## Framework

#### Instead of transcending beyond the world to access universal truth, subjects exist in a particular place at a particular time. Because we are limited by our bodily lense through which we interpret reality, being encounters existence at a particular ethical location—This takes out questions of metaethics and transcendental thought since they are irrelevant to our phenomenological experience.

Michael Fagenblat, Senior Lecturer at the Open University of Israel, Il y a du quotidien: Levinas and Heidegger on the self, pub in Philosophy and Social Criticism, 2002, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0191453702028005666> ///AHS PB

Heidegger develops his account of the ground of being, Sein, by an analysis of the constitutive role of ‘beings-ready-to-hand’, Zuhandenheit. 6 He argues that the meaning of being in general is given and circulated first and foremost through a pre-theoretical acquaintance with objects of use. The phenomenology of ‘useful things’ (Zeug) shows that the meaning of a thing ‘in itself’ is derived from our pre-theoretical involvement with things within an interpretative context. This phenomenological hermeneutic shows that meaning is an external relation between things rather than something inhering in an object or a subject, or an isolatable correspondence between them. This description amounts to a non-cognitivist coherence account of meaning (though not of truth) which is based on ways of being – of comporting, speaking, interpreting, signaling, evaluating, and so forth – rather than states of mind. By reducing the origin of meaning to the phenomenological priority of interpretative activity over intention, Heidegger grounds meaning in the coherence of concrete life rather than in the psychological or transcendental subject.7 The interpretative activity that takes place in the everyday world assumes the role that the subject, now externalized as a pragmatic social agent (Dasein), once occupied as ground of meaning. Heidegger’s reliance on Zuhandenheit as a way of disclosing the precognitive understanding of being leads him to the thesis, central to Being and Time, that the world is a place where ‘work emerges’.8 It is this contention that underlies the charge of ‘instrumentalism’ that has been laid against him.9 Levinas was among the first to condemn this ‘world of exploitation’, even as his reading of Heidegger all but introduced fundamental ontology to France.10 Even so, the important philosophical point that Heidegger introduces is not so much his characterization of the world as a workplace but his account of intelligibility as prior to meaning-bestowing intentions, theoretical vantages or supposedly contextless facts.11 This said, it is important to recall that Heidegger never denies the significance of inner life, just as he never denies the validity of objective knowledge – rather, he views both ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ as derivative of the ontology of the world, and thus as finite.12 Analyses of private or individualistic psychological regions, just like the stance of the scientist and the logician, inevitably presuppose an horizontal background of practices, and this background includes social, historical, linguistic and institutional norms and contents.13 In Being and Time Heidegger calls this background ‘whole’ or ‘totality’, ‘the everyday world’. The everyday world is the interpretative ground of meaning that circumscribes the basic horizon of intelligibility to which every local interpretative act ultimately refers.14 In other words, the everyday historical world, or everydayness, is the ultimate condition for the possibility of meaning in general. Elsewhere Heidegger explicitly calls this everyday condition the ‘original transcendental context’, that enables each and every event of meaning.15

#### By existing in this way, the subject defines the world in relation to it. As the world has no independent existence beyond our understanding of it, every phenomon has its independent essence erased to the point that it exists solely as a one-dimensional object that we have mapped meaning upon. For example, a rock on a stick gains meaning as a hammer through our use of it and has no existence outside of our knowledge of it.

#### However, the other interrupts our attempts to impose meaning on the world by being constitutively unknowable. Because they evade any attempt at definition, and instead acts as an infinite force we cannot comprehend, the other is always vulnerable before us and waiting for a response, which an infinite obligation towards them.

Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Dutch Philosopher, To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, 1993, ///AHS PB

Another comes to the fore as other if and only if his or her “appearance” breaks, pierces, destroys the horizon of my egocentric monism, that is, when the other’s invasion of my world destroys the empire in which all phenomena are, from the outset, a priori, condemned to function as moments of my universe. The other’s face (i.e., any other’s facing me) or the other’s speech (i.e., any other’s speaking to me) interrupts and disturbs the order of my, ego’s world; it makes a hole in it by disarraying my arrangements without ever permitting me to restore the previous order. For even if I kill the other or chase the other away in order to be safe from the intrusion, nothing will ever be the same as before. When Levinas meditates on the significance of the face, he does not describe the complex figure that could be portrayed by a picture or painting; rather, he tries to make us “experience” or “realize” what we see, feel, “know” when another, by looking at me, “touches” me: autrui me vise; the other’s visage looks at me, “regards” me. Similarly the word “language,” often used in this context, evokes the speech addressed to me by some living man or woman and not the linguistic structures or anonymous meanings that can be studied objectively or practiced by a style-con- scious author. Autrui me parle” primordially, it is not important what is said; even if the words are nonsensical, there is still their being addressed. Neither is it relevant who speaks to me; any other is the revelation of the Other, and peculiar features deserving special attention would only lead me away from the “absolute otherness” that is at stake. IN order to concentrate on the other’s otherness, Levinas often stresses the nakedness of the other’s face: if I am touched, if I am conscious of being concerned, it is not becau se of the other’s beauty, talents, performances, roles, or functions but only by the other’s (human) otherness. As disrupting the horizon of my egological—and thus, ontological—ways of handling and seeing the world, the others resist a description that would present them as a particular sort of phenomenon among other phenomena within a universal order of beings. Since they “show” and “present” precisely those realities that do not fit into the universal openness of consciousness, they cannot be seized by the usual categories and models of phenomenology. the other transcends the limits of (self-)consciousness and its horizon; the look and the voice that surprise me are “too much” for my capacity of assimilation. In this sense, the other comes toward me as a total stranger and from a dimension that surpasses me. The otherness of the other reveals a dimension of “height” (hauteur): he/she comes “from on high.” Husserl’s theory of intentionality, based on an adequate and symmetric correlation between noésis and noéma, no longer fits. A forgotten element of Descartes’s analysis of consciousness, however, offers a formal structure much closer to the relation meant by Levinas. According to Descartes’ third Metaphysical Meditation, all human consciousness contains not only and not primarily the idea of itself but also and precedingly the irreducible “idea of the infinite,” that is, an immediate and a priori given relation of the conscious subject to a reality that can neither be constituted nor embraced by this subject. This means that the cogito from the outset is structured by a bipolarity other than the bipolarity of the noetico-noematic relation of phenomenology, in which an idea and its ideatum fit one another adequately. Descartes still knew (as all great metaphysicians before him) that consciousness “thinks more than [or beyond] that which it can think.” The infinite is different from any noéma or cogitatum, for it essentially surpasses our capacity for conception and embracing. Although Descartes identifies “the infinite” with “God” (i.e., the God of the traditional, late scholastic philosophy), we can consider the formal structure he discovers to be the structure of my relation to the other in the form of another human being. When I am confronted with another, I experience myself as an instance that tries to appropriate the world by labor, language, and experience, whereas this other instance does not permit me to monopolize the world because the Other’s greatness does not fit into any enclosure—not even that of theoretical comprehension. This resistance to all integration is not founded on the other’s will; before any possibility of choice and before all psychological considerations, the mere fact of another’s existence is a “surplus” that cannot be reduced to becoming a part or moment of the Same. The Other cannot be captured or grasped and is therefore, in the most literal sense of the word, incomprehensible. In all his works, Levinas has endeavored to show that the (human) other radically differs from all other beings in the world. The other’s coming to the fore cannot be seen as a variation of the general way of appearance by which all other beings are phenomenal. This is the reason why Levinas reserves the word “phenomenon” for realities that fit into the totality of beings ruled by egological understanding. Since the other cannot become a moment of such a totality, it is not a phenomenon but rather an “enigma.” However, if an enigma cannot be defined in phenomenological terms, we must ask: can it be defined at all? If “visibility,” in a broad and metaphorical sense, is a feature of every being that can become a phenomenon, one may even call the enigmatic other “invisible.”47 The other imposes its exceptional and enigmatic otherness on me by way of a command and a prohibition: you are not allowed to kill me; you must accord me a place under the sun and everything that is necessary to live a truly human life! Your facing me or your speaking to me—whatever form your addressing me might take—forbids me to suppress, enslave, or damage you; on the contrary, it obligates me to dedicate myself to your well-being. It is not your will or want or wish that makes me yours truly, but your emerging, your being there, as such. Independently of your or my desires, your presence reveals to me that I am “for you,” responsible for your life. We meet here an exceptional, extraordinary, and absolute fact: a fact that is and exists simultaneously and necessarily as a fact and as a command or norm. By seeing another looking at me, or by hearing someone’s voice, I “know” myself to be obliged. The scission between factuality (is) and normativity (ought)—a scission many philosophers since Hume have believed in—has not yet had the time to emerge here. The immediate experience of another’s emergence contains the root of all possible ethics as well as the source from which all insights of theoretical philosophy must start. The other’s existence as such reveals to me the basis and primary sense of my obligations.

