



AN ETHICAL *SINNGEBUNG* RESPECTFUL OF THE NON-HUMAN: A LEVINASIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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In the following paper, I connect Levinas's notions of il y a and hypostasis to nature as alterity via Sallis's interpretation of nature in its return. I interpret Levinas's idea of the elemental as an unpossessable milieu, an excess with indirect traces, indicating alterity, something strange. I then turn to Levinas's idea of the ruin of representation to argue for a contextual reversal in which meaning arises from the non-human other. This reversal uncovers the possibility of understanding non-human things as existents, sites where nature in its return reveals the need for respect of the other—an ethical Sinngebung.

Our environmental crisis, and especially global climate change, requires innovative rethinking of our relation to the non-human world. Levinas's general idea of ethics based on his notion of the Other has had important influences in many areas, including politics, religion, education, psychology, as well as philosophy. There is a growing debate about how his powerful ideas can be used to rethink our relation to the non-human world in response to the environment crisis.¹ There are several different approaches, even in a limited

¹ Danne Polk, "Good Infinity/Bad Infinity: Il y a, Apeiron, and the Environmental Ethics in the Philosophy of Levinas," in *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2000), 35–40; Silvia Benso, *The Face of Things: A Different Side of Ethics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000); Christian Diehm, "Facing Nature: Levinas Beyond the Human," in *Philosophy Today* vol. 44, no. 1 (2000): 55–59; Christian Diehm, "Gaia and Il y a: Reflections on the Face of the Earth," in *Symposium: Journal of the Canadian Society for Hermeneutics and Postmodern Thought*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2003), 173–81; John Llewelyn, *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience: A Chiasmic Reading of Responsibility in the Neighbourhood of Levinas, Heidegger and Others* (New York: Macmillan, 1991); John Llewelyn, *Seeing Through God: A Geophenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Barbara Jane Davy, "An Other Face of Ethics in Levinas," in *Ethics & the Environment*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2007), 39–65; Diane Perpich, *The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

sample. Danne Polk accepts Levinas's exclusionary focus on the human other, and settles for an anthropocentric stewardship ethics. Silvia Benso and John Llewelyn each accept Levinas's exclusionary move, but argue for a Heideggerian supplement in order to apply Levinas's insights to the non-human realm. Barbara Davy maintains that Levinas's exclusivist focus on the *human* other doesn't grow out of the concept of the other itself but is an arbitrary limitation, and suggests that the notion of face can be extended to the non-human. And Diane Perpich argues that Levinas's possible insights for ecology and the environmental crisis are best developed from his ideas about society and justice, rather than at the ethical level of the face-to-face. Although there is no unanimity about which of these is the best way to think with Levinas about the non-human, each of these are worthwhile contributions to thinking with Levinas about our environmental crisis.

Although each of these contributes something insightful, I believe there are other resources within Levinas's thought that have been overlooked, particularly his notions of *il y a* and hypostasis, as well as the elemental and sensibility. I would like to use these to build a case for a Levinasian approach that is different from a stewardship ethic, that circumvents the need for a strong Heideggerian supplement, and that doesn't require us to thin out his idea of the face. Clearly we need a more robust notion of non-human beings, one resistant to the possibility of exploitation through intentional constitution or equipmental instrumentality. My goal is to develop a notion of the non-human as something that is self-expressive and that is in an ethical relation with humans.

In his early writings, Levinas develops the notion of *il y a* as his own version of Heidegger's ontic-ontological distinction. Early on he distinguishes between an "existent" and "bare existence," where in a thought experiment, he asks us to imagine away all familiar things.² We might be tempted to say that there is nothing left, but that is not his view. Levinas maintains, "The absence of everything returns as a presence, as the place where the bottom has dropped out of everything, an atmospheric density, a plenitude of the void, or the murmur of silence."³ What remains is not nothing but bare existing, without the familiar existents in the world. Levinas names this *il y a*: "This

² Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, (tr.) A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001), 51. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as EE.

³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, (tr.) R. A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 198, 87. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as TO.

impersonal, anonymous, yet inextinguishable 'consummation' of being, which murmurs in the depths of nothingness itself we shall designate by the term *there is [il y a]*." (EE, 52) The anonymous, impersonal, indefinite presence, which has no perspective or situatedness, no structure or shape, is bare existence, an impersonal field of forces associated with existing. *Il y a* remains as a presence in the absence of everything familiar and determinate, something Levinas calls existing without existents.

Although he does not say exactly why or how existents come to occur, Levinas does give an informative story of the relationship between existents in the world and *il y a*. An existent is a rip in *il y a*, an interruption of its anonymity. An existent is an event, an irruption from the impersonal *il y a*, something which shows up most primordially and immediately as position. (TO, 64ff.) Position is localization, a here and a now, a place. And place, "as the irruption in anonymous being of localization itself" (EE, 6, 9) shows up materially as bodiliness. The body "is itself this event" of irruption and localization, the tear in *il y a* that interrupts its anonymity. So we can say that existents populating the world are local, bodily irruptions in the anonymity of bare existing, *il y a*. The local existent is not an objective body, but a localized materiality characterized as subjectivity; localization "is the subjectivization of the subject." (EE, 66) The existent is, as existent, a subject.

Levinas uses the Greek word *hypostasis* to name the event of contraction into existence. (TO, 43) Hypostasis is a coming into being of an existent by tearing away from bare existence. In such a withdrawal, the existent contacts its own existing, as if part of reality falls back onto itself, thereby rupturing bare existence enough to become a separate existent. In the words of Rene van Riessen, hypostasis means "the arising, out of anonymous being, of an independent being that is nameable, one that can be isolated in time and place in the face of general being";⁴ in Levinas own words, its arising is "a rupture of the anonymous vigilance of the *there is [il y a]*." (TO, 51) As stated before, the existent can well be thought of as subjectivity, for because of its escape from the anonymity of *il y a*, it closes itself off from bare existence by binding the existence to itself. This achievement creates a centring, a vantage point from which the localized irruption becomes an interiority, something separate that can relate to outside events.⁵

⁴ Renee Van Riessen, *Erotiek En Dood: Met Het Oog op Transcendentie in De Filosofie Van Levinas* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1991), 104.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

For Levinas, hypostasis is not substantive in the traditional sense. Instead, it can better be thought of as an event that is evanescent, a continual fading away requiring renewal. Even when an existent is seemingly dormant, it is still an accomplishment, for the irruption that is the existent involves continual fresh starts of interrupting the murmur of impersonal *il y a*.⁶ The inevitable evanescence of every present instant means that “being [hypostasis] is never inherited but always won in the heat of the struggle.” (EE, 77) The existent has no lasting endurance, it always involves new beginnings.

