not purely of this world in the sense that it seeks to transcend the natural tendency of the ego to persevere in its being. "Ethics is, therefore, *against nature* because it forbids the murderousness of my natural will to put my own existence first". For Levinas ethics is rooted neither in being nor in Being but in a Platonic "Good beyond Being". As he nicely puts it:

> The ethical situation is a human situation, beyond human nature, in which the idea of God comes to mind (*Gott fällt mir ein*). In this respect, we could say that God is the other who turns our nature inside out, who calls our ontological will-to-be in question. This ethical call of conscience occurs, no doubt, in other religious systems besides the Judeo-Christian, but it remains an essentially

religious vocation. God does indeed go against nature, for He is not of this world. God is other than being.[247]

From these eloquent words, Levinas seems to imply that ethics points to man's fundamental relation to God as evidenced by his desire that is inflamed by the Other. Man's inescapable primordial ethical relation with the Other, this "obsession of responsibility is, in a sense, the "latent birth" of religion".[248] Subjectivity as desire is intentionality. It seeks transcendence and it takes the form of responsibility for the infinite Other. This structure of subjectivity as transcendence points to the religious orientation of human existence. Levinas puts it succinctly in the following words: "The impossibility of escaping God lies in the depths of myself as a self, as an absolute passivity.[249]

Endnotes

[1]The title of this article is a phrase borrowed from Emmanuel Levinas. See his *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Sean Hand (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 159. There is a similar expression in his Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 78. Levinas says: "Ethics is the spiritual optics".

[2]With Levinas's approval, Lingis translates the French word autrui as the "personal Other, the you" while autre as simply "other". See footnote of page 24 in *Totality and Infinity*.

[3]Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality", "translated by A. Benjamin and T. Wright in R. Bernasconi and D. Woods, editors, *The Provocation of Levinas* (London: Routledge, 1988 [1976]), 172. Quoted in Peter Atterton, "Emmanuel Levinas", in Postmodernism: The Key Figures, edited by Hans Bertens and Joseph Natoli (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 235.

[4]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 78-79.

[5]Adriaan Peperzak, *To The Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1993), 212 & 217; Richard A. Cohen, "Foreword" to Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijjhoff, 1981; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1998), xii. See also Cohen's "Introduction" to Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), xxvi-xxvii.

[6]Colin Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 2. See also Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney,

"Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", in Richard A. Cohen, editor, *Face to Face with Levinas* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), 27.

[7]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 26.

[8]Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 127.

[9]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 17.

[10]Emmanuel Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", in *The Levinas Reader*, trans. Sean Hand (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989)31.

[11]Richard A. Cohen, *Elevations: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 139.

[12]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 30.

[13]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 31

[14]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 30.

[15]Philip N. Lawton, Jr., "Levinas' Notion of the 'There Is'", *Philosophy Today 29* (Spring 1976): 69.

[16]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 30.

[17]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 31.

[18]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 31.

[19]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 31.

[20]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 131-132.

[21]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 131.

[22]Levinas, "There is: Existence without Existents", 31.

[23]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 131.

[24]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 23.

[25]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 23. See also Edith Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, second edition (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 68.

[26]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 132.

[27]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 110.

[28]Peperzak, *To the Other*, 150.

[29]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 36.

[30]Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, *On Levinas*, (Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005),61.

[31]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 115. Wyschogrod avers that Levinas provides a novel insight on life in its basic form as enjoyment which runs contrary to the existentialist view of man who in his existence is stricken by anxiety, boredom, nausea, loneliness and absurdity. She enunciates: "Levinas posits a self at home with itself, satiable and happy. Suffering is understood against the background of prior satiety and is experienced as destruction of satiety. Levinas introduces into contemporary existential analyses of primordial affective states a radically new understanding of being-in-the-world, a view that upholds human satisfaction within the framework of ontological plenitude". Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, 61.

[32]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 43.

[33]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 149-150.

[34]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 111.

[35]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 112.

[36]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 133.

