

University of Denver

Digital Commons @ DU

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

6-15-2024

Radical Hospitality: Height and Excess of the Other and the New Host Self

Diako Alikhani
University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Islamic Studies Commons](#), [Jewish Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Alikhani, Diako, "Radical Hospitality: Height and Excess of the Other and the New Host Self" (2024).
Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 2387.
<https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/2387>



All Rights Reserved.

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, dig-commons@du.edu.

Radical Hospitality: Height and Excess of the Other and the New Host Self

Abstract

Drawing on Emmanuel Levinas' ethical framework and its emphasis on the "height and excess" of "the Other," this thesis explores and develops a sense of "radical hospitality" in Levinas and across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In particular, the thesis explores how encounter with the Other is not only marked by an overwhelming excess, but one which transforms the subject into what I call a "New Host Self:" Where the self is the host who greets the stranger with hospitality, it is ultimately the stranger—the refugee, the migrant—who transforms the host into someone new. Here, the host ultimately receives a gift from the guest—and we can in this regard speak of a paradox in which the host/giver ultimately becomes a receiver/guest. After exploring radical hospitality in a range of philosophical and religious text traditions, I go on to share a personal narrative of my own experiences both as a migrant and serving refugees, considering in particular how radical hospitality can—in its capacity to precipitate a new sense of self as host—reorient our political selves towards better serving neighbors in need.

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Ph.D.

First Advisor

Sarah Pessin

Second Advisor

Andrea Stanton

Third Advisor

Ted Vial

Keywords

Philosophy, Radical hospitality, Emmanuel Levinas, Judaism, Christianity, Islam

Subject Categories

Arts and Humanities | Christianity | Islamic Studies | Jewish Studies | Religion | Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion

Publication Statement

Copyright is held by the author. User is responsible for all copyright compliance.

Radical Hospitality: Height and Excess of the Other and the New Host Self

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the University of Denver and
the Iliff School of Theology Joint PhD Program

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Diako Alikhani

June 2024

Advisor: Dr. Sarah Pessin

©Copyright by Diako Alikhani 2024

All Rights Reserved

Author: Diako Alikhani

Title: Radical Hospitality: Height and Excess of the Other and the New Host Self

Advisor: Dr. Sarah Pessin

Degree Date: June 2024

Abstract

Drawing on Emmanuel Levinas' ethical framework and its emphasis on the "height and excess" of "the Other," this thesis explores and develops a sense of "radical hospitality" in Levinas and across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In particular, the thesis explores how encounter with the Other is not only marked by an overwhelming excess, but one which transforms the subject into what I call a "New Host Self." Where the self is the host who greets the stranger with hospitality, it is ultimately the stranger—the refugee, the migrant—who transforms the host into someone new. Here, the host ultimately receives a gift from the guest—and we can in this regard speak of a paradox in which the host/giver ultimately becomes a receiver/guest. After exploring radical hospitality in a range of philosophical and religious text traditions, I go on to share a personal narrative of my own experiences both as a migrant and serving refugees, considering in particular how radical hospitality can—in its capacity to precipitate a new sense of self as host—reorient our political selves towards better serving neighbors in need.

Acknowledgements

I would love to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Sarah Pessin for her individual guidance, unwavering support, and tireless dedication as my advisor throughout the process of finishing all my course requirements and writing the dissertation. Her insightful feedback, expertise, and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this work. I am also indebted to my committee members, Dr. Andrea Stanton, and Dr. Ted Vial, for their invaluable insights, constructive criticism, and scholarly guidance. Furthermore, I extend heartfelt thanks to my Father-in-Love, who has truly become my father, Dr. Paul Schmidgall, whose unwavering support and guidance have been a source of strength and inspiration from the inception of my undergraduate studies to the completion of my doctoral journey. Also, I am deeply grateful to the love of my life, Jasmin, for her unwavering love, support, and sacrifices through this academic journey. Her dedication to our family and her tireless efforts in caring for our children while I was writing this dissertation have been immeasurable. Above all, I thank God for His goodness, grace, and transformative power in my life. Without His guidance, this journey would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Thesis and Scope of the Project	1
Methodology	14
Chapter Content	15
Chapter Two: Levinasian Perspectives on Hospitality - Height and Excess	18
Levinas - <i>Curriculum Vitae</i> & Methodology	18
Levinasian Height and the Excess of the Other	29
Chapter Three: Political Hospitality	76
Hospitality in Levinas: Excess and Asymmetry	77
Hospitality in Kant: Sovereignty and Symmetry	95
Ethics & Politics: From the Face to Justice	112
Ethics as an Optics: Neighbor, Plumblines and Bonomyth	125
On the “Feel” of Facing the Neighbor: Connolly and Pessin on Two Varieties of Agonism.....	134
Chapter Four: Abrahamic Perspectives on Hospitality - Height and Excess.....	149
Hospitality and Jewish Tradition	150
Hospitality in the Islamic Tradition	167
Hospitality in the Christian Tradition	185
Levinas and Radical Hospitality Revisited: Excess, Strangers, and Hagar	201
Chapter Five: Welcoming the Migrant: Autobiographical Reflections	214
The Flight of Hagar.....	214
Better Policy: Cultivating More New Host Selves	220
<i>Hineni!</i>	228
Bibliography	231

Chapter One: Introduction

Thesis and Scope of the Project

For Levinas, the Other is not just another that is other from me, another person or another being among all other beings; the Other is so important that it even makes up a part of the structure of the self, meaning that there is no self, no individual subject with her uniqueness and separateness, different from everything else, without the alterity (presence) of the Other who interrupts her. At first sight, this interruption might seem disturbing and destabilizing, but eventually it actually turns out to be an asset because it is precisely by the advent of the Other that the self as a distinct individual is constituted. It is the Other who separates me out of the world of anonymous, brute, and even brutal being, where I previously was just part of a faceless field of being and transforms me into a unique subject. Therefore, for Levinas, there is no self without the Other; the Other who constitutes me, enriches me, makes me who I am. It is in this regard that we may speak of Levinasian ethics as a juxtaposition of two antonymic *dramatis personae*: On the one hand, the self, the “I”, the host, or the citizen, and on the other hand, the Other, the guest, the stranger, the refugee, or the migrant who interrupts but in that very sense also constitutes that self. And it is in this sense that we might speak of a “New Host Self”

being constituted in encounter with the Other—and in particular, in encounter with the Other-as-stranger/refugee/migrant.

On the one hand, in his emphasis on the stranger interrupting-but-constituting me, Levinas is making a phenomenological claim about the very structure of human subjectivity. But on the other hand, we may consider this insight at the political level as well in which the literal refugee or migrant invites us into new ways of being by precisely interrupting our daily routines of life. In all of her absolute otherness—including national, cultural, ethnic, and religious. The stranger in this way interrupts our daily lives, up to and including the structures of our cities. Nevertheless, the wholly other otherness of the stranger, paradoxically, also becomes the source of an endowment for the self because she breaks the flow of the most totalizing, self-assured, self-contained, and even at times self-congratulatory ways we can tend to live our lives. Just as phenomenologically, the otherness of the Other disrupts the self's assimilation to the realm of Being so too at the political level, the migrant and refugee separate us from the anonymous flow of citizenship, inviting us to take up new forms of life. It is in this sense that the demands of the stranger serve as a kind of welcome, transforming our previously self-directed egos into a New Host Self.

Even in her need for our attention, the stranger can in this sense be said to be giving us a gift, a point we can further explore *via* Kearney's concept of hospitality and "anatheism." "Anatheism" is comprised of two parts, *ana* and *theos*, indicating a "return

of God after God” or a return to God after God’s disappearance.¹ Hospitality, in Kearney’s atheological theological understanding, entails such a moment of anatheism, a moment of not knowing in an epistemological way, but rather a moment that becomes available to anyone who experiences “deep disorientation, doubt, or dread,” when one is not sure about her situation or direction. Such a moment can be experienced when one meets a stranger with radical openness. Taking it a step further, anatheism is also characterized by the experience of the self in giving, transforming it into a sacred moment and receiving back another gift. Like Abraham’s giving up of Isaac as a gift, but then in return receiving him back in what Kearney describes as a “patriarchal project,” or Jesus, in his words before the crucifixion “Why have you forsaken me?” before his return to a renewed belief in life, stating “Into thy hands I command my spirit.”² Likewise, in the encounter with the stranger, in a moment of unknowing or disorientation in the face of an absolute Other, in the moment of a welcome, one creates the potential situation to retrieve oneself, or one’s belief, in a new way. Here Kearney draws on the Christian notion of *kairos* –an opportune or decisive moment—for self-transformation related to what we may call the creation of a New Host Self.

The welcome of the Other entails a paradoxical structure: in being a host (giver), the self becomes a guest (receiver – i.e. receives something of deep value in the act of

¹ Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God After God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 3-5.

² Kearney, *Anatheism*, 3-6.

hospitality). In being welcomed into the household, strangers in this serve as both guests and hosts, as both recipients and gifting agents. The generosity of radical hospitality now leaves the host vulnerable and dependent as well. It's a paradoxical structure, where the relationship between the host and a guest is transformed into a new reality in a way in which the host becomes a guest while still being a host and the guest becomes a host while still being a guest. According to Reynolds, as the host shares her home with the guest, "the host paradoxically (even) gains a gift, unexpectedly becoming more than he or she was before; the host becomes honored and enhanced."³ While the guest receives thus the gift of hospitality, the host, at the same time is endowed with an unexpected gift (*donum superadditum*). Consequently, both migrant and citizen, host and guest, citizen and the stranger, come forth with an enrichment from the experience of sharing home and hospitality. We see this in Genesis 18, when Abraham and Sarah welcome three mysterious guests. In the narrative, the guest receives honor, but ironically turns out to be a divine visitor who bestows honor and an unexpected gift upon the hosts: God blessed Abraham and Sarah by granting them a son. Hospitality becomes thus a portal of blessing where one is welcomed into the presence of God.

Abraham in this way is a marker of the transformative power of serving the stranger. And he is also a marker of the stranger. Commenting on the a Biblical narrative in Genesis, Levinas contrasts the "*lech lecha*"—Abraham's own call to leave his home

³ Thomas E. Reynolds, "Toward a Wider Hospitality: Rethinking Love of Neighbor in Religions of the Book," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2010): 182.

behind as a migrant—with the very different Greek emphasis on unity and the return of the self to oneself in the story of Ulysses.⁴ *Lech lecha* was the Hebrew command of God for Abraham when leaving his homeland, which eventually turned out to be a journey without a return. And we may here speak of a new political self on the model of Abraham in which one is elevated in going out of one's own self and shedding one's own sovereignty, just as one is likewise elevated in welcoming the stranger and the migrant. There is a going out of the self (*lech lecha, tsim-tsum, kenosis*), so that the Other can be welcomed.⁵ Abraham moved from his homeland to welcome, as a stranger, those who were strangers. In the story with the three visitors, he did not just open up his tent, rather he ran toward them - to bring them in (*hachnasat orchim*). *Hachnasat Orchim*, in the Hebrew, is employed for the concept of hospitality which indicates not only to an opening of one's home but even bringing in strangers into one's own home, similar to Abraham's inviting the strangers into his tent and sharing his possessions. There is excess in sharing one's possessions with the Other. Economically, this is a paradox, but for Abraham it meant losing some so that he might gain everything, both a New Host Self and the birth of a son.

⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, "The Trace of the Other," in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 348.

⁵ *Tsim-tsum* is the kabbalistic idea about God contracting Himself in order to make room for creation to come into existence. *Kenosis*, in some similar manner, is the Christian idea of Christ emptying himself of His divine nature in incarnation in order for creation to be redeemed. God in *tsim-tsum* and Christ in *kenosis* became New Host Self(s).

On the backdrop of these initial considerations, I want to explore radical hospitality in the writings of Levinas and across the Abrahamic traditions, marked by an overwhelming excess transforming the self into a New Host Self. After exploring comprehensively radical hospitality in both Levinasian ethical and political texts - as well as interacting with Levinasian commentators - and Jewish, Christian, and Islamic text traditions, I will pair these insights with the personal narrative of my own experiences both as a migrant and serving refugees, considering in particular how a radical and excessive hospitality can precipitate a new sense of self as host, and can in this way reorient our political selves towards better serving neighbors in need.

In exploring radical hospitality, I will thus first turn to Levinas' own philosophy of the Other studying his deliberations on excess and height calling us to responsibility and transforming the self into a Self-for-the-Other—a notion I connect to my own sense of the New Host Self. For Levinas, the excessiveness of the height of the Other cannot be reduced to something to be absorbed by the subject who faces her - but rather grounds the subject and obligates it with an infinite responsibility for her. Such a perspective of alterity explains why Levinas is known as a philosopher of the Other. Nevertheless, this very same dynamic also entails that Levinas is actually also a philosopher of the Self: For Levinas, “ethics” is not just about how to live (an answer to the question “What should I do?”), but about the very structure of human subjectivity (an answer to the question “What am I?”). For Levinas, the ethical encounter thus also constitutes the self and gives rise to a self that is elevated by the presence of the Other. Consequently, in the encounter

with the Other, the self is (1) interrupted by the face of the Other - a process in which the self's freedom and reality is called into question - but paradoxically, the self is also (2) established and (3) elevated in this same process - a process in which the self is invested with freedom and reality.