And yet, as an accomplishment, “hypostasis is freedom.” (TO, 54) Levinas does not mean the freedom of conscious deliberation; instead, the primal freedom of new beginnings. The very continuing presence of the existent shows this freedom. It is the freedom born from the existent’s grip on existing in the face of evanescence. Existing is a verb for Levinas, the perpetual mastering of existence by the existent as a material being: “The freedom of the Ego and its materiality thus go together.” (TO, 57) The existent that irrupts in hypostasis is a subject’s folding back on itself in its material existence: “Materiality accompanies—necessarily—the upsurge of the subject in its existent freedom.” (TO, 56) As such, a body, or bodiliness, is the condition for its centring and freedom.

I would like to make use of *il y a* to understanding differently the non-human. But to do so, our understanding of *il y a* needs to be deepened, in part by connecting it more explicitly to a particular idea of nature, for which I will turn to John Sallis’s work. Sallis argues that we need to think of *il y a* in what he terms the return of nature, a return after human thought has turned away from it.⁷ Human thought has transformed the non-human via cognition, shaping it to fit within the human world and thought, making it something familiar. We have come to call nature that which fits within human categories and practices, that which correlates without remainder to those concepts and actions. For example, Levinas’s notion of thing as object is an account of the non-human made to fit into the categories and practices of the human. Sallis undermines this idea of nature by suggesting that it is something that returns, as strange, in the context of the expected and familiar. Nature is that which returns as something alien, as an excess to our conceptualizations. Sallis’s insight is that we ought to interpret nature as *il y a*, something strange and alien breaking through the familiar and foreseen.

⁶ See Llewelyn, *Seeing Through God*, 27.

⁷ John Sallis, “Levinas and the Elemental,” *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 28, no.1 (1998), 152–59. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as LE.

There is good evidence in Levinas for this interpretation. He does present the “there is” as something that undermines the settledness of the familiar and immediate. Further, Levinas does not describe *il y a* directly, as if one might be able to correlate word and object, and thus capture accurately the object in the conceptual description. Instead, Levinas describes *il y a* with a set of opposites, both of which cannot reasonably be thought simultaneously as part of an existent being: murmur and silence, plenitude and void, light atmosphere and heavy density. Levinas does this so that we will not be able to think of *il y a* as an identifiable attribute of a being, an existent, but only existing as such. In Sallis’s idea of return, nature can only be indicated indirectly, via a paradox of interference, to use Hent de Vries’s phrase.⁸ The one side of the paradox interferes with the other in order for the concept not to come to rest in a being; instead, the contradictory opposites are meant to indicate something beyond a being, an excess that cannot be captured in concepts we typically use for familiar existents. Although *il y a* is pure existing without existents, it cannot be *stated* purely, univocally, directly, familiarly. In this way, what breaks through in nature’s return is not another *being* that exists behind existent beings, but a presence in the absence of such beings. That is, it is neither a being nor purely nothing. Instead, this absence forces us to feel the strange fact of the *there is*, existing, the absolutely strange. According to Sallis, these contradictory opposites are meant to signal “absence that is a presence that is yet absence returned.” (LE 154) These opposites, and more generally *il y a*, are meant to signal the return of nature as absolutely strange, not recoverable into the familiar while breaking into it, perhaps evoking “feelings of sublimity and terror.” (LE, 152) Sallis is suggesting that in its *return*, the presence of nature can be viewed as a question of alterity.

Sallis adds to his understanding of *il y a* by moving to Levinas’s discussion of the elemental. Levinas typically argues that we live *from* the elements, but also states that we live *in* them. Sallis glosses the latter as saying that the things of enjoyment are “not so much a matter of a background as of a medium (*milieu*) in which things take shape....” (LE, 157) The notion of medium is what most sharply differs Levinas from Heidegger, according to Sallis: “such a medium is irreducible to a system of operational references (as in Heidegger’s analysis).” (*Ibid.*) Sallis is arguing that the milieu in which we live as we live from it (enjoyment) is not a set of references between pieces

⁸ Hent de Vries, *Minimal Theologies: Critiques of Secular Reason in Adorno and Levinas* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2005).

of equipment, let alone objects constituted by the intentionality of cognition, but a milieu which has its own domain. And as a milieu, precisely unlike equipment, “the milieu itself is unpossessable.” (*Ibid.*) This central feature of the elemental is clearly a continuation of Levinas’ discussion of the *ilya*, in that as a milieu we do not and cannot possess it. It always already remains alien in this fundamental sense. Levinas says: “The element has no forms containing it; it is content without form. Or rather, it has but a side; the surface of the sea and of the field, the edge of the wind; the milieu upon which this side takes form is not composed of things. It unfolds in its own dimension: depth, which is inconvertible into the breadth and length in which the side of the element extends.... The depth of the element prolongs it till it is lost in the earth and in the heavens.”⁹ Levinas is saying that the elemental is not a being or existent, but a milieu within which we find ourselves. The idea of a side starts out as a surface, which we might be forgiven to think about as breadth times length, but which abruptly changes to the single metaphor of depth, deliberately excluding it as the third dimension of Cartesian extension, and thus of determinate objects. Sallis argues that the introduction of the idea of a side is that the elemental “is indeterminate and noncontained.” (LE, 157) It has only a side, rather than all three dimensions, which would create determinate boundaries, making it into a determinate or determinable object. But, because it is as only a side (or depth), the elemental is uncontainable. Sallis argues that the depth dimension is meant to indicate uncontainability; the elemental as a milieu unfolds “with a depth that is incommensurate with the dimensions of the side.” (*Ibid.*) Depth here is not just the potential surfaces hidden beneath each other sequentially, which could in principle be recovered as profiles (say, by peeling away successive surfaces). Instead, depth indicates a way of not containing the elemental, extending as it does until it is lost in the unfathomable reaches of the earth and sky. There is no separation from the elemental in which we live, no distancing we would need to experience it has having a (determinate) surface close by or far away, to my right or left, in front of or behind me. Instead, “one is always within it.” (*Ibid.*)