[37]Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, 62-63. Peperzak endorses the same judgment on the innocence of the ego as enjoyment. He says: "The hedonism and utilitarianism of the 'economy' is not an evil, but rather the constitution of a provisional world which waits for and 'desires' a more properly human meaning". Peperzak, *Beyond: The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, 122.

[38]Davis, *Levinas; An Introduction*, 43.

[39]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 33.

[40]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 135-136.

[41]Emmanuel Levinas, "The Trace of the Other", trans. Alphonso Lingis, in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 350. Cited in William Paul Simmons, *An-archy and Justice: An Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas's Political Thought* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003), 37.

[42]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 33.

[43]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 117.

[44]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

[45]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

[46]Simons, *An-archy and Justice*, 37.

[47]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 116-117.

[48]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 114.

[49]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 117.

[50]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 110.

[51]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 135.

[52]Peperzak, *To the Other*, 150.

[53]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 135.

[54]Simon Critchley, "Introduction", in Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20.

[55]This is now the theme of Levinas's second major work *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. In this work Levinas reinterprets sensibility as proximity and sensitivity to the Other. See Critchley, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 21.

[56]Peperzak, *To the Other*, 156.

[57]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 117.

[58]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 127.

[59]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 114.

[60]Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, 65.

[61]Peperzak, *To the Other*, 156.
[62]Levinas, "Time and the Other", in *The Levinas Reader*, 38.
[63]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 143-144.
[64]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 156-157.
[65]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 141.
[66]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 146.
[67]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 110.
[68]Peperzak, *Beyond*, 9.
[69]Peperzak, *Beyond*, 9. See also his *To the Other*, 24.
[70]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 158.
[71]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 153.
[72]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 141.
[73]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 153.
[74]Peperzak, *To the Other*, 23.
[75]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 183.
[76]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 74.
[77]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 120.
[78]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 117.
[79]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 148.
[80]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 38.
[81]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 8. See also *Totality and Infinity*, 118.
[82]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 38.
[83]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 134.
[84]Edmund Husserl poses quite the same question in one of his writings. He asked: "How can my ego, within his peculiar ownness, constitute under the name 'experience of something other' precisely something *other*–something that excludes *the constituted* from the concrete make-up of the sense-constituting 'I-myself' which I ascribe to this something other as *alter ego*?" Husserl, C*artesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, translated by Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 94. The difference between Husserl and Levinas as regards the problem of the self and the Other is quite obvious. Levinas views the problem as an ethical one whereas Husserl looks at it from the perspective of epistemology. Levinas thinks that Husserl's way of looking at the problem (and all those philosophers who consider the problem as primarily epistemological) jeopardizes ethics in that one does not need to prove first that the Other exists before one can be responsible for him. In other words, one does not ask oneself if the person who needs his immediate help exists or not before he extends his assistance. This demeanor, Levinas would perhaps think, is preposterous.
[85]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 103.
[86]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75-76.
[87]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.
[88]Betina Bergo, "Emmanuel Levinas" *The Stanford Enclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, editor; available from http://

plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/levinas/.

[89]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 111-112. See also *Davis, Levinas: An Introduction*, 80.

[90]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 111; Critchley, "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 15. See also Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, second edition (George Square, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 5.

[91]Peperzak, *To the Other*, 22.

[92]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

[93]Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy", in *The Levinas Reader*, 82; 85. Levinas, alluding to Heidegger, asks "if the Da of my Dasein is not already the usurpation of somebody else's place". Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy", in *The Levinas Reader*, 85.

[94]See Emmanuel Levinas, "Enigma and Phenomenon", in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 65-77.

[95]Levinas and Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", in *Face to Face with Levinas*, 24.

[96]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 109.

[97]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 124.

[98]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 107.

[99]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 108.

[100]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 109.

[101]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 106. See also Emmanuel *Levinas, Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 202.

[102]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 48.

[103]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 146.

[104]See Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 47.

[105]Andrius Valeviχius, *From the Other to the Totally Other: The Religious Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 2-3.

[106]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 116.

[107]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50.