The self is thus simultaneously interrupted, established, elevated, commanded, questioned, and called into responsibility by the encounter with the Other. Paradoxically, it is thus precisely in responding to the call of the Other that the self is also able to fully separate itself from the totality of being - which is to say, the self becomes a self in being called into service to the Other. Levinas calls this new self a Self-for-the-Other. In the context of hospitality, such a new self welcomes the Other like a host welcomes a guest. Levinas' Self-for-the-Other in this way serves as an invitation to a Radical Hospitality that grounds my broader study of a New Host Self.

As part of his Radical Hospitality, Levinas also invites us to go above and beyond mere rights and laws. His ethical perspective is not simply about honoring people's rights but is a matter of freeing the self from sovereignty by centering a heteronomy that elevates the Other. The height and excess of the Other in this way prevent any reduction of the Other to something that I can possess and grasp. In the encounter with the Other, thus, whatever I possess, my sovereignty or any objects are called into question. The priority of oversight over myself is now grounded in a responsibility for the Other, and the self is no longer a self-for-itself, but a Self-for-the-Other. Not only can I not possess the Other, but also have to share my possessions, my world, with the Other. The Other

grounds the structure of the subject and radical hospitality emerges as one of the ways I relate to that Other. With Levinas, hospitality is no longer just a right for a guest to visit, but an invitation to approach a visitor as a host. We are invited to a structure of a self that is likened to a host who is welcomed into her own home by the guest.

To further clarify this Levinasian insight, I will contrast it with Kant's own politics of hospitality. Whereas Levinasian ethics is rooted in a sense of the heteronomy, excess, and asymmetry in the face of the Other, Kant propagates a political theory that emphasizes sovereignty and symmetry with no room for excess. In particular, he is concerned with the peace among the newly formed nation-states resulting from the increasing movement of people among different nations. Kant in this spirit presents hospitality as a duty for citizens to protect foreigners. The end goal of his concept of hospitality is to maintain peace among the nations, propagating a symmetrical approach of hospitality and placing obligations on both partners, guests and hosts. Hospitality is conditional, premised on legality in general and national laws in particular. This conditional hospitality is concerned with the sovereignty of the host, the nation-state, indicating that the subjectivity of the host must remain intact and must not be interrupted by the Other, while at the same time encouraging welcoming the guest/stranger. Consequently, and because of the absence of the elevation of the Other, there is with Kant no excess that transforms the self. Instead, he emphasizes a symmetrical process, where the sovereign self rules herself, which is much different from the radical hospitality we find in the Levinasian New Host Self.

Following the comparison with Kant, I will explore how ethics and this new sense of radical hospitality inflects politics, or in Levinasian language: What is the move from the ethics of the face to a politics of justice? I will first explore how according to Levinas, the ethical relationship with the Other already implies a relationship with all others, the rest of humanity. My relationship with the Other (2nd person), always already implies the presence of all other people (3rd person), entering into society beyond the closed circle of two. This is the realm where justice (politics), and thereby calculation or compromise emerges. One must thus deliberate between demands from all other people who need my help as much as the Other who stands in front of me. Secondly, I will consider how Levinas sees in his phenomenological ethics a political call to become the kind of people who respond to the “widow, the orphan, and the stranger,” as he frequently delineates in Biblical terms. We may speak in this regard of Levinas’s hospitable sense of politics.

In exploring further the interplay between ethics and politics, I will then consider Simon Critchley’s concept of a “plumbline” and Sarah Pessin’s idea of *bonomythy*. Critchley points to the “other’s decision in me” indicating to my infinite responsibility for the Other pointing to the task of the continuous invention of new decisions, with each decision being necessarily different. He describes this “other’s decision in me” as a guideline for action, or a “plumbline,” as opposed to a categorical imperative or any other rule for action.

Reiterating further that Levinas’s approach to politics is not about rules, Pessin reflects on both Critchley’s “plumbline” and the “Good” in Plotinus and proposes a

philosophy of *bonomythy* as an additional guideline orienting us towards the neighbor in need. In the spirit of Critchley's plumbline and inspired by Levinas's notion of the trace of the Other and the alterity that cannot be traced, Pessin's *bonomythy* represents a philosophy that invites us to live and act upon that trace of goodness which could never be found.

Concluding the discussion of political hospitality, I will then consider what it *feels* like to be a Levinasian New Host Self oriented towards the Other: Does hospitality feel warm and friendly, or can it feel at times also less pleasant? While many read Levinas as implying a rather warm and friendly approach to the neighbor, Pessin emphasizes, that this need not be the case when it comes to serious disagreements between opponents. Consequently, she suggests that the Levinasian mode of responsibility in politics will often feel more like "trembling." Here she draws on political scientist William Connolly's notion of "respectful agonism" propagating a deep appreciation for the irreducibility of opposing views combined with a generous comportment even though my own identity and views are contestable.

Complementing the philosophical, ethical, and political discussions on hospitality, I will then turn to explore the excessive sense of hospitality and the concept of a New Host Self in the texts and traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. I will be interacting with Judaism, since Levinas explicitly uses Biblical concepts (Hebrew Bible) and the Jewish traditions in both his philosophical and also religious writings. The choice to work with the Christian tradition is threefold: first, it is linked to Judaism and the

Biblical text (Hebrew Bible); second, it is helpful to consider the relationship between Levinasian insights and Christian texts and concepts;⁶ and third, my affinity with Christianity serves as a further invitation into this frame. I will also study radical hospitality in the Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim as delineated in the Quran as well as other Islamic sources.⁷ The reasons for this are also threefold: First, this mirrors the emergence of Abraham as a key figure in Levinas' own hospitality account; second, and relatedly, it follows Richard Kearney's consideration of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in his own account of hospitality; and lastly, inasmuch as my project is driven by contemporary concerns, it helps connect my project to the Muslim immigrants as part of my broader concern for how we treat strangers, refugees, and migrants.

In the Abrahamic traditions God is seen as the primary and vertical excess who transforms the self, orienting her to see the neighbor as a secondary and horizontal excess towards which we must respond with hospitality. Like with Levinas, we can detect in these traditions not only excess, but a paradox in which the host/giver ultimately becomes a receiver/guest. Abraham's encounter with the three strangers depicts the excess that manifests itself in the height of the Other as Abraham runs towards the strangers to welcome them into his tent. Abraham is depicted as host but at the same time also as guest who receives from the strangers the gift of fatherhood in the subsequent birth of

⁶ Samuel Moyn, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics* (London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁷ Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God After God* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

Isaac. Also, at the time of this event, Abraham was not yet rooted in the land but was only a sojourner in the land of promise, being called upon to learn how to meet the needs of the Other. Abraham in this way serves as a marker how the self, in engaging with the Other in hospitality, is both at home and in exile. Here, I will also consider Hagar's experience of abandonment in the desert with her son as a paradigm for hospitality, including in response to current-day migration. Her experience highlights, similar to Abraham's, that being a sojourner and a migrant is essential to a life of an individual and fosters the cultivation of a hospitable view towards others, for she herself experienced the life of a stranger and migrant. Etymologically, it is interesting to note that *hajar* (Arabic for Hagar) and *hijra* (migration) are from the same root. But also in the Hebrew tradition, Hagar is considered as the mother of all strangers, as her name simply means, "the stranger" (*HaGer*).

I also go on to explore the welcome of the stranger into one's home and life as a form of true worship within the Christian tradition. In Matthew 25, our relationship to God is likened to our relationship to another person, the stranger, the alien, the poor, the guest. In that context, the height of the Other is so important that giving food or water to the needy can lead one to an encounter with the divine. In extending God's welcome as a host one potentially becomes the guest, both because our guest becomes our host, or because, more profoundly so, the Jesus they serve by ministering to the poor and the hungry becomes their host. Hospitality and the height of the Other potentially becomes a divine moment and an occasion where the self is transformed into a New Host Self.

By way of conclusion, I will then run the litmus test, examining how this new concept of hospitality might fare in the context of the perhaps most paramount societal challenge of our time: migration and the plight of the refugee. I will share my personal experiences and offer some closing reflections and applications of radical hospitality. By way of autobiographical vignettes, exploring some of my own experiences as a migrant and my work with refugees, I aim to delineate in particular how this radical and excessive new sense of hospitality can reorient our political selves and provide an improved approach to the neighbor in need. I will share aspects of my own flight from Iraq, my experience with a Kurdish refugee reflecting the Hagar narrative, my service with refugees and migrants in US and German contexts, as well as sustainability projects with individuals and communities in developing countries.

What political subjectivity of a New Host Self adds in these contexts is precisely the possibility of a radical reversal of a tide so overwhelming that it wants to take the subject with itself, reducing the Other into the same (using Levinas's language). To stem such tides and to reverse its course, requires a political subjectivity radically turned toward the Other. To precipitate such a New Host Self, we can find inspiration both in Levinasian ethical philosophy and in the Abrahamic traditions who draw our attention to the height/primacy of the Other and the necessity of an altruistic treatment of the guest and the stranger. It is such ethics reflected in the absolute responsibility for the Other that inflects the political and the treatment of the migrant, the refugee, the "widow, the orphan, and the stranger," and all of the many "others" on the margins.

Methodology

This project creates a conceptual framework for hospitality that helps us to approach it and the presence of the Other/migrant in a different and more expansive way. In delineating this new approach, I will employ a variety of methods. To unpack hospitality and the relation of the self to the Other, I use phenomenology in the spirit of Levinas to explore hidden structures of subjectivity through an examination of the textures of lived experience.

I also engage in a close reading of ethical, philosophical, and political reflections on hospitality in the writings of Levinas, Kant, Connolly, Pessin, Critchley, *et al.*, supplemented by text studies on themes of hospitality, excess, and height in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. Drawing from these multiple sources, I then employ a constructive philosophical/theological approach in which I arrive at a new concept of hospitality that is itself in turn able to help us inspire a new political approach. This project is interdisciplinary, intercultural, and inclusive as it draws from a wide range of philosophical and religious texts from various philosophical and (three different) religious traditions. In conclusion, I will present an autobiographical/auto-ethnographic account of my own lived experiences and personal narratives as a lens through which to engage further with the concept of radical hospitality.

In developing a radical hospitality related to a New Host Self, the project contributes to Levinasian studies and to scholarship exploring links between the philosophy of Levinas and themes relating to the Abrahamic traditions. It contributes to

studies on the notion of hospitality by employing a multidisciplinary approach that brings to the table philosophical and religious insights on hospitality. Using my own firsthand experiences, it also provides a new way to connect Levinasian ethical philosophy and insights from the Abrahamic traditions to an urgent contemporary political theme: The proliferation of individual and group identities, coupled with massive movement of people across different boundaries, has resulted in a rise of anti-immigration sentiment and anger directed at refugees. For this reason, it is of utmost importance to delineate a radical concept of hospitality derived from the height and the excess that manifests itself in the encounter with the Other.

This project also calls for a paradigm shift concerning hospitality. It is important to take up social and political analytical approaches to find political remedies for the neighbor in need, but at the same time also supporting these endeavors *via* the concept of radical hospitality that transforms the structure of the subject: While the ordinary political question asks “What should I do?” this project also poses the important ethico-political question: “Who am I in all this?” This calls not only for the right political action but also for the right ethical subjectivity that helps us to approach politics from a different perspective.

Chapter Content

The introductory chapter lays out the overarching structure of the project of radical hospitality. It delineates its methodological perimeter, setting the stage for the construction of a new concept of hospitality informed by Levinasian ethical philosophy

and the Abrahamic traditions concerning the elevation and excess of the Other and the New Host Self.

The second chapter focuses on Emanuel Levinas and his ethical philosophy of the Other, providing the underlying argument for the construction of the concept of radical hospitality. This chapter provides his *curriculum vitae* and delineates the methodology of his philosophy of the Other in general and deliberates his notion of height and excess with the Other in particular and how the encounter with the Other and her alterity transforms the self to a new self, from a self-for-itself to a Self-for-the-Other, which I read as a call to a New Host Self.

After having deliberated Levinasian ethics, and a self that is established by the excess of the height of the Other, I will then look in chapter three at Levinasian and non-Levinasian approaches to political hospitality. This central chapter will first delineate how Levinas sees the structure of subjectivity (the topic of ethics) orienting us to become the kind of people who respond to the “widow, the orphan, and the stranger,” *i.e.*, Levinas’s hospitable sense of politics. To further highlight this Levinasian emphasis, I will compare him to and contrast him with Kant’s approach to politics and hospitality. Whereas Levinas provides a theory of subjectivity rooted in heteronomy, excess, and asymmetry in relation to the face of the Other, Kant provides a political theory that emphasizes sovereignty and symmetry with no room for excess. Thinking further about how to apply Levinas to politics, I will next consider Critchley’s idea of a “plumbline” and Pessin’s concept of *bonomythy*, both advocating for an ethics of responsibility as a

guideline for action rather than a list of norms or a moral code. I will then conclude the chapter by exploring Connolly and Pessin on “agonistic respect” as part of a further consideration of what it *feels* like to live as a Levinasian New Host Self oriented towards the Other.