Because the elemental is a milieu, it isn’t itself a property of something substantive, a substance required to support it. This sort of stability would, in fact, mute the elemental by interpreting it as a

⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, (tr.) A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 131. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as TI.

characteristic of an existent, as a trait of a being, an interpretation that the idea of a medium blocks. The elemental “comes to us from nowhere, determines and is determined by no object, is anonymous.” (LE, 158) This adds to Levinas’s concept of *il y a*, as existing without existents, where *il y a* is an abyss rather than solid ground. Added is the idea of inescapable milieu while keeping the notion of something breaking through, returning.

Further, Sallis argues that the elemental “involves a peculiar concealment.” (*Ibid.*) This isn’t an ordinary hiding, where some *thing* hidden from view could in principle be uncovered if we were clever enough or if we had the right approach and perspective. Instead, the sort of concealment associated with the elemental is connected to revealing an absence. To put it in terms of concealment is, says Sallis, to draw attention to what Levinas himself describes as “an ever-new depth of absence, an existence without existent, the impersonal par excellence.” (TI, 142) This is concealment for Levinas because it is a way of existing without revealing itself, by which he means the familiar world of beings. Sallis glosses this as a “withdrawal into fathomless depth.” (LE, 158) As fathomless depth it obscures origin and materiality. The excess of the elemental, difficult to express, is indicated with these indirect traces: a no-thing hidden from view, an indeterminate depth of materiality, of origin, a depth of absence, existence without existent. These are all indicators that conceptually we are always already too late, belatedly and inadequately naming a trace, an excess. This deepens our understanding of *il y a*, in particular its alterity, something absolutely strange.

In summary, Sallis has developed, from within Levinas’s own thought an idea which depicts the non-human in terms of its non-possession and its alterity, something that resists thought, but nevertheless an inescapable milieu within which we live. It breaks through our expected and familiar conceptualizations of the non-human precisely in our non-possessability of the elemental, the absolutely strange. Sallis’ analysis gives us insight into nature in Levinasian terms, as the absolutely strange in its return.

By itself this analysis doesn’t yet get us to an explicitly *ethical* relation to the non-human. To move the argument forward, we can put Sallis’s insight of nature in its return in the context of any number of Levinas’s dualities—totality and infinity, the same and the other, or objectivity and transcendence. In each of these, Levinas is preoccupied by a *movement* in which the second disrupts the first. As John Drabinski points out, “the movement beyond the totality departs

from and within the experience of totality, confronting identity with difference, the familiar with the strange...."¹⁰ The idea of nature's return trip, experienced within the process of cognizing, is just one example of this movement. Levinas's idea of attentiveness begins to explain how this is experienced. Levinas describes being attentive in the context of thematizing thought (consciousness); attentiveness points to another sort of interaction, one that puts thematization into question. Levinas states that "Being attentive signifies a surplus of consciousness, and presupposes the call of the other. To be attentive is to recognize the mastery of the other, to receive his command...." (TI, 178) With the metaphor of surplus Levinas signals a signification that does not originate from the self. The surplus signals a reversal of meaning-bestowal, meaning not generated by thought. It is this reversal that begins to uncover the ethical relation.

Levinas's idea of sensibility is important for understanding the reversal at the heart of attentiveness, especially as he develops it in an early essay on representation. In his analysis of Husserl's notion of intentionality, something he takes to constitute cognition, Levinas argues that there are unsuspected, overlooked, and forgotten horizons that support the thinking process by playing what he calls a transcendental role. He turns specifically to sensibility and sensible qualities that situate the subject in its thinking process. In order to think, the cognizing subject inevitably is located within these unsuspected horizons. Of note, he mentions the body and the earth: "My body is not only a perceived object, but a perceiving subject; the earth is not the base on which things appear, but the condition that the subject requires for their perception."¹¹ Levinas is saying that the body and the earth act as unsuspected horizons that situate the subject, that the subject is located within these horizons as it undertakes the specific intentional task of thought. These horizons have the transcendental role of providing support to the cognizing subject in its intentional move toward the cognized object. Body and earth provide the support of situatedness required for thought. Levinas's lesson is that representation is ruined, by which he means, consciousness is dethroned from its status as sovereign, in what has been mistaken as disembodied conceptualizing. The movement of consciousness toward its object—intentionality—is itself rooted in

¹⁰ John E. Drabinski, *Sensibility and Singularity: The Problem of Phenomenology in Levinas* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 96.

¹¹ Emmanuel Levinas, "The Ruin of Representation," in *Discovering Existence with Husserl*, (tr.) R. A. Cohen and M. B. Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 117. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as RR.

the lived body, “in all the implicit—nonrepresented—horizons of incarnate existence.” (*Ibid.*) From this we can see that the reversal central to attentiveness relies on unsuspected horizons of sensibility, including particularly body and earth, also for its unsettling character. I would argue that the return of nature in its strangeness experienced in attentiveness is uncovered through the unsuspected horizons that constitute sensibility.