#### And when we limit the other to a set of understandable categories the subject relates to them as just another object, denying our infinite obligation towards them. This process of totalization is a prerequisite to action under any other ethical framework, as otherwise we fail to relate to the other as a real part of the world and instead view them as a one dimensional object, which prevents any genuine ethical relationship.

#### Thus the Standard is preventing the totalization of the other. Prefer it:

#### [] We solve solipsism since the other is always already present in our world, and proactively interrupts our ability to conceive of a world without them. Empiricist and Rationalist theories fail to justify how consciousnesses exist since

#### [] My standard is a pre-req - ethics is founded upon a relationship between individuals which totalization denies. Prescribing action presupposes an infinite obligation to the other or else the action would lack moral significance.

Emmanuel Levinas, Lithuanian-French Philosopher, Totality and infinity, 1961 ///AHS PB

This foundation of pluralism does not congeal in isolation the terms that constitute the plurality. While maintaining them against the total ity that would absorb them, it leaves them in commerce or in war. At no moment are they posited as causes of themselves which would be to remove from them all receptivity and all activity, shut them up each in its own interiority, and isolate them like the Epicurean gods living in the interstices of being, or like the gods immobilized in the between-time of art, left for all eternity on the edge of the interval, at the threshold of a future that is never produced, statues looking at one another with empty eyes, idols which, contrary to Gyges, are exposed and do not see. Our analyses of separation have opened another perspective. The primordial form of this multiplicity is not, however, produced as war, nor as commerce. War and commerce presupose the face and the transcendence of the being appearing in the face. War can not be derived from the empirical fact of the multiplicity of beings that limit one another, under the pretext that where the presence of the one inevitably limits the other, violence is identical with this limitation. Limitation is not of itself violence. Limitation is conceivable only within a totality where the parts mutually define one another. Definition, far from doing violence to the identity of the terms united into a totality, ensures this identity. The limit separates and unites in a whole. The reality fragmented into concepts that mutually limit one another forms a totality by virtue of that very fragmentation. As a play of antagonistic forces the world forms a whole, and is deducible or should be deducible, in a completed scientific thought, from one unique formula. What one is tempted to call antagonism of forces or of concepts presupposes a subjective perspective, and a pluralism of wills. The point at which this perspective converges does not form a part of the totality. Violence in nature thus refers to an existence precisely not limited by an other, an existence that maintains itself outside of the totality. But the exclusion of violence by beings susceptible of being integrated into a totality is not equivalent to peace. Totality absorbs the multiplicity of beings, which peace implies. Only beings capable of war can rise to peace. War like peace presupposes beings structured otherwise than as parts of a totality. War therefore is to be distinguished from the logical opposition of the one and the other by which both are defined within a totality open to a panoramic view, to which they would owe their very opposition. In war beings refuse to belong to a totality, refuse community, refuse law; no frontier stops one being by another, nor defines them. They affirm themselves as transcending the totality, each identifying itself not by its place in the whole, but by its self. War presupposes the transcendence of the antagonist; it is waged against man. It is surrounded with honors and pays the last honors; it aims at a presence that comes always from elsewhere, a being that appears in a face. It is neither the hunt nor struggle with an element. The possibility, retained by the adversary, of thwarting the best laid calculations expresses the separation, the breach of totality, across which the adversaries approach one another. The warrier runs a risk; no logistics guarantees victory. The calculations that make possible the determination of the outcome of a play of forces within a totality do not decide war. It lies at the limit of a supreme confidence in oneself and a supreme risk. It is a relation between beings exterior to totality, which hence are not in touch with one another. But would the violence that is impossible among beings ready to constitute a totality that is, to reconstitute it-then be possible among separated beings? How could separated beings maintain any relation, even violence? It is that the refusal of totality in war does not refuse relationship-since in war the adversaries seek out one another. Relationship between separated being would indeed be absurd were the terms posited as substances, each causa sui, since, as pure activities, capable of receiving no action, the terms could undergo no violence. But the relation of violence does not remain at the level of the wholly formal conjuncture of relationship. It implies a specific structure of the terms in relation. Violence bears upon only a being both graspable and escaping every hold. Without this living contradiction in the being that undergoes violence the deployment of violent force would reduce itself to a labor.