[108]Virginia L. Jayme, "Emmanuel Levinas' Philosophy of Responsible Subjectivity", *Philippiniana Sacra* 26 (May-August 1990): 245.

[109]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198. See also Roland Paul Blum, "Emmanuel Levinas' Theory of Commitment", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research XLIV* (December 1983): 152.

[110]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 65-66.

[111]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.

[112]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 171.

[113]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

[114]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

[115]Jayme, "Emmanuel Levinas' Philosophy of Responsible Subjectivity", 252.

[116]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 251.

[117]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.

[118]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 199, 201, 230, 251, 297, 302, 303.

[119]Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 194.

[120]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198.

[121]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198. See also Jeffrey Kosky, *Levinas and The Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 22.

[122]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198.

[123]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 194.

[124]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198.

[125]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 199, 201. Here Levinas quotes Plato's *Republic* 327 b.

[126]David Couzens Hoy, *Critical Resistance: From Poststructuralism to Post-Critique* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2004), 155.

[127]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 150.

[128]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 200, 203.

[129]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 197.

[130]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 136.

[132]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 89.

[133]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 113.

[134]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 105.

[135]Atterton and Calarco explains: "An unargued assumption of many modern moral philosophers is that the Other only has the right to demand what is his or legal due, and that anything he or she receives beyond that is purely optional and a matter of private philanthropy on the part of the benefactor. It has to be said time and time again that Levinas is opposed to that way of conceiving ethics". *On Levinas*, 70-71.

[136]Peperzak, *To The Other*, 221.

[137]James Richard Mensch, *Postfoundational Phenomenology: Husserlian Reflections on Presence and Embodiment* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2001), 208.

[138]Mensch, *Postfoundational Phenomenology*, 207.

[139]See Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 108-113.

[140]Levinas, *Otherwise than Bein*g, 108.

[141]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 87.

[142]Mensch, Postfoundational Phenomenology, 208.

[143]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 105-106.

[144]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 127.

[145]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 145.

[146]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 11.

[147]Levinas, Entre Nous, 108.

[148]Emmanuel Levinas, Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo, trans. R. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985),101.

[149]Levinas. *Otherwise than Being*, 139.

[150]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 108.

[151]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114.

[152]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 183.

[153]Kosky, Levinas and The Philosophy of Religion, 83.

[154]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 102, 55.

[155]Levinas, *Otherwise than Bein*g, 145-146, 149, 152, 185. Here Levinas reechoes Abraham's reply to God in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 22:1) when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. "Here I am" (in Hebrew 'hineni' and Levinas translation in French is 'voici') is the self's unconditional obedience to the call of the Other.

[156]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 101.

[157]Critchley, "Introduction", to *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 20-21.

[158]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 25.

[159]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 127.

[160]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 117-118.

[161]Michele Saracino, *On Being Human: A Conversation with Levinas and Lonergan* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003), 96.

[162]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 127.

[163]Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 98.

[164]Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 100-101.

[165]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 101-102.

[166]Levinas, *God, Death and Time*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 12.

[167]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114.

[168]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 107.

[169]Critchley, "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 21.

[170]Critchley, "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 21.

[171]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 74.

[172]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 100-101.

[173]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 139, 166.

[174]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 48-52.

[175]Levinas, God, *Death and Time*, 23.

[176]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 56.

[177]Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes To Mind, trans*lated by Bettina Bergo (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 63.

[178]Levinas, *God, Death and Time*, 23.

[179]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 12.

[180]Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, 72.

[181]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 113, 126.

[182]Peperzak, *To The Other*, 217. Cf. Roger Burggraeve, *The Wisdom of Love in the Service of Love: Emmanuel Levinas on Justice*, Peace and Human Rights, trans. Jeffrey Bloechl (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002), 77-83.

[183]Critchley, "Introduction", to *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 12.

[184]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 199.

[185]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 5.

[186]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 92.

[187]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 195.

[188]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 174.

[189]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 76.

[190]Levinas and Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", in *Face to Face with Levinas*, 29.

[191]Simons, *An-archy and Justice*, 51.