In chapter four, I will explore the excessive structure of hospitality and the concept of a New Host Self in the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In a summary, I will delineate important elements of the structure of radical hospitality in these traditions as well as similarities with Levinas.

In the final chapter, I will reflect *via* personal vignettes how this radical and excessive new sense of hospitality can reorient our political selves and provide an improved approach and a potential remedy for the neighbor in need. I will explore how political subjectivity of a New Host Self adds precisely the possibility of reversing the tide, providing the possibility of a radical reversal of growing global anti-immigrant sentiment.

Chapter Two: Levinasian Perspectives on Hospitality - Height and Excess

Levinas - *Curriculum Vitae* & Methodology

Curriculum Vitae

Emanuel Levinas was born on January 12, 1906, in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania, as the oldest son (he had two brothers, Boris (born in 1909) and Aminadab (born in 1913, who were murdered by the Nazis) into the Levinas family, belonging to Kovno's large and important Jewish community. The first language Levinas learned to read was Hebrew, although Russian was his mother tongue. Levinas's parents also spoke Yiddish.⁸ During World War I, when Germany occupied Kovno in September 1915, the Levinas family became refugees and moved to Kharkov in Ukraine, where Levinas was admitted to the Russian *Gymnasium*. The Levinas family experienced the upheavals of the

⁸ This biographical summary is based on Simon Critchley, "Emmanuel Levinas: A Disparate Inventory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), XV-XXX; Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, eds., *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), VII-XIII ("Preface"); Anette Aronowicz, *Nine Talmudic Readings* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), 1-15 ("Introduction"); Marie-Anne Lescourret, *Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Flammarion 1994); Salomon Malka, *Emmanuel Levinas: La vie et la trace* (Paris: J.C. Lattes, 2002); Moyn, *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics* (London: Cornell university Press, 2005). For a comprehensive biography see Roger Burggraeve, *Emmanuel Levinas. Une Bibliographie Primaire et Secondaire (1929-1985)*, (Leuven: Peeters, 1986).

revolutions of February and October 1917, but after the war, returned to Lithuania (1920), where Levinas attended a Hebrew *Gymnasium* in Kovno.⁹

In 1923, Levinas initially considered studying in Germany but eventually attended the University of Strasbourg in France. His subjects included classics, psychology as well as sociology, though he soon came to concentrate on philosophy, particularly studying Bergson and Husserl. Eventually, he chose Husserl's theory of intuition as his dissertation topic. During the academic year of 1928/29, he studied in Freiburg, Germany, (just across from Strasbourg) where he gave a presentation in Husserl's last seminar and attended Heidegger's first seminar as Husserl's successor, followed by an intense reading of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Upon returning to Strasbourg, Levinas completed and defended his dissertation, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*, and on April 4, 1930, received a prize from the Institute of Philosophy and had it published by Vrin in Paris, later on in 1930.¹⁰

In 1930, Levinas became a French citizen, performed his military service in Paris, and married Raissa Levi, who he had known since schooldays in Kovno. He also obtained a teaching position at the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris. In 1932, he began work on a book on Heidegger but abandoned it upon learning of Heidegger's

⁹ Peperzak, Critchley and Bernasconi, eds., *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, VII.

¹⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *La Théorie de l'intuition dans la Phénoménologie de Husserl*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1930. (*The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*), translated by André Orianne (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1975); cf. Peperzak, Critchley and Bernasconi, eds., *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, VII-VIII.

leanings towards National Socialism. Instead, he published a philosophical response to National Socialism titled “Some Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism,” in 1934.¹¹

In 1939, Levinas was drafted into the French army, serving as an interpreter of Russian and German. Taken prisoner of war in Rennes with the Tenth French Army in June 1940, he was held captive in a *Frontstalag* for several months. Later, he was transferred to a camp in Fallinpostel, close to Magdeburg in Northern Germany. As an officer in the French army, he was sent to a military prisoners’ camp rather than a concentration camp. Nevertheless, most of his family members were murdered by the Nazis during the bloody pogroms that began in June 1940 with the active and enthusiastic collaboration of Lithuanian nationalists, leading Levinas to vow never to set foot on German soil again.¹² Raissa and their daughter, Simone, (born in 1935), were protected by French friends, who offered their apartment to them for some time until Simone received an offer of refuge from the sisters of a Vincentian convent outside Orleans. Raissa was supported financially throughout the war by the Alliance Israelite Universelle. She stayed in hiding in Paris until 1943, joining her daughter at that point. Levinas himself, however, could only rejoin his family in 1945.

¹¹ Emmanuel Levinas, “Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l’hitlérisme”, *Esprit* (November 1934): 199–208. (“Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism”, translated by Seán Hand, *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1990): 63–71); cf. Peperzak, Critchley and Bernasconi, eds., *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, VIII.

¹² Critchley, “Emmanuel Levinas: A Disparate Inventory,” XIX-XX.

After the war, Levinas became Director of the Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale (ENIO) in Paris. The family lived above the school until 1980 when they moved to another apartment on the same street. In 1949, their son Michael was born, who later became a recognized composer, concert pianist, and Professor of Musical Analysis at the Paris Conservatory. Despite Levinas being appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Poitiers in 1964, Professor of Philosophy at the newly established University of Paris-Nanterre in 1967, and Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1973, he remained Director of the ENIO until 1980, gradually delegating more administrative tasks. After a prolonged struggle with illness, Levinas passed away in Paris on the night of December 24-25. The funeral oration, “Adieu,” was given by his friend Jacques Derrida at the interment on December 28, 1995.¹³

Methodology

After this introductory biographical sketch, it will be beneficial to also delineate Levinas’s philosophical method, since his philosophy of ethics serves as our framing concept for radical hospitality and the New Host Self. It is important, however, to keep in mind that Levinas himself was skeptical about the possibility of pinpointing methodology. Some even questioned whether his system—filled with many Jewish source materials—was actually philosophy proper. Adriaan Peperzak, nonetheless, puts our minds to rest, suggesting that if we focus on the philosophical works of Levinas,

¹³ Critchley, “Emmanuel Levinas: A Disparate Inventory,” XIX-XXX.

which he carefully distinguishes from his religious, exegetical, and theological works, his writings are indeed philosophical in the most rigorous sense of the word. Peperzak further provides a helpful structural suggestion, which I will somewhat follow in this section, asserting that Levinas's method can be best summarized under the headings of ontology, phenomenology, metaphysics, ethics and the Other.¹⁴

According to Levinas, Western philosophy exhibits a preference for sameness over otherness, immanence over transcendence, knowledge over ethics, and is doomed therefore to become a philosophy of power: "Thematization and conceptualization, which moreover are inseparable, are not in peace with the other but suppression or possession of the other [. . .] Ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power."¹⁵ This suppression of the Other carries systemic implications, both ethical (manifesting as violence and the negation of the otherness of the Other) and metaphysical (manifesting as atheism, the negation of the otherness of God/Other) over against which Levinas underscores the necessity of incorporating transcendence/God: "Philosophical discourse should rather be able to include God, of whom the Bible speaks [. . .] in thematizing God it brings God into the discourse of being [. . .]. It is not by chance that the history of Western philosophy has been a destruction of transcendence."¹⁶ Such Levinasian

¹⁴ Adriaan Peperzak, "Levinas' Method," *Research in Phenomenology* 28 (1998): 110-125.

¹⁵ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 23.

¹⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986), 154. Levinas is, however, very much aware of philosophical traditions capable to think transcendence without reducing it to sameness, i.e. Plato with his conception of the Good beyond being, or Descartes with the Idea of the Infinite (*Third Meditation*).

opposition to ontology should not be understood as a total rejection of all ontology, but rather as its dethronement and its eventual subordination to the importance of ethics. Such a perspective necessitates replacing the first philosophy of ontology (Heidegger) with a first philosophy of ethics (Levinas).

To overcome the *aporia* of ontology of his teacher Heidegger, Levinas draws on concepts of another teacher, Husserl, proposing a phenomenological approach. While “intentionality” is the central notion of Husserlian phenomenology, Levinas at times transcends this basic phenomenological principle and moves towards something prior, which he calls “pre-original.” Nevertheless, Levinas insists that “despite everything, what I am doing is phenomenology, even if there is no reduction according to the rules set by Husserl, even if the entire Husserlian methodology is not respected.”¹⁷ In the following, let us consider some aspects of this tension between phenomenology proper and Levinasian phenomenology.

In broad terms, it is true that Levinas explicates his project in terms of phenomenology, as it gives account for the way something appears (*phainomenon*) and seeks to describe them in a temporal context or “how we experience time.” Phenomenology investigates the structures of subjectivity and consciousness that “make possible the unified perception of an object that occurs across successive moments.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 140.

¹⁸ Michael R. Kelly, “Phenomenology and Time-Consciousness,” in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://iep.utm.edu/phe-time>, accessed November 2023.

And it also inquires into hidden structures that make possible those lived experiences. Similar to Husserl and Heidegger, Levinas posits that in temporality, as one of these hidden structures, in the moment of experiencing the Other in the present, there are already reflected some elements of the past and future in the texture of that present experience. But then, somewhat transcending this basic phenomenological concept (consciousness for Husserl and *Dasein* for Heidegger), Levinas notes: “Phenomenology is a method for philosophy, but phenomenology - the comprehension effected through a bringing to light - does not constitute the ultimate event of being itself. The relation between the same and the other is not always reducible to knowledge of the other by the same, nor even to the *revelation* of the other to the same, which is already fundamentally different from disclosure.”¹⁹

Levinas transcends thus traditional phenomenology of the *noema-noesis*/object-subject relationship, and notes that the face of the Other cannot be grasped by a purely phenomenological method. This is because the face of the Other is not merely a phenomenon or a passive object that can be fully grasped and analyzed. Levinas suggests that this necessitates a special kind of phenomenology, a phenomenology of the face: “I do not know if one can speak of a ‘phenomenology’ of the face, since phenomenology describes what appears.”²⁰ While his phenomenology may escape nomenclature, Levinas

¹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 28.

²⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 85.

insists that one cannot turn toward the Other like any other object, for the Other always escapes the gaze of the subject. The turn toward the face, Levinas notes, involves encounter with the Other, yet never leads to totality. This is because the Other, evades my effort of thematizing her. The otherness of the Other is infinite, escaping thematization, and consequently, the interaction between the same and the Other does not result in an assimilation of the Other by the same. He stresses that in our relationship with the Other, one does not just see the color of her eyes. Instead, it is an act that transcends phenomenology and its intentionality of placing the Other under my gaze. Importantly, it always remains an act that is incapable of reducing the Other to a revelation to the same.²¹ The face of the Other consistently eludes any thematization (i.e., it cannot be studied by pure phenomenology) for the encounter of the Other interrupts my effort of possessing and assimilating her to my world/self. Because Levinas's phenomenology is centered on the Other, he rather calls it a phenomenology of the face, as we have seen above, or, a phenomenology of sociality: "I have attempted a 'phenomenology' of sociality starting from the face of the other person - from proximity - by understanding in its rectitude a voice that commands before all mimicry and verbal expression, in the mortality of the face, from the bottom of this weakness. It commands me to not remain indifferent to this death, to not let the Other die alone, that is, to answer for the life of the

²¹ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, 85.

other person, at the risk of becoming an accomplice in that person's death."²²

Since the Levinasian focus on the Other could not be delineated in terms of ontology and not even phenomenology (at least not as understood by some traditions), he resorts to trans-phenomenological language, describing the Other in "metaphysical" categories such as "enigma," "visitation" or "revelation."²³ By subordinating phenomenality and ontology to the "metaphysical relation" between the Other and the self, Levinas forced open the meaning of those notions reflected in several attempts to write a phenomenological ontology of his own.²⁴

Feeling restrained by phenomenological philosophical categories, he circumscribes his heteronomous program of the Other in metaphysical categories and develops a philosophy of ethics: "A calling into question of the same - which cannot occur within the egoist spontaneity of the same - is brought about by the Other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other, ethics. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics."²⁵

²² Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other and Additional Essays*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 109.

²³ Peperzak, "Levinas' Method," 110, suggests that Levinas's metaphysics became a retrieval of the Neoplatonic concept of the "Good beyond being." In this regard, see too Pessin's discussion of Plotinus in Pessin, "[Bonomythy essay title...]". It is also here worth noting John Drabinski's emphasis on how indeed Levinas' approach is very much part of the tradition of phenomenology; see John E. Darbinsky, *Sensibility and Singularity: The problem of Phenomenology in Levinas* (New York: Suny Press, 2001).

²⁴ Peperzak, "Levinas' Method," 117.

²⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

According to Levinas, because of the alterity of the Other, as an infinite that cannot be grasped, my spontaneity, my *ipseity*, is interrupted by the Other - the Other that cannot be reduced to the same. In the escape from being, and because of the shame of having too much being, the Other interrupts me, calling my freedom into question: “Metaphysics, transcendence, the welcoming of the Other by the same, of the Other by me, is concretely produced as the calling into question of the same by the Other, that is, as the ethics that accomplishes the critical essence of knowledge.”²⁶

Levinas considers this notion of responsibility for the Other as being prior to the responsibility for oneself. For Levinas, philosophizing *per se* is already a form of responsibility for the Other, and since a thinker can but start from this responsibility to the Other, ethics—not ontology or phenomenology—becomes a first philosophy. Such a philosophical and ethical perspective of the responsible subject consequently also leads to an anterior relation with infinity. This becomes especially obvious in light of Descartes’ *Third Meditation*, in which the idea of infinity is understood as the primordial opening of the soul to what no soul could ever contain.²⁷ Because this excess always already pours in, the subject cannot truly close itself, living the illusion of an unqualified autonomy. Ethics as first philosophy is a philosophy of heteronomy to which we are awakened when in the face of the Other our very freedom and its capacities are questioned. Levinas

²⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

²⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 48-49.

moves thus *via* the Other from plurality to infinity transcending ontology *via* ethics and metaphysics. Nevertheless, for Levinas, philosophy must deny itself any claim to grasp the Other/God (*finitum non capax infiniti*, the finite cannot grasp the infinite) but should instead commit itself to tracing the structure of relations between human beings who are ordered to one another by the withdrawal of infinity.²⁸ Only in this way can thought genuinely open itself to God truly as God (*deus absconditissimus infinitum est*), where intellectual inquiry alone does not suffice for a genuine encounter with the infinite.²⁹

For Levinas, the primacy of the Other has also linguistic implications. The language evoked by the presence of the Other is uniquely powerful because it emanates from transcendence and calls the self's very identity into question: "The calling in question of the I, coextensive with the manifestation of the Other in the face, we call language."³⁰

Finally, it is also important to note that for Levinas, being influenced by the Hebrew concept of *tsim-tsum*, responsibility for the Other is kenotic (self-emptying) and requires abnegation. God in creation made room for us to be, consequently, we must also

²⁸ Nevertheless, the Levinasian metaphysical method also opens the possibility of authentic discourse about God. Such Levinasian philosophy, or rather philosophy of religion that is characterized by an ethics of radical responsibility for the other person, provides the perimeter that explains his willingness to employ theological terminology at crucial points in his philosophy, Jeffrey Bloechl, "Theological Terms in the Philosophy of Levinas," in *Oxford Handbook*, Michael L. Morgan, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 405.

²⁹ Bloechl, "Theological Terms in the Philosophy of Levinas," 405.

³⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 171.

make room for the Other. Though the abnegation of the subject is not one with the abnegation of God, nevertheless, the responsibility in which we give everything for the Other necessarily resembles it. For Levinas, the two-fold nature of my relation to the Other - she is always already there in proximity and yet also arrives in the call to responsibility - resembles the nature of my relation to God (though, to repeat, they are not one and the same).³¹

In summary, for Levinas, philosophy thus serves two purposes: The undoing of ontology, as totalization, in favor of a more original plurality established in the priority of the relation with the Other, and the focus on responsibility as the very grounding structure of our being. The asymmetrical Other, characterized by height and excess, as we will see in the following, is elevated into a position that demands infinite responsibility, but at the same time the Other also establishes the self, as a New Host Self that is for the Other.

Levinasian Height and the Excess of the Other

In this section, I will examine both the notion of height and excess in Levinasian writings, indicating that the height of the Other and its excess not only elevates the Other but also establishes the self as a New Host Self, a Self-for-the-Other.

Height

In his writings, Levinas elevates the Other, or the face of the Other, to a position of

³¹ Jeffrey Bloechl, "Theological Terms in the Philosophy of Levinas," in *The Oxford Handbook of Levinas*, Michael L. Morgan, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 409.

height, stating that though the Other is not the “incarnation of God, but precisely by his face, in which he is disincarnate, is the manifestation of the height in which God is revealed.”³² Adriaan Peperzak suggests that, for Levinas, the highest place, the elevation of the Other, or height, is a metaphor underscoring the asymmetrical character of the face-to-face. The concept of the Other and height evokes the status of a monarch or ruler that commands the self, who “is called upon to respond and, in a sense, made to respond.”³³ It is not surprising that Levinasian height has been “compared to the Platonic (Summum) Bonum, the Heideggerian *Ens Summum*, or the Kantian *Summum Bonum*.”³⁴ Michael Morgan cautions, though, that both “face” and “height” are philosophical terms whose significance cannot be delineated unequivocally.³⁵ It is thus necessary to carefully investigate the question: What does Levinas really mean with the concept of the elevation and height of the Other, or, the face of the Other, or, to use yet another term from his later writings, i.e., the trace of the face of the Other? Such a study is of utmost importance per se, but it is of particular interest for this project because potentially it can precipitate an important remedy for the Other as migrant!

³² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 79.

³³ Peperzak, *Beyond*, 125, 133, 137, 208.

³⁴ Adriaan Peperzak, “Illeity According to Levinas,” *Philosophy Today* 42 (1998): 41.

³⁵ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 146.

As early as 1951, Levinas admitted in *Is Ontology Fundamental?* an affinity to “the practical philosophy of Kant, to which we feel particularly close.”³⁶ Hence, it was only natural for him to clarify his notion of the ethical in relationship to Kant in *Freedom and Command* (1953), where he delineated over against Kant a heteronomous system that featured the face of the Other with both its height and humility: “The absolute nakedness of a face, the absolutely defenseless face, without covering, clothing or mask, is what opposes my power over it, my violence, and opposes it in an absolute way, with an opposition that is opposition itself. The being that expresses itself, that faces me, says no to me by his very expression.... [I]t is not the no of a hostile force or a threat; it is the impossibility of killing him who presents that face.... The face is the fact that a being affects us not in the indicative, but in the imperative.”³⁷ Michael Morgan elucidates “the impossibility of killing” as follows:

Why is it not the case that for the other standing before the I, there is both the possibility and the impossibility of killing the other? The reason, I think, is that even the choice to kill or the act of killing itself already in some sense incorporates an acknowledgment, an acceptance, so that one can say that all social encounters, even the most violent and destructive, are acts of responsibility, albeit ones that do not necessarily express and develop that sense of responsibility but

³⁶ Levinas, “Is Ontology Fundamental?” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 10. On the centrality of the ethical in both Levinas and Kant and the discussion of their relationship, see Catherine Chaliel, *What Ought I to Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell, 2002); Anthony F. Beavers, “Kant and the Problem of Ethical Metaphysics,” in *In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the 18th Century*, Melvyn New with Robert Bernasconi and Richard Cohen, eds. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2001); and Peter Atterton, “From Transcendental Freedom to the Other: Levinas and Kant,” in *In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the 18th Century*, Melvyn New with Robert Bernasconi and Richard Cohen, eds. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2001).

³⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, “Freedom and Command,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 23.

may rather corrupt and nullify it. In every social interaction, then, there is a plea to be supported in life and, by its sheer otherness, the other issues a command to be supported. The plea of the other person makes me responsible for her, and the command makes me responsible or accountable to her. Hence, in every social encounter, each person begins already with a responsibility to the other person, which is a standard that is undeniable and demanding to live up to. However, the interaction goes, whatever its special features or character, this responsibility is already there, and insofar as it is an ethical matter, an imperative, its directiveness or force permeates the encounter.³⁸

By 1961, in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas more comprehensively develops the concept of encountering the face of the Other and its elevation to height. In the following, I intend to delineate in four steps what Levinas has in mind. He begins by introducing the concept of height in metaphysical categories but then elevates its alterity even further, by secondly resorting even to theological language. Thirdly, he clarifies that the use of metaphysical and theological language is but a metaphor to circumscribe his first philosophy: ethics. In analogy to the Kantian program, we could thus call the Levinasian perspective “Religion Within the Bounds of Ethics Alone.”³⁹ Finally, he elucidates the interesting feature that height actually is two-pronged, because with height there is not only authority but also humility.

From the very beginning, Levinas frames the discussion on height in metaphysical language, suggesting that “the very dimension of height is opened up by metaphysical Desire” and that “height is no longer the heavens but the Invisible is the very elevation of

³⁸ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 69.

³⁹ As we have seen above, religion for Levinas is but sociality.

height and its nobility.”⁴⁰ Metaphysical desire, however, does not consume the Other, i.e., the desired, for its relationship is contingent upon the height or the separateness of the Other/the desired from the self/desire. It is this very height/separateness that makes the relationship between them incomprehensible.

Nevertheless, though emphasizing the chasm between the physical and the metaphysical, Levinas provides the curious argument that the physical provides some resemblance to the metaphysical and considering the erect posture of humans as evidence of their special proximity to God and ascendance over the rest of nature. “... already human egoism leaves pure nature *by virtue of the human body raised upwards, committed in the direction of height. This is not its empirical illusion but its ontological production and its ineffaceable testimony.* The “I can” proceeds from this height.”⁴¹ Recurring to Plato, he also asserts, “in my opinion, that knowledge only which of being and of the unseen can make the soul look upwards.”⁴² Peter Atterton suggests, though,

⁴⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 34-35.

⁴¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 117.

⁴² Plato, *Republic*, Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, (New York, Random house, 1937), 29b. Height was a fundamental concept in Levinas’s philosophy, where it refers to the ethical supremacy of the Other whose (moral) rights exceed my own. This responsibility takes the form of a response to a moral summons that comes to me from the highest part of the body in humans, the head, on which there is the face. Levinas repeatedly hints at the connection as he sees it between the moral and physical characteristics of the (human) face by playing on the French word *droiture*, which is both a physical predicate (meaning “uprightness,” “erectness,” “straightness,” etc.) and a moral predicate (“righteousness,” “moral rectitude”). But Levinas is not the first to conjoin human anatomy and moral excellence. In section 10 of *Being and Time* (74-75), Heidegger quotes Zwingli as evidence of what he calls “Christian dogmatics”: “Because man looks up (*aufsehen*) to God and his Word, he indicates clearly that in his very Nature he is born somewhat closer to God.” Aristotle, *Politics* (1254,25–29) suggests that nature intended to make the bodies of freemen and slaves different, “the latter strong for necessary service, the former erect (*ortha*) and unserviceable for such occupations, but serviceable for a life of citizenship.” Xenophon, in the fifth century

that “Levinas is not literally ascribing physical predicates to moral subjects at all, but merely drawing an analogy by finding something typically associated with human beings that he feels stands in a relation of resemblance to that which impresses him as ethical.”⁴³

Such height is not only reflected vertically in elevation but also horizontally in variety and multiplicity: “The dimension of height from which the Metaphysical comes to the Metaphysician indicates a sort of non-homogeneity of space, such that a radical multiplicity, distinct from numerical multiplicity, can here be produced.”⁴⁴ Such multiplicity, Levinas insists, suggests an objectivity based on the impossibility of “total reflection,” *i.e.*, it is impossible to totalize the I and the non-I into a unity, a whole. “This impossibility . . . results from the surplus of the epiphany of the Other, who dominates me from his height.”⁴⁵ To the concepts of height and multiplicity, he then also adds the metaphysical concepts of infinity, trans-ascendence, and presence, noting that the idea of infinity demarcates a “height and a nobility, a transascendence” and it is an immediate

B.C.E., wrote in his *Memorabilia* (1.4.12-14) that “Man is the only living creature that (the gods) have caused to stand upright (*monon ton zoon anthropon orthon anesthesan*) For with a man’s reason and the body of an ox we could not carry out our wishes, and the possession of hands without reason is of little worth.” But, of course, we know that there is no *moral* connection between *standing upright*, or *bipedalism*, beyond the purely biological adaptative behaviors that have become established because they are beneficial in response to the famous “obstetrical dilemma” caused by the narrowing of the birth canal (S. Washburn, “Tools and Human Evolution,” *Scientific American* 203 (1960), 73–74). Levinas’s connection between the morality and the body is no less contrived than Plato’s etymology (*Cratylus*, 399c) for “man” (*anthropos*) signifying the only being that “looks up at (*anathrei*) what he has seen (*eiden*).”

⁴³ Peter Atterton, “Levinas’s Humanism and Anthropocentrism,” in *Oxford Handbook of Levinas*, ed. Michael L. Morgan. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 709-730.

⁴⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 220.

⁴⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 221.

presence more than just a visible manifestation, as well as a distant presence - the presence of the Other. This presence overwhelms the one who welcomes it, occurring from above, unanticipated, and teaching its “very novelty.”⁴⁶ Appreciating linguistic categories, Levinas also explicates that the “epiphany of the other, who dominates me from his height” manifests itself in speech and expression.⁴⁷ Language (discourse and expression) does not exist for the sole purpose of providing information because the primordial essence of expression and discourse does not reside in the information supplied but beyond it.⁴⁸ This perspective makes it impossible to totalize and reabsorb the presence of the Other - whose dimensions exceed mine - into my perception. Consequently, height or the “divinity of exteriority,” is constituted, precisely because of the incapacity of the I to encompass the exteriority of the Other. “Divinity” maintains its distance. Referring to Plato’s Phaedrus, discourse, therefore, takes place with “God”, rather than with equal human: “Metaphysics is the essence of this language with God; it leads above being.”⁴⁹ Levinas concludes his linguistic metaphysical delineations deliberating, “in the face the Other expresses his eminence, the dimension of height and divinity from which he descends.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 41, 66.