#### [] Respect for the other proves that progress on colonization is possible and link turns the critique.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Professor LCS and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University, summarizes Robert Eaglestone, Professor of Contemporary Literature and Thought in the Department of English at Royal Holloway, University of London, Levinas’s Hegemonic Identity Politics, Radical Philosophy, and the Unfinished Project of Decolonization, Levinas Studies, Volume 7, 2012, pp. 63-94 (Article) ///AHS PB

Unlike Perpich, Eaglestone does not gesture toward a critique or dismissal of postcolonial thought, but rather toward showing the ways in which Levinas’s philosophy “aids or radicalizes the under- standing of postcolonial critique.” For this, he focuses on Levinas’s analysis of murder. For Levinas, murder, which is a concrete event or incident (a scandal, in Levinas’s terms) at the ontological level of con- crete existence, illuminates rather than denies, the “ethical plane.” The idea is that “murder presupposes a relationship” between a self and an other.42 That is, murder is murder, vis-à-vis only eliminating or even killing, one could say, because it breaks and violates a fun- damental relation between a self and an other. Levinas characterizes that relation as asymmetrical and ethical, and both the ethics and the asymmetry are always already presupposed in human affairs, which is what makes possible for one to “murder” an other. According to Eaglestone, this kind of “doublethinking” by Levinas helps to “radi- calize” postcolonial critique by showing, first, that colonization entails a recognition of the humanity of the colonized. This occurs when the colonized are made to appear as inferior to the colonizer, or as non- human. In both of these cases, as in murder, there is a presupposition about the colonized as “others to whom we owe (a nonpaternalistic) responsibility.”43 A second way in which Levinas’s work helps to radicalize post- colonial critique “lies in the continuing development of the notion of what ‘postcolonialism’ is.” For, “Levinas’s critique of ontol- ogy is a way of exploring in detail the philosophical discourse that underlies Western thought precisely in terms of its colonial and all- consuming power.”44 This means that Levinas adds a deep philo- sophical layer to discussion about postcolonialism, which tend to be focused on either political economy or culture. For Eaglestone, “Levinas’s work is a way of exposing, from within, the colonial and ‘omnivorous’ powers of Western thought. And by confronting these, those involved in philosophy at least are best able to ‘decolonize the mind’ and begin to establish what Young calls ‘new forms of cultural and political production.’”45 Eaglestone poses that “only the colonial context—metaphorical perhaps for Levinas—reveals” “the urge to possess and annex that underlies Western thought.”46 Interestingly enough, having a similar impact in postcolonial studies has already been attributed to Levinas, and not in a good way. In a critique of the alleged disavowal of the universal in postcolonial studies, Kenan Malik writes: “Since all knowledge and understanding requires the appropriation of the object by the subject, implicit in every act of understanding, says Levinas, is an act of violence. The only solution to this problem for Levinas, and for other theoreticians of difference, such as Robert Young and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, is to abjure entirely knowledge in the conventional sense. Instead of ‘grasping’ the object, says Levinas, we must ‘respect’ it; in the place of assimi- lation there should be ‘infinite separation.’ At this point difference becomes resolved into indifference, an unwillingness to engage with what any one else has to say.”47 Eaglestone’s and Malik’s interepreta- tion of the relation between Levinas and postcolonial studies seem to stand on opposite ends: one pointing to Levinas as a promise for postcolonial studies, and the other as a source of some of its most fundamental problems. The former may not give enough credit to postcolonial studies in the face of Levinas’s potential contributions, and the other seems to give too much credit to Levinas. Eaglestone provides a much more fair reading of Levinas and postcolonial stud- ies than Malik, though, who makes Levinas say quite the opposite of what most scholars would probably agree that he said (e.g., Levinas as a philosopher of indifference).

#### [] Systems of supposedly “ontological” oppression only come to be, when societies totalize the other on the basis of social categories. The only solution to this is reemphasize a radical system of infinite responsibility to those considered subhuman.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Professor LCS and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University, ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING, published 2007, ///AHS PB