Levinas interprets these “unsuspected horizons” with Heidegger’s distinction between being and beings: “All thought that directs itself to a being already stands within the being of that being (which Heidegger shows to be irreducible to a being), as within the horizon and site that commands all position-taking...” (RR, 118) Levinas is saying that horizons of body and earth provide needed support for thought by giving location and situatedness. The freedom of thought in its constituting role is situated in the belonging of the subject via the horizons that place it in location. For Levinas the world is not only constituted by human cognition, but also is actively constituting consciousness in return. The object of thought is not merely known: it is not merely revealed but also reveals, not merely passive but also active. Says Levinas, “Every object calls forth and as it were gives rise to the consciousness through which its being shines and, in doing so, appears.” (RR, 119) Although Levinas reserves a purely outgoing arrow for the intentionality of cognition, the unsuspected horizons constitute a reverse arrow, as condition for the subject’s ability to cognize. Thus he concludes: “Earth and sky, hand and tool, body and other, condition knowledge and being, in an a priori way.” (RR, 119–20) Levinas’s point in drawing our attention to these unsuspected horizons “is to offer a glimpse of a relationship with the other that is neither an intolerable limitation of the thinker, nor a simple absorption of this other into the ego, in the form of a content.” (RR, 121) The characteristics that Sallis rightly attributes to the elemental, namely, a milieu that is unpossessable, an uncontainability within which we nevertheless always already find ourselves, show up within cognition and intentionality as unsuspected horizons extending indeterminately until they are lost in the unfathomable depths of the earth and bodiliness. Perhaps more to the point, they are the conditions that make possible the reversal of meaning-bestowal, which for Levinas is central to the ethical relation.

Levinas is clear about this. He believes he needs this analysis because without it, all meaning-giving concerning the other would be totally absorbed into the ego’s representation of the Other, and thus become a mere function of the subject’s cognizing moves. This is important for Levinas because “within horizons that it somehow had

not willed, but with which it cannot dispense, an ethical *Sinngebung* becomes possible, that is, a *Sinngebung* essentially respectful of the Other." (*Ibid.*) The recovery of unsuspected horizons is for Levinas important work in order to reveal an *ethical* relation with the other, one in which the otherness of the other is respected. Levinas's early attempt to articulate a relation with the other in ethical terms is formulated in terms of an ethical bestowal of meaning. Although he uses the term bestowal, the ethical relation does not originate with the cognizing subject and isn't projected onto the cognized object. Instead, in "an ethical *Sinngebung*" the arrow of intentionality is reversed. Ethical meaning originates from the Other which, importantly, gives rise to a relation of respect of the other as other. In this reversal, to put it in terms of our earlier argument, nature breaks through our cognizing representations, returning in its strangeness as an ethical call to which we humans are compelled to respond with an ethical *Sinngebung* which is respectful of the other. The unsuspected horizons form an the unpossessable milieu in which we live, whose non-possession and alterity form the conditions for an ethical relation, experienced as something that calls us to respect the non-human as other.

This supports Sallis's insight that in Levinas's later writing he unduly restricts the human relation to the elemental because of his focus on the idea of enjoyment. Enjoyment for Levinas is the relation with the elements in which, precisely as enjoyment, they are interiorized, brought into the domain of domesticity, moved from strangeness to familiarity, from alterity to sameness. That is because Levinas uses the idea of alimenterity to explain enjoyment. In the joy of eating we take in the elements, as strange, and make them into the same. Food is literally interiorized and transformed via metabolism into ourselves. But, asks Sallis perceptively, "is enjoyment the only way, the all-encompassing way, of comporting oneself to the elemental?... Or could the elemental—as the elements extending into the *there is*, as the coupling of the elements with the *there is*—provoke an ekstasis irrecoverable by enjoyment and its interiorizing movement?" (LE, 159) Sallis is suggesting that there are other possible modes of relating to the elemental, different from alimentary relations, which remain true to Levinas's more general insights. Sallis's criticism of Levinas is that he unduly restricts the relation to the elemental and thus to alterity. By interpreting the relation to the elemental only through the lens of enjoyment via alimenterity, a primal standing relation to alterity disappears from the relation to the elemental. If the elemental is not first of all that which is taken in, but more basically the milieu in which one bathes, then its absolute

strangeness is not reducible in relations with the elemental. The horizons of earth and body, when connected to the elemental as milieu, can be interpreted as horizons of strangeness. My interest here is uncovering relations to alterity through the elemental that would be responsive to the horizontal work of earth and body, namely, respecting the non-human through our experience of their strangeness. The elemental as milieu that comes through our unsuspected horizons in our relation to the non-human reveals an *ethical Sinngebung* respectful of the other. The *responsive* relation to the elemental, as milieu within which we live provides the resilient alterity which stubbornly supports the ethical relation to the non-human.

The idea of an ethical *Sinngebung* uncovered via unsuspected horizons, signalling the return of nature as the breakthrough of the elemental (and ultimately, *ily a*), helps us begin to see the possibility of an ethical relation to the non-human. However, it does not yet get us the entire distance. Although it indicates a role for the elemental in how an ethical respectfulness arises via its alterity, what is still missing is an account of possible ethical relations explicitly with non-human *existents*. On what basis might we claim an ethical relation to living existents such as dogs, horses, flies, earthworms, trees, shrubs, grass, and paramecia? And is it possible to argue for an ethical relation to more complex existents such as lakes and rivers, forests and prairies, tundras and deserts? Or, even more abstractly, what about abstract phenomena such as the biosphere (the interconnected systems of living beings that encircles the globe) and the cryosphere (a similarly comprehensive interconnected system of ice and snow)? Is there an ethical *Sinngebung* that calls for respect toward these complex existents? Can they be experienced as having intrinsic worth in their own right? Using Levinas's scheme, these are existents and should not be reduced to the elemental or *ily a*—the non-human realm is more than the elemental. Thus there remains the issue of an ethical *Sinngebung* to non-human *existents*.

In characterizing the non-human realm I have included a variety of different existents, from recognizable living creatures to abstract global systems. In doing so, I have of course *represented* them, in Levinas's sense, cognitively organizing them in categories such as living beings, ecosystems, and abstract global systems. This means we are back to the situation of reducing non-human existents to thematized objects. Thematization is cognition by the subject that grasps via possession and familiarization. If we are to uncover a possible ethical relation to non-human existents, we will need to uncover something within cognition, or more aptly in *excess* of it, to

make explicit the possible ethical relation with non-human existents, something that I would argue would have to involve Sallis's idea of nature in its return.