⁴⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 221.

⁴⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 220.

⁴⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 296-297.

⁵⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 262.

As already anticipated in the discussion of our last paragraph, some of the metaphysical terminology employed by Levinas in the discussion of the face and the height of the face is then reiterated in theological epithets, which brings us to the second point of our discussion. Putnam suggests that it is a part of Levinas's strategy to take theological connotations attributed to God and ascribe them to the Other, e.g. Levinas's notion of my "infinite responsibility to the other, of the impossibility of really seeing the face of the other, of the 'height' of the other, etc."⁵¹ Morgan also notes that Levinas employs theological metaphors, pointing to different characteristics of the encounter of the self with the Other: that the Other maintains its distance or separateness (Levinas's insistence that the Other eludes assimilation and totalization), that the Other addresses the self from a position of height, above me, that it has a primacy or elevation in respect to the I, the self, having authority and even power over the self, and that the relationship of the self and the other is asymmetrical, indicating that they are not equal in every aspect. But also always already anticipating his *summa philosophia*, he insists that both metaphysical and theological epithets only reflect "one's recognition of a particular aspect of the ethical relationship and responsibility."⁵² Morgan thus concludes that Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* considers God, as a theological concept, as a myth, which does not, however, refer to a real being but expresses a relationship or a feature of a

⁵¹ Hilary Putnam, "Levinas and Judaism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42-43.

⁵² Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 145-146.

relationship. The height of the face of the Other, Levinas holds, is where God is revealed. It is *in* the height and not *by* it that God is revealed. God should not be coincided with the face or its height, but the connotation of God (the divine, the sacred, and the holy), “is a theological way of expressing something about that height, of calling attention to it and acknowledging it.”⁵³

The ethical relation to the Other, employing the metaphysical and theological term “infinity,” is found with Levinas since the late 1950s. The ethical relationship and responsibility to the Other betrays obvious formal similarities with the *res cogitans* and the infinity of God of Descartes’s *Third Meditation*.⁵⁴ Levinas’s interest in Descartes’ argument lies in his assertion that the subject has an idea of infinity, which by definition is a thought that contains more than can be thought. As Levinas puts it, in what is almost a mantra in his published work, “In thinking infinity the I from the first *thinks more than it thinks*.”⁵⁵

Simon Critchley, in delineating the Cartesian influence on Levinas, agrees that it is the formal structure of thought that “thinks more than it can think,” and contains a surplus in itself that intrigues Levinas. Such a structure indicates that the Other cannot be reduced to any idea that I have of her but exceeds my perception, always eluding my

⁵³ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 143-144.

⁵⁴ Simon Critchley, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14.

⁵⁵ Levinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 54.

thematization. The relationship of the thinking being (the subject) and God through the idea of the infinite in the Cartesian model “provides Levinas with a picture or formal model of a relation between two terms that are based on height, inequality, non-reciprocity and asymmetry.”⁵⁶ However, Critchley cautions that the comparison goes only so far: “Levinas is making no substantive claim at this point; he is not saying that I actually do possess the idea of the infinite in the way Descartes describes, nor is he claiming that the Other is God, as some readers mistakenly continue to believe.”⁵⁷ Levinas simply embraces Descartes’ argument and transforms it by substituting the Other for God. Putnam, though, explicates that the analogy between Levinas’s account of the relationship to the Other and the Cartesian account of his relation to God is striking in an analogous way to Descartes’s experience of God, as someone that violates his mind by interrupting the subject, the *cogito*, entails “a profound sense of obligation,” as well as “a sense of glory.” Likewise, for Levinas, “the experience of the other as, in effect, a violator of his mind, as one who breaks his phenomenology, goes with ... the ‘fundamental obligation’ to make oneself available to the other, and with the experience of what Levinas calls ‘the Glory of the Infinite.’”⁵⁸ Levinas thus elevates the Other, or the

⁵⁶ Critchley, “Introduction,” 14.

⁵⁷ Critchley, “Introduction,” 14.

⁵⁸ Hilary Putnam, “Levinas and Judaism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42-43; cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2000), 140-162.

face of the Other, to a position of height, ascribing infinity and other metaphysical/theological categories to it. Still, at the same time, he maintains, along with Kant, Kierkegaard, Buber, Rosenzweig, and a host of other philosophers, that *finitum non capax infiniti* - the finite cannot grasp the infinite. And yet, the Other, or the face of the Other, or the trace of the face of the Other, though infinite and incomprehensible, reaches out to us and even commands us.⁵⁹

Thirdly, in spite of employing at times a metaphysical or theological narrative, Levinas leaves no doubt that his primary concern is not with metaphysics or theology *per se*, but rather with ethics. He insists that the idea of infinity and its metaphysical relation “connects with the *noumenon* which is not a *numen*. This *noumenon* is to be distinguished from the concept of God possessed by the believers of positive religions ill-disengaged from the bonds of participation, who accept being immersed in a myth unbeknown to themselves, and that the idea of infinity, the metaphysical relation, is the dawn of a humanity without myths.”⁶⁰ Levinas deliberates that the height of the face of the Other is at the heart of his first philosophy, ethics, because the face of the Other commands me to my responsibilities. The being that presents itself in the face of the

⁵⁹ If we compare the Levinasian Other or the face of the Other to theological categories, it is most appropriate to compare it to the Spirit, because in the context of the *theologoumenon* of the Third Article we also have the qualification of the *finitum non capax infiniti*, by a *finitum capax infiniti*, *non per se sed per ipsum infinitum, qui est Spiritus Sanctus*, but with Levinas the Other, or the face of the Other, or the trace of the face of the Other taking the role of the Spirit.

⁶⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 77.

Other stands in a position of height, “a dimension of transcendence.”⁶¹ Nevertheless, he insists that the Other must not be conflated with God and His incarnation, “but precisely by his face, in which he is disincarnate, is the manifestation of the height in which God is revealed.”⁶² At the same time, he also clarifies that his first philosophy is of a heteronomous nature, noting that philosophy requires the existence of a conscience that entails the presence of “the other as the other,” and “where the movement of thematization is inverted.”⁶³ Such inversion leads to the submission to the demand of the Other, “morality,” and not the traditional view of knowing oneself as a theme attended by the Other. The position of height, which the Other entails, is, as it were, “the primary curvature of being from which the privilege of the Other results, the gradient of transcendence.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 215.

⁶² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 79.

⁶³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 86.

⁶⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 86. A similar concept to Levinas’s face-to-face with the other is the idea of recognition in Fichte and Hegel. Fichte, in his *Foundations of Natural Right*, argues that I must have the concept of the other in order to have self-consciousness and the grasp of myself as a self. I become a self only insofar as I am summoned to free action by an other, whom I take to be a self in the very act of taking myself to be summoned by it. See Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right: According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Frederick Neuhouser, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), I, Section 3, 32–37. Paul Franks explains that Fichte takes this process to be the historical genesis of self-consciousness and the notion of the self; the self becomes a self in becoming free, *i.e.*, in coming to have the ability to determine itself in order to comply with the summons of the other or to resist it. See Franks, “The Discovery of the Other: Cavell, Fichte and Skepticism,” in *Reading Cavell*, eds. Cary and Shieh (London: Routledge, 2006), 176–177; also Paul Franks, *All or Nothing* (Boston: Harvard University, 2005), 323–325.

Such an epiphany of the face of the Other, the absolutely Other, Levinas insists, “paralyzes possession.”⁶⁵ I now need to share my possession or the world with the Other because the Other interrupts me from a position of height and not merely from the outside. The “untraversable infinity of the negation of murder is announced by this dimension of height, where the Other comes to me concretely in the ethical impossibility of committing this murder. I welcome the Other who presents himself in my home by opening my home to him.”⁶⁶ Thus, the “God” who “speaks” to us does so through the other person, the *real* transcendent, who engages me. The encounter with the face is the relation with God. Actually, the relationship with God is not possible apart from the relationship with the Other.⁶⁷ The Other, however, should be perceived neither as mediator nor as the incarnation of God, but the *locus* where the height, the divine height, is revealed.⁶⁸ Richard Cohen, though calling the Levinasian height on the one hand “*the dimension of the divine,*” on the other hand, unequivocally identifies it as “*a moral dimension, the dimension of moral height, goodness.*”⁶⁹ A moral dimension, here, should not be confused with morality and a moral code but the ethical structure of the subject.

⁶⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 171.

⁶⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 171.

⁶⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 78.

⁶⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 78-79.

⁶⁹ Richard A. Cohen, *Elevations: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 183.

According to Levinas, God who speaks to us does so through the ultimate Other, the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, (mentioning the three groups of people who are commanded in the Biblical texts to be taken care of) out of her destitution, but also with her height. Cohen consequently coined the defining aphorism: “By ‘height’ Levinas means the *moral* force encountered in the *other’s* face as the *subject’s* obligation to and responsibility for that other person.”⁷⁰

Finally, it is important to note that the concept of Levinasian height is complemented by humility, as the face simultaneously calls me into question, singles me out, and so speaks to me or addresses me from “a height that is as low as it is high, so to speak.”⁷¹ The height of the Other positions the Other in a dimension of “abasement-glorious-abasement,” encompassing both the face of the marginalized, such as the stranger (the migrant), etc., and also a master who interrupts and justifies my freedom.⁷² In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas continuously delineates the two prongs of the “height” - height and abasement: “The nakedness of the face is destituteness. To recognize the Other is to recognize a hunger. To recognize the Other is to give. But it is to give to the master, to the lord, to him whom one approaches as ‘You’ (*vous* – the you of majesty in contrast to the thou of intimacy) in a dimension of height.”⁷³ He continues to elaborate

⁷⁰ Cohen, *Elevations*, 185.

⁷¹ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 145-146.

⁷² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 251.

⁷³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.

that the Other's transcendence with all its height, eminence, and lordship, comprises also "his destitution, his exile."⁷⁴ In an interview with Philippe Nemo, collected in *Ethics and Infinity*, Levinas reiterates the two prongs/tiers of height by responding to the question concerning the height of the Other and the insistence that the Other is higher than I am. According to Levinas, "the first word of the face is the 'Thou shalt not kill.' It is an order. There is a commandment in the appearance of the face, as if a master spoke to me. However, at the same time, the face of the Other is destitute; it is the poor for whom I can do all and to whom I owe all. And me, whoever I may be, but as a 'first person,' I am he who finds the resources to respond to the call."⁷⁵

Morgan elucidates the concept further by suggesting that what Levinas wants us to understand by the claim that the face of the Other makes upon me is twofold: first, the need that emerges out of the face that Levinas often calls "vulnerability," "nudity," or "weakness." Morgan prefers to call this phenomenon "dependency-upon-me." Second, the claim arises out of the dignity of the face, called by Levinas as the height of the face. Morgan calls this second phenomenon, "authority." That is, "the face speaks with authority and out of weakness or need; it commands and petitions at once."⁷⁶ Morgan continues that such a concept sounds perplexing for how can one who is in need

⁷⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 76.

⁷⁵ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 89.

⁷⁶ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 10.

command me, and *vice versa*, how can one who demands of me be vulnerable? Such a paradoxical structure is necessary, though, “to make normativity or the ought-to-be-doneness possible.” If the face stands in a superior position to me, the claim that she makes upon me would be “compulsion,” but if she stands in the position of weakness and vulnerability, the self is the one who determines the weight that her pleas will carry. But why is it that the face of the Other, and her needs, entail both of these dimensions, the calling out of the self, and the demand upon the self?⁷⁷ This indicates that there must be some inherent characteristic in the way in which the relation of the Other to me is structured, determining the structure of my own subjectivity. Robert Stern suggests that one way of analyzing how this dialectic works is to assert the authority of the other *via* its vulnerability as stranger, widow, and orphan, that grants the Other legitimate authority and not a coercive force.⁷⁸ Stern continues and suggests that for Levinas, the relation of the Other and the self is a composite of both “more” and “less,” or “height” and “depth.” The height of the Other that positions her above me arises out of her “capacity to command,” which requires a response from me, while, simultaneously, her need that she cannot meet by herself puts her beneath me, making her vulnerable in a way that I am not. Nevertheless, I am summoned to respond to the command of the Other who stands in the position of authority, where she receives her authority through her vulnerability,

⁷⁷ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 10.

⁷⁸ Robert Stern, “Levinas, Darwall, and Logstrup on Second-Personal Ethics: Command or Responsibility?” in *Oxford Handbook*, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 313.

legitimizing her authority.⁷⁹ “But the emphasis on the vulnerability of the Other is not merely the result of the wretchedness (mortality) of the Other,” as Putnam notes, but “it is also connected with Levinas’ emphasis on the neediness of others and the corresponding obligation on the ‘me’ who always has ‘one responsibility more than anyone else’ to sacrifice for others, to the point of substituting for them, to the point of martyrdom ... In Levinas’ image of man, the *vulnerability* of the other is what is stressed, in contrast to what Levinas sees as the Enlightenment’s radiant image of the human essence.”⁸⁰

Elucidating Levinas through an exegesis of “the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, to whom I am obliged” Stern suggests that it might be argued, analogous to the parable of the Good Samaritan that “what gives the injured traveler the right to command the Samaritan to help him is precisely the fact that he *is* injured, destitute, and in need, while the Samaritan is in a position to alleviate this need.”⁸¹ Stern proposes that a reading of Levinas along these lines can find textual support if we note that he does not always characterize the position of height as involving command. Instead, he sometimes describes it as comprising a “summons,” a “call,” and an act of judgement, as he puts it in the crucial passage from *Totality and Infinity*: “the face summons me to my obligations

⁷⁹ Stern, “Levinas, Darwall, and Logstrup,” 307.