What is the meaning of damne´? The damne´ is the subject that emerges in a world marked by the coloniality of Being. The damne´, as Fanon put it, has nonontological resistance in the eyes of the dominant group. The damne´ is either invisible or excessively visible. The damne´ exists in the mode of not-being there, which hints at the nearness of death, at the company of death. The damne´ is a concrete being but it is also a transcendental concept. Emile Benveniste has shown that the term damne´ is etymologically related to the concept of donner, which means, to give. The damne´ is literally the subject who cannot give because what he or she has has been taken from him or her.63 This means that the damne´ is a subject from whom the capacity to have and to give have been taken away from her and him. The coloniality of Being is thus fundamentally an ontological dynamic that aims to obliterate in its literal sense of doing away completely so as to leave no trace gift-giving and generous reception as a fundamental character of being-in-the-world. Emmanuel Le´vinas argues that gift-giving and reception are fundamental traits of the self. Giving is first and foremost for Le´vinas a metaphysical act that makes possible the communication between a self and an Other as transontological as well as the sharing of a common world. Without giving to an Other there would be no self just as without receiving from the Other there would be no reason. In short, without a trans-ontological moment there would be no self, no reason, and no Being. The trans-ontological is the foundation of the ontological. For Le´vinas, the ontological, the realm of being, comes to exist out of the introduction of justice into the trans-ontological relation, which introduces measure and synchronicity in the order of the fundamentally diachronic.64 The ontological comes to be at the expense of the transontological. The ontological thus carries with it the marks of both positive achievement and betrayal of the trans-ontological relation, a relation of radical givenness and reception. According to Le´vinas, ontology is a philosophy of power. It is a discourse that, when taken as foundation or ultimate end, it gives priority to an anonymous Being over and beyond the self-Other relation it gives priority to the ontological rather than to the trans-ontological, and to authenticity rather than to radical responsibility. When ontology is conceived as fundamental, the self-Other relation becomes a secondary dimension of the subject. It is also seen as a source of the potential forgetfulness of Being and thus as a departure from authenticity. Le´vinas argues precisely the contrary: it is the forgetting of the self-Other relation that characterizes the return of ontology as fundamental, which can lead, not to lacking authenticity, but to a renunciation of responsibility and justice. That is so because being is always already a betrayal of sorts of the trans-ontological relation (of gift and reception between self and Other), and it tends to forgetting. That is, being presents itself as the foundation of reality when it is not. This happens because once being is born, it tends to preserve itself and to present itself as autonomous foundation. But, preservation and autonomy can be achieved at the expense of the transontological. Being thus aims to eliminate the traces of the trans-ontological. This is done, both, by philosophical accounts that attempt to reduce the self-Other relation to knowledge or being, and by ways of thinking, concrete policies, and historical projects that reduce the significance of givenness, generosity, hospitality, and justice. Clearly enough, Le´vinas saw Nazism and the Jewish Holocaust as radical betrayals of the trans-ontological dimension of human reality, and thus, of the very meaning of the human as such. Thus, Nazism represented not only a threat to European nations and many minorities within Europe, but also a crucial moment in the history of being. The presence of anti-Semitism, Aryanism, and other forms of racial prejudices in Nazism, make clear that race and racism occupy an special place in that history. Race and caste, along with gender and sexuality, are perhaps the four forms of human differentiation that have served most frequently as means to transgress the primacy of the self-Other relation and to obliterate the traces of the trans-ontological in the concrete world. In modernity, racial differentiation alters the way in which the other forms of human differentiation work in modernity, as the entire globe is divided according to races, which alter the existing caste, gender, and sexual relations. To be sure, race is not totally independent of gender or sexuality, as feminization and eroticism are always part of it. I have argued that the emergence of race and its entanglement with gender and sexuality can be explained in part by their relation to war ethics and their naturalization in the colonial world. Le´vinas did not go into these matters. He focused on the analysis of the trans-ontological dimension of human reality and in the rescue and philosophical reconstruction of the Jewish conceptual and ethical legacy, which for him provided an alternative to the Euro-Greek tendency to privilege knowledge and being. He nonetheless provided important considerations for understanding the meaning and significance of the damne´ and the coloniality of being. The appearance of the damne´ is not only of social significance but of ontological significance as well. It indicates the emergence of a world structured on the basis of the lack of recognition of the greater part of humanity as givers, which legitimizes dynamics of possession, rather than generous exchange. This is in great part achieved through the idea of race, which suggests not only inferiority but also dispensability. From here that not only poverty, but also the nearness of death in misery, lack of recognition, lynching, and imprisonment among so many other ways characterize the situation of the damne´. It is this situation that we refer to here as coloniality. And the ways by virtue of which the world comes to be shaped by the excess of being and its obliteration of the trans-ontological we call the coloniality of being. Coloniality of being refers to a process whereby the forgetfulness of ethics as a transcendental moment that founds subjectivity turns into the production of a world in which exceptions to ethical relationships become the norm. That being has a colonial aspect means that in addition to posit itself as autonomous and be driven by preservation, it tries to obliterate the traces of the trans-ontological by actually giving birth to a world in which lordship and supremacy rather than generous interaction define social dynamics in society. The damne´ is the product of these tendencies. Colonization and racialization are the concrete and conceptual ways by virtue of which the damne´ emerges as an idea and mode of being. Colonization and racialization are expressions of the dark side of being, that is, they represent radical betrayals of the trans-ontological. Colonization and racialization are not only political and social events or structures. They also have metaphysical and ontological significance. War is the opposite of the an-archical relation of absolute responsbility for the Other that gives birth to human subjectivity. The obliteration of the transontological takes the tendency of producing a world in which war becomes the norm, rather than the exception. That is the basic meaning of the coloniality of being: the radical betrayal of the trans-ontological by the formation of a world in which the non-ethics of war become naturalized through the idea of race. The damne´ is the outcome of this process. Her agency needs to be defined by a consistent opposition to the paradigm of war and the promotion of a world oriented by the ideals of human generosity and receptivity. This is the precise meaning of decolonization: restoration of the logic of the gift. Fanon suggests as much in the conclusion of Black Skin, White Masks: Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the You? 65 Fanon’s message is clear: decolonization should aspire at the very minimum to restore or create a reality where racialized subjects could give and receive freely in societies founded on the principle of receptive generosity.66 Receptive generosity involves a break away from racial dynamics as well as from conceptions of gender and sexuality that inhibit generous interaction among subjects. In this sense, a consistent response to coloniality involves both decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’ as projects, both of which are necessary for the YOU to emerge. Only in this way the trans-ontological can shine through the ontological, and love, ethics, and justice can take the role that the non-ethics of war have occupied in modern life. Decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’, different from authenticity, are not based on the anticipation of death, but on the aperture of one’s self to the racialized other to the point of substitution. 67 Substitution occurs when one’s identity is teleologically suspended and when one offers one’s life to the task of achieving decolonial justice: that is, a justice oriented by the trans-ontological dimension of the human. Decolonial justice opposes the preferential option for imperial Man by the preferential option for the damne´ or condemned of the earth. Such justice is inspired by a form of love which is also decolonial. ‘Decolonial love’ a concept coined and developed by the Chicana theorist Chela Sandoval gives priority to the trans-ontological over the claims of ontology.68 Decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’ are the active products of decolonial love and justice. They aim to restore the logics of the gift through a decolonial politics of receptive generosity.69 In order to be consistent, the discourse of decolonization and ‘des-generaccio´n’ would have to be understood according to the very logics that they open. They cannot take the form of a new imperial universal. Decolonization itself, the whole discourse around it, is a gift itself, an invitation to engage in dialogue. For decolonization, concepts need to be conceived as invitations to dialogue and not as impositions. They are expressions of the availability of the subject to engage in dialogue and the desire for exchange. Decolonization in this respect aspires to break with monologic modernity. It aims to foment transmodernity, a concept which also becomes an invitation that has to be understood in relation to the decolonial paradox of giving and receiving.70 Transmodernity is an invitation to think modernity/coloniality critically from different epistemic positions and according to the manifold experiences of subjects who suffer different dimensions of the coloniality of Being. Transmodernity involves radical dialogical ethics to initiate a dialogue between humans and those considered subhumans and the formulation of a decolonial and critical cosmopolitanism.71 Decolonization is an idea that is probably as old as colonization itself. But it only becomes a project in the twentieth century. That is what Du Bois suggested when he stated that the problem of the twentieth-century is the problem of the color-line. The idea was not that the color-line was unique to the twentieth century, but that critical and violent confrontations with it were unavoidable then. With decolonization I do not have in mind simply the end of formal colonial relations, as it happened throughout the Americas in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. I am instead referring to a confrontation with the racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies that were put in place or strengthened by European modernity as it colonized and enslaved populations through the planet. In short, with decolonization I am thinking of oppositions to the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being it may be more consistent to refer to it as ‘decoloniality’, as Chela Sandoval and Catherine Walsh suggest.72 Such opposition existed before the twentieth century, but only reached interconnected global articulations then. If Du Bois announced the project of systematic opposition to the color-line, it was perhaps intellectuals after the Second World War who most consistently expressed the ambitions of decolonization as project. We owe some of the most important early formulations to authors such as Aime´ Ce´saire and Frantz Fanon. They are key thinkers of what could very well be considered a decolonial turn in theory and critique.

#### [] Topic Spec: My framework is key to any kind of education as learning only occurs through the other exposing us to new information outside our subjectivity.