To develop this, I would like to say a little more about the nature of at least some non-human existents, for which I would like to return briefly to Levinas's idea of sensibility. Levinas writes, "Sensibility constitutes the very egoism of the I, which is sentient and not something sensed." (TI, 59) What is important here is that he depicts not thought (thematization, cognition) but *sensibility* as the egoism of the I. Two things should be noted in characterizing it this way. First, he roots the living subject in the very materiality from which it is achieved in hypostasis and connected to the unsuspected horizon of the body. Second, because *sensibility* constitutes the core of the ego, there is little reason to limit subjectivity to the human. Certainly, Levinas is talking about the egoism of the *human* I and arguably, the sensibility he means is particularly associated with humans. But his description of egoism leaves ample room for the idea that egoism more generally can occur in other, non-human sentient beings. Dogs and horses are uncontroversially sentient, but arguably so are flies and worms. And perhaps even paramecia, in a particular sort of way.¹² If we combine this with the earlier understanding of sensibility, namely that which is in excess to and resists thought, we can think of the possibility that all sentient beings exhibit something that resists representation, something we can posit in general as "egoism," which we can also characterize as being a subject.¹³ The idea of sensibility can be used to depict the sentience of some non-human existents. Their sentience, depicted in this way, can be construed as that which is in excess of our thematizing cognition of them.

Another way to say this is that sensibility, central to sentient creatures, is a kind of subjectivity, one that resists representation. To support this claim, I would like to return to Levinas's idea of hypostasis. We can justifiably argue, based on Levinas's idea of hypostasis, that *all* sentient beings are upsurges in bare existence, achievements we can rightly call existents. All sentient beings can be characterized as a rupture or tear in the anonymity of *il y a*, achieved through the hollowing out of an inner space that can rightly be called subjective. That is, given that *il y a* is essentially anonymous and impersonal,

¹² Harvard Armus, Amber Montgomery, and Jenny Jellison, "Discrimination Learning in Paramecia (P. Caudatum)," *The Psychological Record*, vol. 56, no. 4 (2010), 489–98.

¹³ Yoshimi Kawade, "On the Nature of the Subjectivity of Living Things," *Biosemiotics*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2009), 205–20.

ruptures of this anonymity are achievements toward subjectivity. Sentient existents are thus subjective by virtue of hypostasis, the event of their irruptions. Given Levinas's general description of existents, including specifically the notion of hypostasis, living entities in the non-human world are not explicitly excluded from this characterization. There is nothing within Levinas's description of the process of hypostasis itself that suggests that human beings are the only existents. Although in places he uses human examples as illustrations, including particularly the idea of consciousness, in fact his analysis that the upsurge and achievement are *bodily* in character points us in a more expansive direction. Given the bodily character of hypostasis, it seems arbitrary not to include at least some of the non-human realm: surely animals exhibit the features of an existent. Most animals, for example, exhibit many of the characteristics of subjectivity: freedom of beginnings, independence and interiority, a grip on existence in the face of evanescence.¹⁴ But also, plants such as the maple tree in my backyard too show the freedom of beginnings, an independence from its elemental milieu, a centred existence in the face of evanescence.¹⁵ At least some non-human existents exhibit subjectivities that resist (cognitive) representation.

More complex existents, including ecosystems and global systems, are clearly not sentient. Yet they also show evidence of certain hypostatic-like characteristics, including internal dynamics, boundaries, unpredictability, vulnerability and resilience. Ecosystems such as rivers and forests, bioregions such as the Amazon rainforest and the Southern Siberian steppes, and perhaps even global systems such as the biosphere and cryosphere, embody these traits.¹⁶ Ecosystems and global systems are not merely confluences and balances of physical forces, but are entities in their own right, in large part because they are dynamic systems exhibiting rudimentary autonomy

¹⁴ Kepa Ruiz-Mirazo and Alvaro Moreno, "Autonomy in Evolution: From Minimal to Complex Life," *Synthese*, vol. 185, no. 1 (2011), 1–32.

¹⁵ A Trewavas, "Green Plants as Intelligent Organisms," *Trends in Plant Science*, vol. 10, no. 9 (2005), 413–19.

¹⁶ C. S. Holling, "Surprise for Science, Resilience for Ecosystems, and Incentives for People," in *Ecological Applications*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1996), 733–35; B. L. Turner, Roger E. Kasperson, Pamela A. Matson, James J. McCarthy, Robert W. Corell, Lindsey Christensen, Noelle Eckley, Jeanne X. Kasperson, Amy Luers, Marybeth L. Martello, Colin Polsky, Alexander Pulsipher, Andrew Schiller, "A Framework for Vulnerability Analysis in Sustainability Science," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 100, no. 14 (2003), 8074–79; Brian Walker, C. S. Holling, Stephen R. Carpenter and Ann Kinzig, "Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability in Social – Ecological Systems," *Ecology And Society*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2004), 5.

in their self-organization.¹⁷ Muller and Nielson point to a number of characteristics of such self-organization: open systems that exchange energy, matter and information with its surroundings; fuelled by imported energy (*e.g.*, solar) that can be changed into mechanical work as well as into energy-storing structures (*e.g.*, biomass of various sorts) and energy-releasing processes, as well as into non-usable energy that is released into the environment (*e.g.*, evaporation); comprised of heterogeneous structures and gradients internal to the system that are maintained far from thermodynamic equilibrium; showing changes that are non-linear, including complex feedback loops with high fluctuations; and dynamics that are functions of internal networks of relations, relatively autonomous from external constraints, maintaining internal hierarchies and stability by buffering inputs.¹⁸ I would argue that these features can rightly be construed as particulars of hypostasis, and the resultant entities construed as irruptions from *il y a*, self-organizing events. Although they are not sentient or contained by a physical boundary such as a membrane or epidermis, their hypostatic features allows them to be considered non-human existents. And as existents, they express claims. In this they can be regarded as subjects that are able to disrupt our thematizing representations. Again, to argue this does not mean that these existents are on par with sentient creatures. My claim, more modestly, is only that these also, in their own ways, can be plausibly and helpfully considered as irruptions of *il y a*, *i.e.*, non-human existents. And my suggestion is that they thus also can be thought of as subjects exhibiting characteristics such as resilience and vulnerability, which I would claim is in excess of our thematizing representation—disruptions.