⁸⁰ Putnam, “Levinas and Judaism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 45. The concept of the two prongs is reminiscent to the humiliation-exaltation concept and dyphycism of the Second Article.

⁸¹ Stern, “Levinas, Darwall, and Logstrup,” 313.

and judges me.”⁸² Height, in *Totality and Infinity*, is thus part of the structure of the subject where the face of the Other and her height interrupts the ipseity of the self with a command to responsibility. Feeling constrained by pure phenomenology, Levinas resorts to metaphysical and theological language to delineate the height of the Other in his *prima philosophia*. Yet, the height of the Other is not only imperative and commanding but also vulnerable and in need, thus positioned to call the self into responsibility and transform it into a self-for-the-Other that is willing to give and share its home and possessions.

It is noteworthy that after the publication of *Totality and Infinity* (1961), and despite Levinas eventually introducing additional concepts to circumscribe height, there remains a great degree of continuity in Levinasian thought on this subject matter, centered around the four delineated themes above. Following the publication of *Totality and Infinity* (1961), he was invited to speak to the *Societe Francaise de Philosophie*, where he presented on January 27, 1962, *Transcendance et Hauteur (Transcendence and Height)*. The lecture provided a brief summary of some of the main themes of *Totality and Infinity* from an epistemological standpoint. In it, Levinas attacked idealism and realism as forms of a “fundamental monism: both trying to reduce the plurality of beings to the unity of ‘the Same,’ thus excluding the otherness of any irreducible ‘Other.’”⁸³

Peperzak, Critchley, and Bernasconi point out that in *Transcendence and Height*, Levinas

⁸² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 251; cf. Stern, “Levinas, Darwall, and Løgstrup,” 313-314.

⁸³ Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 11.

employs Platonic expressions of “the Same” (*le Meme*) and “the Other” (*l’Autre*) from his dialogue *The Sophist*, insisting that that “*to auton*” and “*to heteron*” as basic categories will maintain their irreducibility to one another or any other categories such as “being” or “nonbeing,” the lack of distinction of which was, for Levinas, the *aporia* of Western Philosophy, including Heidegger’s project of differentiating between “beings” and “being itself.”⁸⁴ But Levinas also concedes that “traces of another conception of philosophy can be found in some of the classic texts of that history,” e.g., the above mentioned Cartesian Third Metaphysical Meditation that witnesses to the “irreducibility of the idea of the infinite, an idea found in human consciousness together with the idea of consciousness itself.”⁸⁵ Thus, in *Transcendence and Height*, Levinas reiterates once again that the “epiphany” of the Other is a face by which the Other calls me into question and makes a plea upon me through his (her) vulnerability and destitution: “He challenges me from his humility and from his height.... The absolutely Other is the human Other. And the putting into question of the Same by the Other is a summons to respond.... Hence, to be “I” signifies not being able to escape responsibility.”⁸⁶ The height of the Other and its demands indicate the impossibility of escaping responsibility and thereby the call for absolute responsibility for the Other. The self being perceived as “wholly responsible”

⁸⁴ Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 11.

⁸⁵ Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 11.

⁸⁶ Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 17.

and the Other as “wholly plea and command.” In every interaction of the self with the Other, “it is always *already* such a nexus of plea, command, and inescapable responsibility, *before* it is anything else - which it always is.”⁸⁷ Thus, also after 1962, Levinas continues to describe the face by and large in terms of *Totality and Infinity*: the face calls the self into question; it commands out of vulnerability, nakedness, weakness; it commands the self from the position of height and humility; it speaks “thou shall not murder;” it calls the self to responsibility.⁸⁸

A similar understanding is also reflected in his later writings and interviews.⁸⁹ In *Ethics and Infinity* (1982), he again deliberates on the paradox of the face of the Other. On the one hand, the nakedness and its menace invites violence; on the other hand, the face is what forbids us to murder because “the face is what one cannot kill, or at least it is that whose *meaning* consists in saying: ‘thou shalt not kill.’”⁹⁰ Also in an interview with Richard Kearney, published in 1984, Levinas reiterates that “the face is the other who asks me not to let him die alone, as if to do so were to become an accomplice in his death.

⁸⁷ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 66.

⁸⁸ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 80. Cf. Levinas, “Phenomenon and Enigma,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 69–70; Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 16–19; Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 54; Levinas, “Language and Proximity,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 120–121; Levinas, “Transcendence and Evil,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 185; Levinas, “Philosophy, Justice and Love,” in *Entre Nous*, 103–105; and Levinas, “From One to the Other,” in *Entre Nous*, 144–146.

⁸⁹ Cf. Levinas, *Is It Righteous To Be?* 48–49, 114–115, 127–128, 135–136, 144–145, 215.

⁹⁰ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 86–87; cf. 85–92.

Thus, the face says to me: you shall not kill.”⁹¹ Levinas’ basic insights on the height of the face thus prevail, yet eventually, new terminologies are introduced to address the subject matter. In the essay *Substitution* (1968), later developed as a central theme in *Otherwise than Being* (1974), Levinas introduces additional notions associated with the height of the face and the asymmetrical relation with the Other, such as “passivity,” “substitution,” and “recurrence.” As we examine these additional concepts, it seems clear that *Otherwise than Being* also builds from the concepts laid out already in *Totality and Infinity*.⁹²

The height of the Other is further explicated in the notion of “passivity” as the structure of the subject, where the passivity of the subject in relation to the Other prior to any encounter anarchically already indicates the height of the Other and the asymmetrical relationship with the Other. “The subjectivity of a subject is vulnerability, exposure to affection, sensibility, a passivity more passive still than any passivity, ... an exposedness always to be exposed the more, an exposure to expressing, and thus to saying, thus to giving.”⁹³ When comparing *Totality and Infinity* with *Otherwise than Being*, one can see that entering into relation with the Other and language is not an act or a will that the subject initiates, but rather, it is passive amid the exposure to the Other— an exposure

⁹¹ Cohen, ed., “Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas,” 24.

⁹² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

⁹³ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 50.

that is prior to exposure, so to speak. This passivity prior to any act of memory and recollection breaks up the identity of the self *qua* self and puts an unlimited responsibility for the Other as the one-for-the-Other. This passivity due to the exposedness cannot be assumed, for it is prior to the subject. The subject's passivity is non-voluntary because the subject is called by the Other and is elected. Before even I can decide to respond to the Other, I am passively responsible for the Other and her need. Such obligation to the Other, therefore, is prior to the realm of epistemology and the thematization of the Other, even prior to freedom—a kind of freedom that arises from my own subjectivity. The Other is already in me in an anarchic way (referring to a past before past) that is more passive than passivity and thus responsibility before the arrival of any identity.

Responsibility and its passivity are thus prior to my freedom, for the Other is not entirely outside of me. There is a passivity more passive than the passivity opposed to activity for which Levinas employs the Biblical language of “Here am I (*hinneni*)” that indicates the “me” in an accusative position rather than the “I” that is active: “the word I means here I am, answering for everything and for everyone.”⁹⁴ The freedom of the modern subject is rendered secondary by the emphasis on the already existing responsibility for the Other as the structure of the subject. This responsibility is prior and before any formation of consciousness with no room for escape. “I am the ‘me’ of a ‘*me voici*’ of which I become aware when another confronts me.”⁹⁵ This is the discovery of the guilt in regard to the

⁹⁴ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114.

⁹⁵ Adriaan Peperzak, “Levinas’ Method,” *Research in Phenomenology* 28,1 (1998): 116.

Other and the impossibility of the fulfilment of the infinite responsibility for the Other. “I am the hostage and substitute of the Other and that the infinite is “in me” causing a strange kind of nonidentity between me and myself.”⁹⁶ While the notion of responsibility for the Other is paramount in both *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being*, the latter further reiterates, according to Sean Hand, the major philosophical outline of *Totality and Infinity*, where the asymmetrical relationship between “Being and Other are presented dramatically through intense phenomenological examination of our subjectivity, temporality, responsibility and infinitude.”⁹⁷

Radical passivity is intricately linked to the notion of “substitution.” In contrast to Buber’s symmetrical relationship, Levinas’s insistence on the asymmetrical relationship with the Other gives rise to the notion of “substitution.” Expounding on this notion, Levinas remarks, “what can it be but a substitution of me for the others? It is, however, not an alienation because the other in the same is my substitution for the other through responsibility, for which I am summoned as someone irreplaceable. I exist through the other and for the other ...”⁹⁸ Levinas asserts that substitution, as an asymmetrical relationship or relation without relation, stresses the subject’s passivity (*sub iactus* = thrown under) over against her being active. He also employs the language of accusation, hostage, and persecution, signifying that I am always accused, taken hostage, and even

⁹⁶ Peperzak, “Levinas’ Method,” 116.

⁹⁷ Sean Hand, *Emmanuel Levinas* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 48.

⁹⁸ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 104.

persecuted by the Other. Substitution involves the idea of placing myself in the place of the Other, resulting in the one-for-the-Other as the structure of my subjectivity and the responsibility for everything that the Other is responsible for.

From *Totality and Infinity* to *Otherwise Than Being*, Levinas shifts his focus from the separated subject, separating herself from the *il y a* (“there is”) to the emphasis on the notion of “substitution.”⁹⁹ This shift is apparent in the movement from a discourse centered on shame in *Totality and Infinity* to one dominated by guilt in *Otherwise than Being*. In *Totality and Infinity*, shame arises from the overwhelming presence of one’s being in contrast to the Other and its suffocation by the *il y a*. The separated subject is confronted by the shame of the excess of her own being and attempts to evade it till it is eventually freed by the desire—in the sense of ethical, metaphysical desire—for the Other. Conversely, in *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas accentuates guilt over shame, portraying the self not as a being-in-the-world akin to Heidegger’s perspective but as a self in need of pardon. In exploring the question of “who am I,” Levinas thus moves from the formation of a subject escaping *il y a*/being to a subject in need of pardon, already accused, with a passivity in relation to the Other that is prior and before activity of the subject.¹⁰⁰ There is an immemorial or pre-original responsibility for the Other in *Otherwise than Being* which extends beyond my death. The intensification of

⁹⁹ Robert Bernasconi, “What Is the Question to Which ‘Substitution’ Is the Answer?,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88.

¹⁰⁰ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 112, 125, 146.

responsibility for the Other extends thus beyond the structure outlined in *Totality and Infinity* and as Sean Hand notes: “Whereas the latter was still structured by the phenomenological terms of self and Other (wherein the realms of enjoyment and dwelling are followed by the relationships with things, the ethical dimension to which the face gives rise, and the voluptuousness which in turn can go beyond ethics), *Otherwise than Being* begins with this last element.”¹⁰¹

There is also a slight change to the notion of what Sarah Pessin calls “double grounding” of the separated self from *Totality and Infinity* to *Otherwise than Being*. Whereas the separated subject gives rise to the desire for the Other, which is exteriority, infinity, and also the face, the face, consequently, calls me into question with a double grounding nature: the Other grounds me, but I also ground the Other.¹⁰² In *Otherwise than Being*, however, the Other is already in the self-indicating extreme passivity-obsession, an interrupted persecuted self-intemporal, persecuted self. There is an emphasis on responsibility inherent in subjectivity prior to the encounter of the Other. Nonetheless, the separated subject and the being called into question by the Other in *Totality and Infinity* must not be seen in a temporal sense as a sequence of events. According to Bernasconi, there is a shift in thinking in Levinas’s term, as he notes that in

¹⁰¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1989), 94.

¹⁰² The concept of “double grounding,” introduced by Dr. Sarah Pessin in our discussions, pertains to the understanding of subjectivity in Levinas, particularly in the context of *Totality and Infinity*, and its differentiation from *Otherwise than Being*.

Totality and Infinity ethics is found in my encounter with the Other, while in *Otherwise than Being*, responsibility is already inherent in subjectivity prior to my encounter with the Other.¹⁰³ Substitution, with its inherent passivity preceding the emergence of subjectivity, is also underscored by Bernasconi as the “condition of the ethical.” The heart of subjectivity is not a “for itself” but “the one-for-the-other.”¹⁰⁴ I am for the Other without having done anything, and, as Levinas notes, under persecution. This substitution implies that one is even responsible for the persecution that one undergoes, and consequently, a subject obsessed by the Other cannot be indifferent.¹⁰⁵

In Levinasian thinking substitution is also linked closely to the idea of “recurrence.” The self and its identity, according to Levinas, must not be reduced to consciousness or a return of the self to oneself. “There is expulsion in that it assigns me before I show myself before I set myself up. I am assigned without recourse, without fatherland, already sent back to myself, but without being able to stay there, compelled before commencing.”¹⁰⁶ Levinas insist that I, the subject/self, comes before myself. Unlike the return of the self to oneself prevalent in the history of philosophy, Levinas

¹⁰³ Bernasconi, “What Is the Question to Which ‘Substitution’ Is the Answer?” 292.