Clarence Joldersma, Resident philosopher and interdisciplinary scholar of the Graduate Studies in Education Program at Calvin College, A Levinasian Ethics for Education's Commonplaces Between Calling and Inspiration, pub 2014 ///AHS PB

This disruption is the felt affect of inspiration. The condition for learning is being inspired. This is openness to the teacher as one who questions, openness to interruptions to the student’s egoism, including self-preservation. The teacher is felt as a foreign disturbance entering into the interiority of the student as a subject, undermining its self-sufficiency and naïve self-satisfaction. Inspiration is felt as the autonomous I of the student becoming answerable to the teacher as other, feeling assigned to respond. The independent I of the student is conditioned by the inspired I. It means feeling disturbed by something that did not originate from within, but came from elsewhere. It means feeling an in-fluence of something that comes from outside of the student’s world—outside of the learner’s conceptualization, grasp, control, expectation, and manipulation. This idea can be stated with the metaphor of a time unforeseen in order to depict the enigmatic character of this condition for learning. Learning from another occurs in situations in which the learner cannot foresee. To be able to foresee means to be able to absorb what is incoming, to assimilate it into the subject’s current conceptual structures and thought patterns, without significant change. It is to be able to expect what is incoming, to anticipate it. But that is precisely the opposite of being disturbed, having one’s autonomy questioned. The ability to absorb without changing is, in fact, to be autonomous, in charge, independent, complacent. Inspiration, by contrast, is experiencing something unforeseen. Learning occurs in response to being disturbed precisely because the interruption cannot be anticipated, because it is unexpected. Learning from another occurs in a space of blindness, beyond vision, that seeps into consciousness as a presence and absence. Learning from another is conditioned not by the joy of independence or the spontaneity of freedom and agency, but instead by inspiration from the other which functions as a disturbance from a time unforeseen that cannot be fully recovered into presence. But there’s more than just being disturbed, put into question, beyond expectation. It is a disturbance with an ethical orientation. If this questioning is coerced, done against one’s wishes, without permission, it might rightly be called violence. Violence threatens, obliterates, destroys. But learning—as learning—builds up, constructs, enhances. So this disturbance, in order to be an opening for learning, is not violent, but something ethical. Learning, although unforeseen, is a disturbance welcomed by the student. The student as learner must welcome the impossible, feel hope in the disturbance. To use the metaphor of dwelling, learning involves an opening of hospitality. To be a learner is to be hospitable, to invite the teacher as other into one’s dwelling, to ask the teacher to make him or herself comfortable, at home. Learning requires being a gracious host, welcoming the incoming disturbance. The door is open—the walls are not battered down from the outside. The teacher, as other, is invited in for learning. It is the welcome that most clearly signals inspiration as an ethical orientation, an infusion of hope, a hope for rejuvenation beyond the disturbance, for something better. This means that having a dwelling is important for learning’s ethical orientation. Without a home, there could be no invitation, no welcoming, no hospitality. That is, without the enjoying and worrying dimensions of the subject, one who has both enjoyment and concern for self in terms of preservation, there could be no welcoming the questioning of that freedom and enjoyment, namely, one’s autonomy. The ethical orientation of learning thus requires the at-home nature of autonomy. Its disturbance via inspiration does not abolish the autonomous subject, but interrupts its complacency and serenity. Although the condition for learning is inspiration, it requires something to be inspired, a subjectivity that dwells in a home. The learning relation I am describing has a distinct asymmetry. The asymmetry shows up in the disturbance, the unexpectedness, and the welcoming. Disturbances are not symmetrical, for they are only such from the perspective of the one disturbed. Similarly, to get something not expected is only such from the recipient’s point of view. And welcoming can only be done by the one whose place it is. The asymmetry that conditions the student’s relation to the teacher is not half a reciprocal relation. The conditions for being a learner are not simultaneously those that condition being a teacher; the teacher, from the student’s perspective, is the one who is welcomed, the one who delivers something unexpected. Only the learner welcomes the one who disturbs, who brings something unexpected. What this highlights is that being a learner involves an asymmetry from a first-person perspective. More strongly, the core of the ethical relation of learning is its asymmetric relationship, one that has no reciprocity as such. The phrase ‘the inspired subject’ is meant to indicate that ethical asymmetry. Of course, any particular flesh-and-blood person may indeed function at times as teacher and at other times as learner. People who are employed as professors can and do learn many things from the school’s tuition payers. Or, high school teachers who are paid to teach can and do, in fact, learn from their teenage students. But in those cases, to the extent professors and high school teachers are learning, at the very moment they function as learners, they are inspired by their students, and thus are conditioned by a relation of asymmetry with the other from whom they are at that moment learning. That is, professional instructors are at that moment inspired subjects, existing in an asymmetric intersubjective relation with their students, who function in that relation as the disturbing, questioning, other.

#### [] Prefer intent based ethics to consequences: 1) If the other is infinite its impossible to reduce them to an aggregately property 2) Consequences can

#### [] We enter life already indebted to the infinity of the other, which prevents any attempt to return to a transcendental past or define the future with history.

**General utility card about time, makes the general claim that how we experience time is contingent on us being here in the world, and that we cant like leave our body behind: this has three impacts:**

1. **Takes out stuff like Kant bc we cant go back in time to find the source of our reason before we interacted with the world or the other**
2. **Means the framework is constituitive and inescapable, since our world was shattered by the other the second that life begun, and we cant go back and find existence without the other**
3. **Takes out afropess: the end of the card says that because A) past instances of time cant effect us and B) our ontological status is always shaped by the other, we cant go back and be like X historical event effects my ontology, since we cant leave our phenomological state.**

Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Dutch Philosopher, To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, 1993, ///AHS PB

When classical ontology uses such terms as “principle,” “origin,” “end,” “a priori,” “precedence,” “before,” “first,” and so on, it mostly understands them in a nontemporal, “logical,” or “ontological” sense. As key concepts in the search for a well-constructed and complete world picture on the basis of a first and last foundation, they enable us to represent the universe as an orderly whole that can be comprehended here and now. Such a representation poses the universe, and the time “in” which it unfolds itself, as a present totality. The past and the future are presented as secondary forms of the present; remembrance and expectation bring them back or reduce them to the presence of a thought that ties all faces of temporality together in a supratemporal, eternal “Now.” This Now, then, is immovable because it transcends all mobility by encompassing it within the limits of an imaginary superpresence. Heidegger has pointed out that the distinction between time and being presupposed in traditional ontology is not at all clear and that we cannot separate the temporal dimension from being by a simple abstraction. Levinas, too, hears in the term quoted above a reference to temporality. Presence and presencing characterize the time of the overall systems proposed in Western philosophy. Levinas’s analyses of the encounter and of ego’s subjectivity as summarized earlier showed, however, that we are not able to reduce the entire universe to one unique absolute origin, arche, or principle. If it is true that I, in relation to the Other, discover myself from the outset as already claimed and made hostage, then it is impossible to conceive of myself as the true beginning of my life and destiny. Before I can make any free choice or accept any obligation, I find myself as already dedicated and delivered over to the Other. To be an ego is to have been performing—well or badly—the service that constitutes me as a subject. The meaning of existence has inscribed itself into my life long before I became aware that there was a question or an obligation. We cannot go back to the time where our subjectivity started to emerge; imagination and thought are not able to reach the beginning of “what it is all about.” The attempt to precede our “having-been-originated-before we-discovered-it” by postulating an ultimate, that is, most primordial and absolutely transcendental Ego, is a consequence of the systematic project. It is refuted by the Other’s transcendence, to which a passivity in me corresponds. Although I neither contracted nor wanted anything—i.e., without my consent— I am obliged to serve the Other. Although I never committed a crime, I am always already in your debt and responsible as well for your as for my own failures and guilt. Not being able to choose my basic responsibilities and obligations—not even by a retrieval in the style of Plato’s remembrance—I am aware that the past from which I stem is more past than any past that can be recalled to memory: an immemorable past. From the perspective of one’s temporality, the dimension of one’s future appears as threatened by death. Death is not—as Heidegger would have it—the ultimate possibility of human existence but rather an alien power that destroys every possibility of wanting or willing anything. Instead of being the “possibility of impossibility”—a form of “I can” that still suggests too much freedom—it is the utter impossibility of all possibilities. This impossibility receives, however, a positive meaning from the Other’s claims which dedicate me to an endless task whose performance costs me my life. The future of a more just world, for which we cannot give up hoping, has also another time structure than that of a teleological projection. History cannot be reduced to a collective maturation and completion of humanity. Time cannot be understood as a continuous extension back and forth from the present because the multiplicity of events that surprise and overwhelm us cannot be assimilated as moments of an intelligible totality. Against a Hegelian or quasi-Hegelian interpretation of history, according to which all people, events, and works receive their meaning from their being necessary moments in the self-unfolding of an anonymous Principle, Levinas defends the humanism of another, invisible history—a history that respects the absoluteness of every singular person in his or her here-and-now. The eschaton of this secret history is the just world of those who feed and clothe their others before they take care of their own possessions.