Earlier I argued that Levinas's idea of attentiveness named the experience of the disruption of representation. There is nothing in our attentiveness that requires it to be exclusively oriented to the human; we can be attentive also to non-human existents. I would argue that the excess constituting attention allows them to show themselves as hypostatic achievements irrupting from the elemental and the anonymity of *il y a*. As we saw earlier, attentiveness is grounded in sensibility, which uncovers *alterity*, absolute strangeness, nature in its return. Here I wish to add that attentiveness can

¹⁷ Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 44.

¹⁸ Felix Muller and Soren Nors Nielsen, "Ecosystems as Subjects of Self-Organizing Processes," in *Handbook of Ecosystem Theories and Management*, (ed.) S. E. Jørgensen and F. Müller (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2000), 183.

open us up particularly to the enigmatic experience of the self-expression of the non-human existent: strangeness originating from the non-human existent can infiltrate the human ego by disrupting our intentional representations, and thus experiencing them as hypostatic achievements. Since as achievement hypostasis is simultaneously evanescent, I would suggest that in our attentiveness non-human existents reveal their vulnerability. To be a non-human existent is to be show vulnerability to demise and breakdown. Clearly this is something beyond *il y a*, for the anonymous *there is* is not the sort of being that is threatened at all, it is not an existent, and hence not vulnerable. By contrast, what makes the non-human other vulnerable is that it is an *existent*, an upsurge in existing, a momentary and continually precarious achievement, hypostasis. Attentiveness allows us to experience the non-human existent as an event that is structurally vulnerable.

Because non-human existents can be undermined from below, threatened by *il y a* to collapse back into bare existing, they can also be threatened from the outside, by humans who cognize and act. Because structurally evanescence is just a part of hypostasis, there can also be proximal causes of breakdown, including centrally those brought on by our human insistence on our place in the sun. Thus, for example, our thematizing cognition can reduce non-human existents to an instrumental usefulness, to objects of thought, to barriers in need of destruction, or even to gifts offered to human others. In these ways, the well-being of non-human other is vulnerable to our human egoistic thought and action. The non-human other, precisely as *existent*, is vulnerable to becoming mere resource, equipment, barrier, object, or gift. As a material existent, these reductions can easily mean that the non-human other suffers loss and harm, if not outright demise. That is, the non-human existent precisely as an event of hypostasis, as one that suffers continual evanescence and thus requiring ever new beginnings, is also an existent vulnerable to human reduction and exploitation, and thus is vulnerable to human action. And it is precisely because of this that non-human existents can also affect the human subject, via sensibility, as an ethical *Sinngebung*.

It is here that I differ with those who advocate using Levinas's idea of the face as the paradigm for the ethical relation to the non-human. I would contend that the ethical relation does not always have to be explicitly and primarily associated with the face. Although Levinas introduces the face to talk about the ethical relation, it is clear he does so to indicate the *human* as other. In order to argue for the non-human face, theorists would have to modify either the

notion of face to make it fit the non-human or introduce a supplement to make things more human-like. But what if we allow, with Levinas, that the face is reserved for the *human* as other? My contention in this paper is that the face is not the only way to enter into an ethical relation, specifically with the non-human. There are Levinasian resources left to claim also an ethical relation to the non-human world. Perhaps oddly, not forcing the non-human realm to have faces might in fact create more room for an ethical relation to the non-human realm. Freeing us from the heavy requirements of an intra-human ethical relation might allow for more nuanced ethical relations commensurate with the diversity of the non-human realm without making it appear on the one hand that the non-human is crypto-human or on the other to have to admit that the non-human is nothing more than instrumental equipment or objects of thought. That is, by not employing the trope of face we might in fact be able to open another space of otherness that isn't yet fully articulated in Levinas but is nevertheless compatible with his framework.

Bernhard Waldenfels argues that in Levinas's position "we are invited to treat our whole sensorium as a responsorium."¹⁹ I would draw attention to the word "whole," which I believe includes attentiveness to non-human existents. Waldenfels goes on to ask that, if this is so, by what criteria does Levinas restrict the face to humans? Waldenfels argues that the non-human can equally appeal and call us to responsibility. I agree with Waldenfels about the appeal from the non-human other, although I would parse it differently. I think we need to ask: given that Levinas restricts the face to the human other, how might we characterize the appeal of living and other complex non-human existents? Given that we are invited to construe our entire sensorium as a responsorium, my take is that there is enough responsorium left over for it to be affected by the appeal of non-human existents, whether animals, plants, ecosystems, bioregions or global systems such as the biosphere or cryosphere. Rudolf Bernet reminds us, for Levinas "responsibility accrues to a subject that is marked, at the deepest level of its experience, by its sensibility, which brings it into the other's proximity, or by its vulnerability with respect to the other.... As a consequence, ethical sensibility is an affectivity that comes to me entirely from the other."²⁰ What I take

¹⁹ Bernhard Waldenfels, "Levinas and the Face of the Other," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, (ed.) S. Critchley and R. Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 77.

²⁰ Rudolf Bernet, "Levinas's Critique of Husserl," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 90.

from this is that the non-human existent, precisely in its strangeness, in nature's return through it, in its excess of representation, affects us humans in such a way as to mark an *ethical* relation. Our attentiveness to the non-human existent shows up as an ethical sensibility that comes to us from the non-human other. Waldenfels suggests, "Levinas's ethics are rooted in a phenomenology of the body.... It is the hungering, thirsting, enjoying, suffering, working, loving, murdering human being in all its corporeality (*Leibhaftigkeit*) whose otherness is at stake."²¹ The unsuspected horizon of the body forms the implicit context for such responsibility. Extending this, it is clear that sentient non-human existents such as chickens (to use an odd example) also hunger, thirst, enjoy, and suffer. I would argue that these empirical states are important to the extent that they point to the vulnerability of those particular sorts of existents. And more generally, the vulnerability of other, complex non-human existents reveals an ethical relation, uncovering something that is at stake for the non-human existent.