¹⁰⁴ Bernasconi, “What Is the Question to Which ‘Substitution’ Is the Answer?” 235.

¹⁰⁵ Bernasconi, “What Is the Question to Which ‘Substitution’ Is the Answer?” 239-40. Steven Crowell, “Why Is Ethics First Philosophy? Levinas in Phenomenological Context,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 23, 3 (2015), 564-5.

¹⁰⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, “Substitution,” in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 93.

stresses that the return to a home is to a no home, indicating that one does not circularly return to oneself. Instead, there is a recurrence of the self to the Other-in-self (self as self-for-the-Other/substitution). This recurrence is prior to being (pre-ontological). It differs from Plato's notion of recollection, which requires regaining the lost knowledge (universal knowledge), as the self goes out of herself and returns to herself. It is also distinct from Kierkegaard's notion of repetition, portrayed in the moment of faith as regaining something that may have been lost. In Levinas, the self is an exile that does not return to itself. Not only does the self in exile not come back to itself, but it is also oriented toward the Other, whose source is prior to any departure that the self could grasp. The self-for-itself is broken since the Other, and thus the responsibility for the Other, are prior to my will or freedom - a past before past, a past that I can never grasp and reduce it to the same. Because the responsibility for the Other arises from the Other, the alterity of the Other is maintained. "Here I am" (*hinneni*) becomes the proper way of describing the subject as the one who is always under accusation by the Other, responsible to the command of the Other, prior to freedom. In light of such an understanding of the structure of subjectivity, it is obvious how ethics is first philosophy, prior to being. As Crowell points out, ethics becomes a lens through which all other philosophical questions are addressed, thus prior to ontology. Even the encounter of being is only possible through the encounter with the face of the Other, and thus the priority of ontology over ethics must be reversed.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Crowell, "Why Is Ethics First Philosophy?," 564-5.

In the later stage of his writings, Levinas also resorted to the concepts of “*illeity*” and “trace” and ceased using “height” as his primary metaphor for the relation to the face. Cohen and Morgan suggest that after the publication of *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas seems to have meditated a lot about theological themes and the interplay between ethics and religion.¹⁰⁸ “It is a line of thinking that begins in these essays, continues in *Otherwise than Being*, and culminates for all practical purposes in *God and Philosophy* (1975; 1986); the key terms that mark this route are “trace” and “*illeity*.”¹⁰⁹ It will thus be paramount to conclude this section with some considerations on these two important terms of Levinasian ethics.

Levinas rejects the idea of God in Western philosophy, considering it a totalizing system that conceived God as a being *par excellence*. Theology must have been given a meaning and must be capable of being thematized to be included in the discipline of philosophy. However, the God of the Bible, Levinas agrees, “signifies beyond being, transcendence... is not a problematic concept; it is not a concept at all.”¹¹⁰ For him, God is revealed only in our relation to the Other “who is the only ‘place’ where God is revealed.”¹¹¹ The most appropriate way to approach God is through the Other, and thus

¹⁰⁸ Cohen, *Elevations*; Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 147.

¹¹⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, ed. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 154-5.

¹¹¹ Levinas, *Collected Philosophical*, 155.

any attempt to thematize God becomes inappropriate. Peperzak notes, “by following certain suggestions, philosophical thinking can try metaphorically to evoke God as the One who has left a ‘trace’ behind: I am invited to meet God by meeting the human Other who knocks at my door.”¹¹²

Levinas expounds on these concepts in his essay *The Trace of the Other* (1963) in the last section of *Meaning and Sense* (1964), entitled *The Trace*, describing the face-to-face and its significance as a “return to Platonism in a new way.”¹¹³ Levinas asserts that Plato and Plotinus can help us see the Good or the One as a ground and also as genuinely transcendent, beyond Being.¹¹⁴ Levinas quotes Plotinus’s account of the One, stating that “the trace of the One gives birth to essence, and being is only the trace of the One.”¹¹⁵ The face of the other person, Levinas states, “proceeds from the absolutely Absent,” but its relationship “does not indicate, does not reveal, this Absent; and yet the Absent has a meaning in the face.”¹¹⁶ The face is not a thing like God or its appearance; the Absent not an “entity,” and the relationship is not one of “signifying or referring” in one direction, nor is it one of “explaining or justifying” in the other, for the Absent is no

¹¹² Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (West Lafayette, Ind: Purdue University Press, 1993), 35.

¹¹³ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 58.

¹¹⁴ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 59.

¹¹⁵ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” 63. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* V,5,5.

¹¹⁶ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” 59-60.

“world behind our world.”¹¹⁷ Levinas uses the word “trace” for this relationship. A trace “obliges” for it is what is left as it tries to escape but fails to do so.¹¹⁸ Just as we are incapable of seeing God but at best “traces of God’s presence” in the universe, so we are incapable of seeing the face of the Other but only its “trace.”¹¹⁹ The Other faces me in “the trace of God,” who already left the place where I met you. The structure of the self as chosen to serve the Other prior to the self being a choosing subject may indicate the trace of God who inscribed responsibility to the Other in me: “the immemorial past from which I stem suggests that the One who placed me on my way as one-for-the-Other has always already passed away, leaving me to my responsibility.”¹²⁰ Because God is the one “who has passed, never present: If we get in touch with ‘Him,’ it will be only his back that leaves us with an ‘inkling.’”¹²¹

With the neologism “*illeity*,” Levinas uses in *Meaning and Sense* (1964) and in *Enigma and Phenomena* (1965), drawing on an earlier essay, *The Trace of the Other* (1963), Levinas wants to draw transcendence, the infinite, and the absolute into the picture.¹²² “*Illeity*” (“he” in French) is “neither a being nor a big or small Neuter.” This

¹¹⁷ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” 60.

¹¹⁸ Levinas, “Enigma and Phenomenon,” 75-77.

¹¹⁹ Putnam, “Levinas and Judaism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 45.

¹²⁰ Peperzak, *To the Other*, 35.

¹²¹ Peperzak, *To the Other*, 35.

¹²² Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 147.

unnamable can neither be “present in our time nor be represented as a Presence in another, supernatural, ...”¹²³ This *illeity* indicates an abyss rather than an *arche*, substance, or a foundation.¹²⁴ Like a footprint in a sand that indicates a trace of a person that is not present, *illeity*, or God, in the face of the Other is the trace of “what is forever absent.”¹²⁵ Peperzak, reflecting on the relation of the trace to God, notes that because of our separateness from God by a past that “is more past than the past,” a past “before all past,” we only can walk in the trace that God left which leads to a face.¹²⁶ Because of our separateness from the Divine or *illeity*— a past that is beyond the past, a past that cannot be recollected through memory, before any past— we can only walk in the trace of the *illeity* that is in the face and leads to the face. *Illeity* points to the enigma of morality and the emergence of the pre-voluntary chosenness to respond to the Other. “The enigma of morality suggests an elsewhere or an otherness that is otherwise other than you and me, another Other from which our relation, including your command and my pre-voluntary obedience, comes.”¹²⁷ *Illeity*, thus, points to the presence of the third person(s) in the

¹²³ Peperzak, *To the Other*, 36.

¹²⁴ Peperzak, *To the Other*, 35.

¹²⁵ Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction*, 149.

¹²⁶ Adrian Peperzak, “Illeity According to Levinas,” in *Philosophy Today* 42 (1998): 41.

¹²⁷ Peperzak, “Illeity According to Levinas,” 44-5, points out that “neither illeity nor *il y a* are cognitive certainties if cognition is confined to the *cosmos noetos*. Kant made one of the many attempts to determine the border between *Erkenntnis* (science of the objective reality) and the necessary and reasonable affirmation of (or referral to) the non-scientific deal beyond science. Metaphysics should be defined as thought beyond the physis of the noetic/essential dimension.”

relation with the Other, or the second person. *Illeity* refers to the otherness of the Other, and when connected it to the notion of height, it commands me to respond to the Other. *Illeity*, like the idea of the infinite, signifies the alterity of the Other. As Levinas avers: “A face is of itself a visitation and a transcendence. But the face, wholly open, can at the same time be in itself because it is in the trace of *illeity*. *Illeity* is the origin of the alterity of being in which the *in itself* of objectivity participates while betraying it.”¹²⁸

Levinas also beckons to the table of this discussion Exodus 33, reflecting on the God who passed, never present. He connects this to the notion of the image of God and emphasizes that the trace of God should not be perceived as an image but as a way to “find oneself in his trace.”¹²⁹ According to Exodus 33, God is manifested only in his trace, and to draw close to him is not to follow the trace as a sign; rather, it is to respond to the Others who “stand in the trace of *illeity*.” A being finds its sense/meaning through this *illeity* that stands beyond the calculation and representation of economy.¹³⁰

This study of the Levinasian texts up to the year 1961 (*Totality and Infinity*) has precipitated that firstly, he introduced the concept of height in metaphysical categories; secondly, he further elevated its alterity by resorting to theological language. Thirdly, he insisted though that the use of metaphysical and theological language is but a metaphor to circumscribe his first philosophy: ethics. Finally, he elucidated the interesting feature that

¹²⁸ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” 64.

¹²⁹ Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” 64.

¹³⁰ Levinas, “Meanings and Sense,” 64.

height is actually two-pronged, because with height there is not only authority but also humility. This basic delineation of the meaning of the height of the face would also prevail after *TI*, yet eventually, new terminologies were introduced. With the neologism *illeity* in *Meaning and Sense* (1964) and in *Enigma and Phenomena* (1965), drawing on an earlier essay, *The Trace of the Other* (1963), Levinas favors *illeity* and “trace,” in the essay *Substitution* (1968), later developed as a central theme in *Otherwise than Being* (1974), he employs the notions “passivity,” “substitution,” and “recurrence” indicating that the height of the Other not only elevates the Other but also establishes the self as a New Host Self - a Self-for-the-Other.

In Levinas’s philosophical perspective, the notion of height and its association with goodness reorient philosophy to a higher vocation. Levinas sees the will to (universal) truth as the primary characteristics of the West and thus philosophy. Unlike Hegel’s attempt to achieve the Western *telos* or Nietzsche’s attempt to reverse it, Levinas attempts to “reorient the West to a higher vocation ...the call of goodness, an appeal that is not of another truth but of a height that makes truth possible.”¹³¹ The height of the good, its positivity, is too extreme for reason to grasp and thematize: “the good is both *farther* and *closer* than presence, hence invisible to reason. Reason can reason as far as the transcendental but not as far as the transcendent.”¹³² This higher vocation is symbolized by the notion of height, indicating a dimension beyond economy or reason,

¹³¹ Cohen, *Elevations*, 123.

¹³² Cohen, *Elevations*, 124.

where the height and its goodness become the focal point, elusive but intimately connected to human experience.

Excess

The height of the Other is intertwined with the excess of the Other: the height of the Other breeds excess, and *vice versa*, the excess of the Other breeds height. Yet, simultaneously, the excessive height of the Other also constitutes the self as a Self-for-the-Other. In this section, I intend to explore the concept of “excess” in relationship to the notions of “dwelling,” “language,” “signification,” “saying and the said,” and particularly to “the idea of the infinite,” elucidating their significance for our study of radical hospitality.

The excessive structure of the Other, overwhelming the self, is directly tied to Levinas’s crucial notion of hospitality explored through the concept of dwelling. Levinas’s project of hospitality towards the Other delves into the structure of the subject, separated not only from the material world but also the Other subject(s). It is through the excess of the Other, emanating from her height, that the self transforms into a Self-for-the-Other, *i.e.*, a New Host Self. Levinas contends that the act of separation, symbolized by my separation as a distinct subject from the material world, is established through a home made by labor (*vide infra*). This separation results from “having limited a part of this world and having closed it off, having access to the elements I enjoy by way of the door and the window.”¹³³ Looking out through the window, without being seen, signifies

¹³³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 169-70.

sovereignty over the world. However, this independence is built on the dependence of the world, as the home extending the interiority of my *ego* still depends in part on the world. As Levinas notes, “my sovereignty is anterior to the world which is its posterior.”¹³⁴ Consequently, recollection and the care for oneself, according to Levinas, are impossible without a dwelling. Yet, this recollection, stemming from the separation from the objective world by dwelling in one’s home, is insufficient. The mere act of possession and the gathering of objects in my home still cannot separate me from them. Even “the relation with the Other who welcomes me (here the feminine or the familial other and not the stranger other) in the home” cannot achieve this.¹³⁵ For Levinas, one must be freed from the possession established by the welcome of the home, meaning that I need to “know how to give what I possess.” This is accomplished in welcoming the Other “who presents himself in my home by opening my home to him.” The welcome of the Other involves the calling into question of the I which Levinas calls “language.”¹³⁶ The excess of the Other and her alterity, evading my thematization, calls me into question. Through language, the objective world presents itself to everyone and confirms the existence of the other object that I see. An objective world for everyone is present through language because we can confirm its intersubjective presence through language. “The language,

¹³⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 170.