#### [4] Death is not a biological end that we can infinitely minimize but rather an inevitable reality of life, which does not prevent a relationship with the other but instead gets meaning through it.

A) Util isn’t a lexical pre requisite, insofar as we are always in relation to others, even when we die these relations still eist, since our ability to effect and fufill our obligtaions to the other, is relative to them not our existence.

B) Util isn’t a lexical pre req bc death is inevitable, so insofar as we will always die at some point, we shouldn’t usnderstand moral value as deriving from “Oh I have the ability to help X amount of people, if Im alive” but instead the relations that we do create. This is similar to how if the universe is infinite, pure aggregation doesn’t matter, just the intrinsic quality of the action

C) Levinas Hijacks Util. Suffering and Death Only matter if we havfe a coherent relation to the other, as if we view the world as coming from the isolated subject, it is literally suffering for nobody, since if we die we do not exist and nobody feels that harm, and if we suffer it is contained in our own subjectivity. The argument is like, suffering without relation to the other, is like talking to yourself.

Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Dutch Philosopher, To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, 1993, ///AHS PB

'Having shown that the will, as a free body, is a vulnerable consciousness between the immunity of independent initiative and the weaknesses of its exposition to the forces of nature and seduction, Levinas elaborates in a third subsection, “The Will and Death" (208-13/232-36), on its mortality as a typically human mode of temporality. As a postponement of the last event, the will is met by the inexorability of its disappearance. We are afraid of death because it puts an end to any further delay. The annihilation whereby death threatens a human life cannot be explained in terms of the categorical pair being versus nothingness, as if they formed the ultimate horizon of the world. For death is neither a being nor nothing; rather, we experience its threat as that of a murder coming from some sort of enemy. It comes from a dimension beyond life and world: from the dimension of invisibility and otherness over which we do not have any power. Therefore, death is not our last or ultimate possibility, and we are not able to accept, to anticipate, or to welcome it. Our fear originates in the will as still having (some) time by delaying the ultimate and absolute impossibility ofall possibilities, but the inexorability of death refutes any view on human being according to which it is primarily an “l can," a possibility of possibilities. The invisibility of death does not lie in the nothingness with which it confronts us but in its not permitting us to grasp it, fight with it, and protect ourselves against it. Death always comes too early and as a nonwelcomed murderer. Since we cannot conceive of it as a possibility of our own, we cannot want it. And yet, this enemy can receive a meaning precisely because it is not a moment of the world or any other totality composed ofbeings and their negations. The absolute passivity revealed in our ultimate impossibility belongs to a life that is directed to a meaning beyond its own destruction. This meaning cannot be found in a life “after death" of some immortal soul, since this idea itself sticks to the ultimacy of the categories being and nothingness as constituting world and time. To live for a time beyond one's own life is to live for the other(s), and this is made possible by mortality; the necessity of losing one's life belongs to the structure of being-for-other(s). Thus, the egoism of a fearful life can be converted into the obedience of having time for others; the absolute violence from which nobody can escape can become the source of indestructible goodness. To lose one's life for the other(s) is to be meaningful in living for a time after one's own life. If death-and suffering-were a purely individual event, it would' be meaningless; its having a place within the horizon of the metaphysical (i.e., intersubjective) relation saves it from absurdity. HThe supreme ordeal of freedom" (or cCof the will") His not death, but suffering" (216/239). For whereas death terminates the ambiguity of humanity's finite freedom, suffering is the extreme experience of the discordance discovered in mortality as human temporality. This is shown in subsection 4, cCTime and the Will: Patience" (213-17/236-40). Since time is the ability of free consciousness (or CCthe will") to postpone death, it is also the possibility of keeping a distance from all fixations that would identify the will with a certain instant or present. As long as there is time, nothing is definitive; the will can always take or change its position with regard to what the subject has done, thought, become until now. Ithas a distance toward the presence thanks to the many possibilities for a future that are still open. The future is not a prolongation of the present but rather.the possibility of having a distance from it Suffering reduces this distance and the difference between present and future-as well as between fact and possibility or between fixation andfreedom-to a minimum. In itwe are backed up and glued to what we are, without possibility of fleeing it; a feared future has caught us, annulled our capacity of withdrawal, almosttakenaway our distance, and submitted ourconsciousness to utter passivity, without permitting it to die. A heroic will is a will that Ustands" this uimpossible" situation without giving in. It conquers by patience, i.e., by a disengagement within its forced engagement, thus still saving an ultimate mastery in the midst of almost total passivity. Patience is the experience of the limit of our will. Suffering, much more so than death, reveals the ambivalence of finite freedom and self-consciousness. But suffering, too, receives its meaning from the order ofdiscourse," that is, from its being endured for the Other. Even hate, as expressed, for instance, in torture or persecution, is better than complete isolation because it frees us from the egoistic absurdity of suffering for nobody, and without such a deliverance desire and goodness remain empty words.

#### [5] K Solvency: Only a system orientated around an unconditional obligation can stop the oppression of the other.

Burggraeve, R. Belgian professor of moral theology (1999). Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility. Journal of Social Philosophy, 30(1), 29–45. doi:10.1111/0047-2786.t01-1-00003 ///AHS PB

1. The root cause of all oppression is, denying the other IE what is foreign, in favor of what u know. For example blackness is totalized and whiteness is considered the same
2. Creating an infinite obligation to the other solves for oppression bc we refuse to put these kinds of limits on the others existence
3. Some racism is inevitable, which means only the aff solves bc it views it as an outgrowth of the human condition and the solution an infinite ongoing obligation instead of a final solution.