John Drabinski can help us here. He states, "The Other is not an object precisely because its expressive life consists in undoing what would make it an object."²² I would argue that non-human existent can express in this way, where such expression is both a manifestation and a hiding. In its presence it is also absent, showing itself as an enigma rather than a fully grasped object. Although non-human existents can rightly be represented, at the same time they unsettle the thematizing work of consciousness and hide from cognition's intentional arrow, from its constituting function that would conceptualize non-human existents without remainder. As such, non-human existents, as hypostatic achievements, express themselves by disrupting being represented by the cognizing subject. It is this interruption that opens up the space for ethical meaning-bestowal by the non-human existent, where ethics simply means, at its minimum, the "calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other." (TI, 43) The non-human existent is not a merely passive, determinate object that can be adequated with my thematizing intentionality. My attentiveness via sensibility, receives an incoming disturbance as ethical meaning-bestowal, originating from outside of me—there is something about the non-human existent in which such affection originates. That is, the non-human existent doesn't just appear to me—it expresses. I am suggesting that it is the sort of existent that "at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic

²¹ Waldenfels, "Levinas and the Face...," 65.

²² Drabinski, *Sensibility and Singularity*, 103.

image it leaves in me.” (TI, 51) Non-human existents express, which in our attentiveness we experience as an absolute difference unsettling our representations of them, and in doing so reversing the arrow of meaning-bestowal, which shows up as an ethical relation, an ethical *Sinngebung* that is respectful of the other.

Levinas uses the Greek phrase *kath auto* to name this, by which he means “it expresses itself.” In such expression, “the existent breaks through all envelopings and generalities of Being...” (*Ibid.*) Levinas is saying that precisely because the existent is an achievement as an upsurge in existing, the existent expresses itself to me beyond the representing function of my thought in which I equate the existent with my categories of cognition. I am suggesting that, as existents, non-human beings also manifest *kath auto*. The manifestation of the non-human as existent, as upsurge in its achievement, shows up in my awareness as the existent’s *kath auto*: “*kath auto* consists in a being telling itself to us independently of every position we would have taken in its regard, expressing itself.” (TI, 65) It is not a matter of the incoming sensibility helping us choose which interpretation among many best fits, for that would still be maintaining the sovereignty of the thematizing subject. Instead, the “it expresses itself” by the non-human existent undoes our themes without replacing them with other ones. In this move, says Drabinski, Levinas is attempting “to alter sensibility *from* the posterior status of the sensible as constituted *to* the sensible as a self-constituted signification (*i.e.*, expression and *kath auto*).”²³ Sensibility is given the transcendental role of constituting rather than the conditioned role of being constituted. This means that for Levinas sensibility is absolute difference, not merely blind protocognition. Sensibility is, at its deepest root, not cognition that lacks something, which is then made sufficient by thought. Instead, it is the responsorium that maintains an awareness of absolute difference, also of non-human existents, attentiveness to an independence that cannot be completely cognitively grasped.

In other words, even without the notion of a face, we can envision the non-human existent as expressing an ethical claim on us as humans. Clearly, in its vulnerability it cannot physically stop itself from being harmed (reduced, exploited, degraded, destroyed), for then it would not be vulnerable in the first place. But it has an ethical defense: *kath auto*. It can express itself in a way that reveals the arbitrariness if not violence of our exploitative thematization, not only our “I think” but also our “I can” which often lead to the exploi-

²³ *Ibid.*, 108.

tation of non-human existents. The very vulnerability of the non-human existent functions at the same time as its self-expression, namely, an appeal to do the non-human existent good. In Levinas's scheme, for any existent to be an existent, it is not merely an instance of a kind, but a concrete, irreplaceable achievement. The fact that they are existents means in Levinas's scheme they are singular upsurges in existing which, as existents, are thus vulnerable. But as vulnerable, they also self-express (*kath'auto*), something which disturbs us as human existents, via an ethical appeal. This seems reason enough to suggest that non-human existents are the sorts of existents with which we humans can enter ethical relations of responsibility.²⁴

Take our relation to animals in the meat production of industrial agriculture, as an example. Clearly, the production of say, chicken meat, can rightly be construed as explicitly thematizing the reduction of an animal species to a commodity for human exploitation.²⁵ Domestic meat chickens, called broilers, are particular varieties (often now Cornish-Rock) bred for fast and efficient meat production in rigidly controlled environments. As such, the term *broiler*, which names a post-production domestic cooking process, reduces the animal to its represented goal of human exploitation. And the production process, including genetic modifications for fast growth and maximum breast and thigh meat, are aimed at human interests. However, they are more than broilers; they are also living, sentient existents, with their own characteristic norms for well-being in their attempts to cope with their extremely controlled environment.²⁶ According to one theorist, "Feelings, such as pain, fear and the various forms of pleasure, may be part of a coping strategy."²⁷ In my terms, the hypostatic achievement that constitutes the chicken as sentient existent makes it vulnerable, not only to evanescence generally but also to human exploitation that causes fear and pain. One perhaps small example is the stress of walking caused by leg weakness relative to body weight, a high-incidence condition in many

²⁴ See Llewelyn, *Seeing Through God*, 13.

²⁵ Egbert Hardeman and Henk Jochemsen, "Are There Ideological Aspects to the Modernization of Agriculture?," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, vol. 25, no. 5 (2012), 657–74. [<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10806-011-9331-5/fulltext.html>], accessed May 27, 2013.

²⁶ See Ian J. H. Duncan, "The Changing Concept of Animal Sentience," *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, vol. 100, no. 1–2 (2006), 11–19.

²⁷ Donald M. Broom, "A History of Animal Welfare Science," *Acta Biotheoretica*, vol. 59, no. 2 (2011), 126.

broiler populations and of great economic concern for producers.²⁸ However, I would argue, in Levinasian fashion, that attentiveness to chickens in nature's return disrupts our representation of them as broilers, revealing an excess that resists such thematization by pointing to, for one thing, their pain and suffering, including specifically with each step they might take.²⁹ This vulnerability and suffering functions at the same time as a self-expression, namely, an appeal to humans to do them good. As non-human existents they are upsurges that self-express (*kath auto*), disturbing us with an ethical appeal, an ethical *Sinngebung* that call humans to be respectful of them as existents.