[192]Hoy, *Critical Resistance*, 158.

[193]Peperzak, *To The Other*, 221.

[194]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 75.

[195]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 5.

[196]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 48.

[197]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 75.

[198]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 45, 49.

[199]Simons, *An-archy and Justice*, 51.

[200]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 42-43.

[201]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 7.

[202]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 37-38, 45-48.

[203]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 85.

[204]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 79.

[205]See Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas", in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 79-153.

[206]This is the opinion of Jacques Rolland, see *Parcours de l'autrement: Lecture d'Emannuel Levinas* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), as cited in Michael B. Smith, *Toward the Outside: Concepts and Themes in Emmanuel Levinas* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005),148. But Michael B. Smith holds a different opinion. He says "it would be both unnecessary and unlikely for Levinas to have shaped his future work on Derrida's critique". He is inclined to believe "that Levinas's thought already contained, for such an astute reader as Derrida, the exigencies that were to be worked out until later, but so clearly inscribed in potentia that Derrida's essay was able to decipher some of them". Smith,

Toward the Outside, 149, 148.

[207]Levinas is already aware of this weakness in his philosophy, particularly in *Totality and Infinity*. In his 1962 essay *Transcendence and Height*, Levinas writes: "One could reproach it for using classical rationalist terminology and for mixing it up and dressing it up with empirical givens". Levinas, "Transcendence and Height", *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 22.

[208]Simmons, *An-archy and Justice*, 5.

[209]Simmons, *An-archy and Justice*, 5.

[210]Critchley, "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 18.

[211]Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, 77.

[212]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 47.

[213]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 7, 183.

[214]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 168.

[215]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 167.

[216]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 168.

[217]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 171.

[219]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 212.

[220]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

[221]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 157.

[222]See Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 158-161.

[223]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 128.

[224]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 40.

[225]Simmons, *An-archy and Justice*, 54.

[226]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 78.

[227]Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 79.

[228]Burggraeve, *The Wisdom of Love in the Service of Love*, 117.

[229]Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 293; Emmanuel Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite" in Peperzak, *To the Other*, 112.

[230]Cohen, Elevations: *The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas*, 188.

[231]Kosky, *Levinas and The Philosophy of Religion*, n. 10, 211.

[232]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 23.

[233]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 146.

[234]Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, xvii.

[235]Smith, *Toward the Outside*, 89. For Smith, God is in the third person because Levinas wants "an important distinction to be made between the relation to God and the dialogical relation to the other person". Levinas intends to depart from Martin Buber's implied reciprocity in the "I-Thou" dialogical relation. As Smith explains: "The dialogical relationship brings with it elements that make it inadequate structure for transcendence because of the reciprocity and eventual play of gratitude and psychological interplay to which both parties of the dialogue are

open. The otherness of the other person is preserved and his or her stature as "greater than myself safeguarded only if the face of the other is 'in the trace' of illeity. 'The illeity of the third person is the condition of irreversibility'". Smith, *Toward the Outside*, 89.

[236]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 78.

[237]Cohen, Cohen, *Elevations: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas*, 187.

[238]See Emmanuel Levinas, *Is It Righteous To Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas, edited by Jill Robbins* (Stanford, California: Stanford University, 2001), 182.

[239]Michael Purcell, *Levinas and Theology* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.

[240]Purcell, *Levinas and Theology*, 47. Purcell, however, does not here imply "that the subject is the absolute origin of theology. Rather, it means that the starting point for theological reflection on God takes its point of departure in the here of human subjectivity". Purcell, *Levinas and Theology*, 47.

[241]Purcell, *Levinas and Theology*, 2.

[242]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34.

[243]Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 22.

[244]Wyschogrod, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, 62.

[245]Levinas, *God, Death and Time*, 15.

[246]Levinas and Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", in *Face to Face with Levinas*, 24.

[247]Levinas and Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", in *Face to Face with Levinas*, 25.

[248]Hent de Vries, "Levinas" in *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, edited by Simon Critchley and William S. Schroeder (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1998), 246.

[249]Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 129.