In a wider sense, one also speaks of racism when one recognizes and relates to others on the basis of their belonging to another culture, language group, or religion. As contemporary examples of this, we can point to the manner in which people today reject immigrants from the Arab world and wish to expel them because of their origin in another religion, specifically Islam and its related traditions. Or think of [is] the long-standing suppression and discrimination against African Americans in the United States, many of whose ancestors were brought over from Africa as slaves. According to Levinas, the core of racism consists not in the denial of, or failure to appreciate, similarities between people, but in the denial of, or better said, failure to appreciate and value, people's differences, or better still, the fundamental and irreducible otherness by which they fall outside of every genre and are thus "unique":" Alterity flows in no sense out of difference, to the contrary difference goes back to alterity" (VA 92). A racist relation wants to recognize and value only the same," or one's "own" (het eigene), and therefore excludes the "foreign." Out of self-defense, we are easily inclined to accept and consider positively only that which agrees with, or is "similar" to, ourselves. One finds the other embarrassing, threatening, and frightening. One therefore [and] tries to expel him from oneself, to place him outside so that he can be considered as the "enemy" from whom one "may" defend oneself, and whom one may even "destroy" as what brings life and well-being under pressure, unless one can reduce him to oneself or make him a part of oneself. One wants to accept "others" (or "strangers," or "foreigners") only to the extent that they belong to one's own "genre" or "kind," which is to say to one's own blood and soil, to the same family, tribe, sex, clan, nation, church, club, or community, do the same work, have the same birthplace and date. One's "own" is praised and even divinized at the price of the "other," which is vilified. The "stranger" becomes the scapegoat on whom we blame all of our problems and worries. One accepts differences only insofar as they are a matter of accidental particularities or specificities within a same genre or basic design, in which individuals differ from one another within a same "sort" only very relatively (for example, character, taste, intellectual level), and in which their deeper affinity is not at all tested (VA 97). Against this background, it is clear that for Levinas anti-Semitism, as a specific and advanced form of racism, takes aim at the Jew as the intolerable other. For anti-Semitic thinking and sentiment, the Jew is simply the enemy, just as for every racism the other is the enemy as such, that is to say not on the basis of personality, one or another character trait, or a specific act considered morally troublesome or objectionable, but due only to his very otherness. In anti-Semitism, the Jew, as "other," is always the guilty one. It is never "oneself," the embodiment of the "same" that not only arranges everything around itself but also profiles itself as principle of meaning and value (CAJ 77-79). From this perspective on racism as rejection of the other, it appears, according to Levinas, that racism is not a rare and improbable phenomenon existing in the heart and thought of only some "perverse" people that has nothing to do with us. Insofar as one is, according to the spontaneous dynamic of existing, or conatus essendi, directed toward the "same," toward maintaining and fortifying one's "own"-all such as I have just sketched it one must be considered "by nature" potentially racist, though of course without being "predestined" for it. In itself, this admits no question of psychological or pathological deviation. According to Levinas, this implies that one cannot simply dispense with the racism of Hitler and the Nazis, in contrast to something instead occurring only once, as a wholly distinct and incomparable phenomenon, at least if one views it not quantitatively but qualitatively, which is to say in terms of its roots and basic inspiration. In an attempt to hold open a pure-in fact, Manichean distinction between "good" (us) and "bad" (the "others"), thus keeping oneself out of range of the difficulties in question, it happens all too often that Hitlerism is described as something completely unique that has nothing in common with the aims and affairs of the common mortal. The perspective of Levinas shows that Hitlerism, with its genocide and other programs of eradication, is [are] only a quantitative extension, that is to say a consistent, qualitative extension, that is to say a consistent, systematic, and inexorably refined outgrowth of racism in its pure form, one that, in its turn, represents a concretization of the effort of existing, which, as the reduction of the other to the same, is the nature of our existence (without, on the other hand, our being abandoned to this nature as a fatality, since as ethical beings we can overcome it). No one is invulnerable; any of us is a potential racist, and at least sometimes a real racist. Racism, like Hitlerism, does not occur by chance, or by an accidental turn. Nor is it an exceptional perversion occurring in a group of psychologically disturbed people. It is a permanent possibility woven into the dynamic of our very being, so that whoever accedes to and lives out the dynamic of his own being inevitably extends racism in one or another form (AS 60-61). We can no longer blame racism and anti-Semitism on "others," for both their possibility and the temptation to them are borne in the dynamic of our own being, as "nonreciprocal determination of the other" (TI 99), which is precisely the kernel of our freedom (TI 97). It is specifically to unmask this racist violence, and all forms of violence as modalities of denial of the other as other, that Levinas discerns the basic ethical norm in the commandment mentioned and explicated above, "Thou shall not kill," which is to say in the commandment to respect the otherness of the other. In committing to the possible overcoming of evil, and of racism in particular, through the ethical choice for the good, Levinas certainly realizes how vulnerable this "overcoming" of evil is. By rejecting the idea that every objective system, through its ironclad, mechanistic laws and coerciveness, might be able to render evil impossible forever, and instead basing everything on the ethical call to the good, he makes clear that abuse, violence, and the racist exclusion and elimination of the other are con stantly possible and can never be definitively overcome. In ethics, there is no eschatology, in the sense of a guaranteed "better world" or "world without evil." There is only the "good will" that must always prove itself in a choice against evil that is neither evident nor easy. Only in this way can there be a good future and justice for the other: only through ethical vigilance with respect to all forms of violence, tyranny, hate, and racism, and a society that nurtures in both our upbringing and education a "sensibility" for the other as "stranger." Such a sensitivity takes in full seriousness the ethical essence of the human person, and serves always to put us back on the path to a culture "where the other counts more than I do," and where the most foreign enjoys our complete hospitality.

## Offense

#### I affirm that In the United States, colleges and universities ought not consider standardized tests in undergraduate admissions decisions.