I would argue that the same is true, albeit in a somewhat different way, of our relations to more complex and abstract existents such as ecosystems and bioregions. Although these are not sentient, I have argued above that they are hypostatic achievements, including particularly hypostatic traits of resilience and vulnerability.³⁰ Historically we have not paid them much attention, except as merely the environment within which we live, or more intrusively as inexhaustible standing reserve for our instrumental interests and infinite repository of our waste. I would argue that when we are attentive to them as existents, we find that they also express (*kath auto*) something beyond our instrumental representations, including particularly their vulnerability to our human actions.³¹ Even at a global scale, the data as documented in the annual reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change discloses the fragility of the global earth, including its current envelop of biotic life we call the biosphere.³² The perhaps unexpected vulnerability of the entity Don

²⁸ D. O. Skinner-Noble and R. G. Teeter, "An Examination of Anatomic, Physiologic, and Metabolic Factors Associated with Well-being of Broilers Differing in Field Gait Score," *Poultry Science*, vol. 88, no. 1 (2009), 2–9.

²⁹ I. A. Nääs, I. C. L. A. Paz, M. S. Baracho, A. G. Menezes, L. G. F. Bueno, I. C. L. Almeida and D. J. Moura, "Impact of Lameness on Broiler Well-being," *The Journal of Applied Poultry Research*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2009), 432.

³⁰ F. S. Chapin, G. Peterson, F. Berkes, T. V. Callaghan, P. Angelstam, M. Apps, C. Beier, Y. Bergeron, A.-S. Crépin, K. Danell, T. Elmqvist, C. Folke, B. Forbes, N. Fresco, G. Juday, J. Niemelä, A. Shvidenko, and G. Whiteman, "Resilience and Vulnerability of Northern Regions to Social and Environmental Change," *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*, vol. 33, no. 6 (2004), 344–49.

³¹ Adger W. Neil, "Vulnerability," *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 16, no. 3 (2006), 268–81.

³² S. Solomon, D. Qin, M. Manning, Z. Chen, M. Marquis, K. B. Averyt, M. Tignor and H. L. Miller eds., *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental*

Ihde calls “earth-as-planet”³³ breaks through the data points of temperature, ice thicknesses, sea-level, and so on, by disclosing the significance of these changes. This is not reducible to merely information about global climate. Through the disclosure of the global earth’s fragility, we become aware, in Levinas’s sense, of the vulnerability of the biosphere; precisely as a complex existent is the biosphere is able to suffer loss and harm.³⁴ As a system of support for life, earth-as-planet’s perishability can be construed as an ethical meaning-bestowal expressed by this abstract non-human existent, providing an unsettling that opens up the possibility responsibility toward it.³⁵ That is, our ethical relation to ecosystems, bioregions and the earth-as-planet is also based in nature in its return, an absolute difference between our thematization and the *kath auto* of these interrelated non-human existents. In their resistance to our thematizing representations and actions, they express themselves in ways that might undermine our human exploitative proclivities for control and degradation.

My point in all of this has been to argue for, on the basis of two early Levinasian ideas, *il y a* and hypostasis, the possibility of an ethical relation that extends beyond the human, to the non-human realm. However, Diane Perpich is surely right to point out that such a relation is not yet an ethical theory in the more usual sense of answering questions such as “what ought I do?” She remarks that “Levinas is not in the business of constructing normative moral principles” while maintaining that it is equally wrong to “deny that Levinas’s thought has anything to do with normative ethics...,” something she resolves with the idea that his is “normativity without norms.”³⁶ I would agree with her that to conceptualize knowing what to *do*, *i.e.*, developing concrete social norms for environmental action,

Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³³ Don Ihde, *Expanding Hermeneutics: Visualization in Science* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 51.

³⁴ Fikret Berkes, “Understanding Uncertainty and Reducing Vulnerability: Lessons from Resilience Thinking,” *Natural Hazards*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2007), 283–95; Chris J. Cuomo, “Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Responsibility,” *Hypatia*, vol. 26, no. 4 (2011), 690–714; Carl Folke, Å. Jansson, J. Rockström, P. Olsson, S. Carpenter, F. Chapin, A. S. Crépin, G. Daily, K. Danell, J. Ebbesson, T. Ebbesson, V. Galaz, F. Moberg, M. Nilsson, H. Österblom, E. Ostrom, Å. Persson, G. Peterson, S. Polasky, W. Steffen, B. Walker, F. Westley, “Reconnecting to the Biosphere,” *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*, vol. 40, no. 7 (2011), 719–38.

³⁵ Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, (tr.) D. Herr (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

³⁶ Perpich, *The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas*, 3, 9, 124.

would require explicating what Levinas calls politics, something he arrives at via his notion of the third party.³⁷ Although Levinas himself does not often focus on the idea of “the third,” he does remark that “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.”³⁸ In a nutshell, society emerges with the third party and, along with that, the conscious, thoughtful, principled development of social norms that are responses to the normativity of the ethical relation to the non-human Other. Although beyond the scope of this paper, I would agree with Perpich and others³⁹, it is here that we might rightly seek Levinasian answers to the political question of how we might collectively live and act based in an ethical *Sinnggebung* that is respectful of non-human existents.

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³⁷ Robert Bernasconi, “The Third Party: Levinas on the Intersection of the Ethical and the Political,” in *Emmanuel Levinas: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, (ed.) C. E. Katz (London: Routledge, 2004), 45; see also Bettina Bergo, *Levinas Between Ethics and Politics: For the Beauty That Adorns the Earth* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1999), Part Two.

³⁸ Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being: Or Beyond Essence*, (tr.) A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 128.

³⁹ Madeleine Fagan, “The Inseparability of Ethics and Politics: Rethinking the Third in Emmanuel Levinas,” *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2009), 5–22; Howard Caygill, *Levinas and the Political* (London: Routledge, 2002); William Simmons, “The Third: Levinas’ Theoretical Move from An-archival Ethics to the Realm of Justice and Politics,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 25, no. 6 (1999), 83–104.