#### Communication can only occur between multiple agents, which demands a coherent relationship with the other.

Emmanuel Levinas, Lithuanian-French Philosopher, Totality and infinity, 1961 ///AHS PB

Can objectivity and the universality of thought be founded on discourse? Is not universal thought of itself prior to discourse? Does not a mind in speaking evoke what the other mind already thinks, both of them participating in common ideas? But the community of thought ought to have made language as a relation between beings impossible. Coherent discourse is one. A universal thought dispenses with communication. A reason cannot be other for a reason. How can a reason be an I or an other, since its very being consists in renouncing singularity? European thought has always combated, as skeptical, the idea of man as measure of all things, although this idea contributes the idea of atheist separation and one of the foundations of discourse. For it the sentient I could not found Reason; the I was defined by reason. Reason speaking in the first person is not addressed to the other, conducts a monologue. And, conversely, it would attain to veritable personality, would recover the sovereignty characteristic of the autonomous person, only by becoming universal. Separated thinkers become rational only in the measure that their personal and particular acts of thinking figure as moments of this unique and universal discourse. There would be reason in the thinking individual only in the measure that he would himself enter into his own discourse, that thought would, in the etymological sense of the term, comprehend the thinker-that it would include him. But to make of the thinker a moment of thought is to limit the revealing function of language to its coherence, conveying the coherence of concepts. In this coherence the unique I of the thinker volatilizes. The function of language would amount to suppressing "the other," who breaks this coherence and is hence essentially irrational. A curious result: language would consist in suppressing the other, in making the other agree with the same! But in its expressive function language precisely maintains the other-to whom it is addl"ess~d, ~horn it calls upon or invokes. To be sure, language does not consist in invoking him as a being represented and thought. But this is why language institutes a relation irreducible to the subject-object relation: the revelation of the other. In this revelation only can language as a system of signs be constituted. The other called upon is not something represented, is not a given, is not a particular, through one side already open to generalization. Language, far from presupposing universality and generality, first makes them possible. Language presupposes interlocutors, a plurality. Their commerce is not a representation of the one by the other, nor a participation in universality, on the common plane of language. Their commerce, as we shall show shortly, is ethical.

#### That affirms: because any communication requires the other, all language reflects the other’s infinity and therefore can never be fully comprehended as long as meaning remains social. This entails that the content taught through linguistic practices like education can never be entirely understood as learning is an infinite practice. Standardized tests give education an defined endpoint and structure, which totalizes the knowledge we get through the other.

Paul Standish, Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, Levinas and the Language of the Curriculum, pub in Levinas and Education At the Intersection of Faith and Reason Edited By Denise Egea-Kuehne, 2008, ///AHS PB

There are numerous objections to those various claims, and these scarcely need spelling out in the present context. What the examples do is remind us of the way any kind of study takes place through—at the very least against the background of—language. Subjects are language to the extent that they are ways of thinking and reasoning about the world that have been passed down through the generations, where this thinking and reasoning essentially is language. They are, as Michael Oakeshott says, the “conversation of mankind” (1962). Of course, educators are quick to assert the salience of language in various aspects of the curriculum. The progressive educator arguing for the value of direct experience may also emphasize the importance of the arts in the development of imagination and creativity, and it may be that literature and creative writing are valued highly in this. But here the danger is that language is rarefied: it is, when it is cherished in this way, the province of the literary, while the ordinary language that serves its purpose in other aspects of learning is construed as dully instrumental and unproblematic— in other words, as incidental to the study. This is to misconstrue language on both fronts and disastrously to underestimate its centrality in our lives. It is also, as we shall come to see, to open the door to misunderstandings of teaching and learning. If it is the case, then, that the curriculum itself is essentially a matter of language, and if, as was shown previously, the relation to the Other is effected in language itself, it seems to follow that the curriculum is one way in which the relation to the Other can be realized—and, by the same token, one way in which our failures in this obligation can be continually degenerative. Levinas sometimes says that the realization of the relation to the Other is very rare; but it is pervasive as an obligation. It is time to recall why this matters and then to explore some possible implications for educational practice in more specific terms. The Relation to the Other in Teaching and Learning The reason why this matters can be seen if we recall the consequences of closing our lives and thoughts to the dimension of infinity. The examples of the grotesques—the citizen, the teacher, the parent, the learner—need to be seen as subjects trapped within totalized conceptions of their relationships with others. While outlooks such as theirs might retain a place for ideals of autonomy, mastery, freedom itself, these values would, if Levinas is right, be fatally compromised by their assumption of independence. They would be like Cartesian rationalism without the relation to divine veracity (or to the infinite), the relation that Descartes recognized as vital to its very sustenance. The dominance of totalized ways of thinking in education can readily be demonstrated in the economy of quality control and performativity that prevails in so much policy and practice today. If, in contrast to these totalizing practices, the thinking that is needed is characterized by a movement that must lead us beyond the nature that surrounds us, goes towards the stranger, and extends into a kind of perfectionism, there are implications for what is taught within a subject and for how it is assessed. In contrast to teaching to the test, or to the assumption that there must be a tidy matching of learning outcomes and learning activities, or to the exhaustive specification of criteria, it follows that teaching and learning should open ways beyond what is directly planned. This would imply the selection of subject matter that is intrinsically rich—that is to say, content that defi es easy assimilation and mastery but always invites further thought. It would also suggest the need for methods of assessment that retain an openness until the end of the course, as opposed to providing means for students to pick off the items required and ignore the rest. It would imply also methods of examining that are not exhaustive but leave open the possibility that other things will be learned on the course. And implicit in each of these measures, part of the lesson learned is an understanding of the subject in question as itself limitless (as opposed, say, to a thing of which anyone could know all).

#### Standardized tests totalize the other by erasing the educational systems infinite obligation to the other, and reducing students academic success to a universal number that eradicates the individual face.

Clarence Joldersma, Resident philosopher and interdisciplinary scholar of the Graduate Studies in Education Program at Calvin College, A Levinasian Ethics for Education's Commonplaces Between Calling and Inspiration, pub 2014 ///AHS PB

Yet there is a felt tension in grading. Institutionally, grading limits the ethical responsibility of the teacher to the student. This shows itself in several ways. First, grading can be seen as a way of bringing to a close the otherwise unending responsibility of a teacher to a student. Final grades, most clearly, do not constitute formative pedagogical feedback, from which a student is meant to learn. Conversely, if formal assessments were meant primarily as pedagogical feedback, they would not need standardized gradations; effective feedback is more nuanced and individualized than letters or numbers can indicate. Instead, grades are final judgments, namely, ones that put closure to the learning process. To assign a grade is to say, in effect, the course is done, the unit is over, here’s the relative level of achievement. Or, to say the same thing: here’s the judgment, my pedagogical responsibility is discharged. In other words, grades are institutionalized structures designed to bring closure to an otherwise indefinite obligation to the student. This is in tension with the felt pedagogical responsibility to do the student good as a learner. Second, institutional limitation shows up in the process of grading itself. Central to grading is a judgment of each paper or exam. These are decisions about whether or not that particular student has learned this material in a satisfactory manner. While grading the teacher meets face-to-face each student, individually and inescapably. But in this act, the teacher meets the student in two ways, one as an institutionalized rationally interchangeable identity, and the other as someone interrupting that institutionalized context, namely, the student as other. The teacher meets the student institutionally as a cognitive knower, a rational subject who has learned the material as presented in the course. In this sense, each student is construed as a cognitive alter ego, the same as all the others in the class. They are all comparable. From an institutional perspective students are commensurable, rational knowers who have equal opportunity and skills to learn a body of knowledge. In terms of their institutional identity, students are replaceable, cognitive, rational subjects. Despite idiosyncratic or biographical differences, as institutional students are completely comparable. It is to the students as interchangeable cognizers that a teacher feels justified assigning grades based on their work.