¹³⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 170.

¹³⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 171.

which designates it to the other, is a primordial dispossession, one where the generality of the word institutes a common world.”¹³⁷

It is thus particularly through language that we transcend the influence of materiality on us, transforming materials into linguistic terms of meaning and senses. The freedom achieved in representation has a moral basis for Levinas, provided by language and the generosity that speaking implies. To offer one’s view about the world requires generosity and thus dispossessing oneself. This also requires openness to the view of the Other. The calling into question by the Other requires me to go outside of myself and the possibility of freeing myself from myself by regarding a view other than mine - that of the Other. “Representation derives its freedom with regard to the world that nourishes it from the essentially moral relation, the relation with the Other. Morality . . . calls in question, and puts at a distance from itself, the I itself.”¹³⁸ Since the relationship with the Other occurs in the world, the first gift to the Other is “speaking the world to the Other,” language. The making of a common world is “the offering of the world to the Other” . . . “which answers the face of the Other.”¹³⁹ Consequently, the home is not a mere possession but a place of refuge or withdrawals. A person is both taking refuge and, simultaneously, on the move, signifying that being at home is both a place and a way of

¹³⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 173.

¹³⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 172.

¹³⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 174.

being. One cannot be at home by oneself, but one is always at home in the face of the Other. It is in the face of the Other and her excess that monadic possessiveness is called into question, and the home, to be hospitable to me, requires other possible possessors.

The Other is the signifier that makes language, the objectivity of an object, and meaning possible. The surplus or excess of the Other emerges from the Other's signification. As Levinas avers, "signification is in the absolute surplus of the other with respect to the same who desires him, who desires what he does not lack, who welcomes the other across themes which the other proposes to him or receives from him, without absenting himself from the signs thus given."¹⁴⁰ In signification, through saying, an indication of the excess and the surplus of the Other, the face of the Other always adds to what she said. In Saying, the Other evades my thematization. The face of the Other directs the manifestation according to itself (*kath auto*) "as he corrects my interpretations. What we experience in discussing with him is not disclosure, but 'revelation.'"¹⁴¹ It is because of the exteriority of the Other who evades thematization or the coincidence of the signified with the signifier that the Other can correct my interpretation. Signification of the presence of the exteriority, and exteriority itself, is what breeds excess. As Levinas states in *Totality and Infinity*, "to signify is not to give. Signification is not . . . analogous

¹⁴⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 97.

¹⁴¹ James R. Mensch, *Levinas's Existential Analytic: A Commentary on Totality and Infinity* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 50.

to the sensation presented to the eye. It is preeminently the presence of exteriority.”¹⁴² It is “an original relation with exterior being.”¹⁴³ Therefore, without the Other, there is no need of language. The exteriority of the Other that cannot be reduced to a concrete theme necessitates language. What the Other has in mind cannot be “directly (intuitively) present to us. It can only be signified.”¹⁴⁴ The excess of the Other in signification transcends the silence of the world where there is no one to interrupt my view of it (world). The Other interrupts me and calls me into question. As Mensch notes, the speaking Other rescues me from the Cartesian doubt I have about the world. Cartesian doubt gives no room for the separation between the sign and the signified. It is a world “where the signified does not have the objectivity - the ‘in-itselfness’ - to call the sign into question, to assert that it signifies incorrectly.”¹⁴⁵ It is the Other who speaks that breaks this spell.¹⁴⁶ The face is not equal to what it “said,” but is presented in the “Saying.” Here, “the signifier, he who gives a sign, is not signified,” is not absorbed by the said.¹⁴⁷ Anytime the Other speaks, she adds to what it said.

¹⁴² Mensch, *Levinas's Existential Analytic*, 50.

¹⁴³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.

¹⁴⁴ Mensch, *Levinas's Existential Analytic*, 51.

¹⁴⁵ Mensch, *Levinas's Existential Analytic*, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Mensch, *Levinas's Existential Analytic*, 67.

¹⁴⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 182.

Furthermore, in *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas states that “on the hither side of the ambiguity of being and entities, prior to the said, saying uncovers the one that speaks, not as an object disclosed by theory, but in the sense that one discloses oneself by neglecting one’s defenses, leaving a shelter, exposing oneself to outrage, to insults and wounding.”¹⁴⁸ The subject is already exposed and invoked prior to any relation to the Other (in a temporal sense). In “saying” the self expresses itself to the Other and thereby loses its ground of being at home in itself, now turned toward the Other. Such exposure does not lend itself to thematization, for the saying is what stands outside of being (theme) and consequently reveals the speaker. Already in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas has pointed out that the Other cannot be reduced to any theme or discourse. The Other, as she speaks, always adds to what is said and thus evades my effort to thematize her. The Other is infinite, as she escapes thematization (categorization, e.g., being put in one category of the human being as one part of a *genus*), and consequently, the interaction of the same and the Other does not result in assimilating the knowledge of the Other by the same. Criticizing phenomenology and its emphasis on bringing to light, Levinas notes that such an act “does not constitute the ultimate event of being itself.”¹⁴⁹ For Levinas, the saying unsays the said to evade its totalization. As Wyschogrod notes, saying as exposure or offering oneself to the Other goes beyond the realm of action or will,

¹⁴⁸ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 49.

¹⁴⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 28.

resulting in unlimited responsibility for the Other and a life of “extreme passivity before the other.”¹⁵⁰ Regarding the face of the Other, Levinas stresses that one does not see the color of her eyes - transcending phenomenology and its intentionality of setting the Other under my gaze - and thus is incapable of reducing the Other to a revelation to the same or a thematized “said.”¹⁵¹ The face of the Other eludes any thematization, for the encounter with the Other interrupts my effort to possess and assimilate her into my world/self.

The excess of the Other can be explicated in particular through Descartes’ “idea of infinity.” The idea of infinity explains the separation (separated subject) of the self from the Other, here God, the Divine. The idea of the infinite refers to an idea about an *ideatum* (infinite) put in the self that cannot contain it. This separateness between the idea and the *ideatum* constitutes “the content of the *ideatum* itself. Infinity is characteristic of a transcendent being as transcendent; the infinite is the absolutely other.”¹⁵² The *ideatum*, the infinite, always surpasses the idea presented to the self. The excess of the infinite maintains its exteriority with respect to the self that thinks of it, evading any reduction of the exteriority to a theme/thought.

¹⁵⁰ Edith Wyschogrod, “Language and Alterity in the Thought of Levinas,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 200-1.

¹⁵¹ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversation with Philippe Nemo*.

¹⁵² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 49.

The idea of the infinite in the self or the finite, accomplished by the idea of infinity, is produced through desire. This desire is not a kind of desire precipitated by a lack (e.g., the Platonic notion of need as a lack that needs to be filled) that should be satisfied, but a desire that never satisfies and is aroused by the desirable/the infinite. “A Desire perfectly disinterested - goodness.”¹⁵³ Desire, however, requires a relationship where the Desirable/Other refuses the domination of the Other by the same, putting an end to power. This is established by turning to the face of the Other with generosity, offering the world/possession that I have to the Other. This relationship of generosity takes place in conversation.

The Other presents herself, exceeding my idea/thematization of her, through the face. The face reflects the idea of height and excess of the Other. The excess of the height of the Other surpasses any idea that I have of her. It is infinite excess that always contain a (sur)plus (n+1). “The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me, the idea existing to my own measure and to the measure of its *ideatum* - the adequate idea.”¹⁵⁴ The face “expresses itself” according to itself and turns thematization into conversation. Approaching the Other in discourse is to welcome the expression of the Other, as the expression always overflows the idea that the expression

¹⁵³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50.

¹⁵⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50-51.

has precipitated. “It is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity.”¹⁵⁵

The idea of infinity further explicates the interruption of the same by the Other. “Infinity, overflowing the idea of infinity, puts the spontaneous freedom within us into question.”¹⁵⁶ This infinity judges the I and its spontaneous freedom through its surplus and excess that cannot be thematized. It also indicates that meaning exists prior to giving meaning by consciousness. The face of the Other “brings us to a notion of meaning prior to my *Sinngebung* and thus independent of my initiative and my power.”¹⁵⁷ (The freedom of the self is interrupted by the Other that is exterior to the self. Her exteriority “does not call for power or possession” since the Other cannot be reduced to a memory, theme, interiority, etc.¹⁵⁸)

Sean Hand highlights that the face of the Other/Infinity signifies a “priority of existent over Being,” where the face of the Other and my responsibility for her disrupts the prioritization of any ontological inquiry. Thus, “my presence before the face is therefore an epiphany.”¹⁵⁹ The Other, as epiphany, creates an asymmetrical relationship with the Other not based on any prior knowledge. The asymmetrical relationship with the

¹⁵⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹⁵⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹⁵⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹⁵⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.

¹⁵⁹ Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, 5.

Other is based on the primacy of the Other and the epiphany of the face with the commandment ‘You shall not kill.’ “Ethics arises from the presence of infinity within the human situation, which from the beginning summons and puts me into question in a manner that recalls Descartes’s remark in his third Meditation that ‘in some way I have in me the notion of the infinite earlier than the finite.’”¹⁶⁰ The infinite, Levinas elsewhere avers, cannot be reduced to a presence/theme because it is “absolute difference” unlike the reduction of the past and the future into a presence in Husserlian intentionality. The infinite, however, is not “indifferent to me.” The infinite “is in calling me to other men that transcendence concerns me. In this unique intrigue of transcendence, the non-absence of the Infinite is neither presence, nor re-presentation. Instead, the idea of the Infinite is to be found in my responsibility for the Other.”¹⁶¹

Furthermore, the idea of infinity and the excess of the Other proposes an understanding of history that rejects totalization. The idea of infinity also rejects the binary between, on the one hand, a philosophy of transcendence where truth is located somewhere else, and on the other hand, the philosophy of immanence where the Other is reduced to the same, and where the Other vanishes at the end of history (Hegel). The idea of the infinite rejects the totalization of history, both divine and human. The idea of the

¹⁶⁰ Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, 5.

¹⁶¹ Emmanuel Levinas, “Beyond Intentionality,” in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 112.

infinite and its excess reveal the exteriority of the Other that is exterior to history.¹⁶² This exteriority is achieved by speaking to the Other, where the infinity of the Other (*ideatum*) surpasses the idea that I have about the Other.

Infinity, to conclude, refers to a mode of being more than a state of being like an “infinite being.” It possesses an excessive structure, as it “overflows the thought that thinks it. Its very infinity is produced precisely in this overflowing.”¹⁶³ Infinity is a mode of being that can evade any thematization or reduction to a presence. It is in the relation with the infinite and its infinity where the self realizes that it contains within itself (the idea of infinity) “what it can neither contain nor receives solely by virtue of its own identity.”¹⁶⁴ The relationship between infinity and excess is evident, as infinity “is manifested by the surplus, the excess of the object. As a verb, it designates this exceeding.”¹⁶⁵

Levinas’s concept of the excess of the Other is thus closely intertwined with the height of the Other. Excess is what the self cannot grasp and is what economy cannot economize. The inability of economy to grasp excess is not because “economy is limited to the finite, but because excess is of a different order than economy, because excess calls

¹⁶² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 52.

¹⁶³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 27.

¹⁶⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 27.

¹⁶⁵ Mensch, *Levinas’s Existential Analytic*, 21.

into question economy's naïve right of existence."¹⁶⁶ The Other and her excess thus resists economy in Levinas, a concept also found in Nietzsche, where resistance to economy resides within the concept of "will to power." Knowledge, operating in the realm of economy, is where the excess and the alterity of the Other in both Levinas and Nietzsche are domesticated. For Nietzsche, similar to Levinas in some respects, it is in the realm of knowledge that the "will to power" or the "creative force" of a metaphor loses its creativity and becomes knowledge.¹⁶⁷

The excess of the Other thus interrupts traditional phenomenology and economy in its attempt of apprehension by imposing a thought or perception upon the Other. In the encounter with the Other, the face of the Other escapes apprehension when imposing one's horizon - only the trace of the face of the Other can be perceived. The excessive structure of the face "is not primarily an indication of the finitude of my subjective horizon of meaning but is rather beyond the possibility of adequate thematic exposition, a call to ethical responsibility."¹⁶⁸ The call to responsibility is before and prior to any meaning and value. Therefore, the reduction of the Other to the same is a refusal of the

¹⁶⁶ Stephen Minister, "In Praise of Wanderers and Insomniacs: Economy, Excess, and Self-Overcoming in Nietzsche and Levinas," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 37, no. 3 (January 2006): 273. "The process by which a metaphor is fossilized into knowledge is a process of *losing* force and value. Thus Nietzsche intimates a value prior to the calcification of knowledge into economy, a value which knowledge violates and destroys."

¹⁶⁷ Minister, "In Praise of Wanderers and Insomniacs," 273.

¹⁶⁸ Minister, "In Praise of Wanderers and Insomniacs," 275.

commandment “thou shall not kill,” precipitating violence toward the Other through economizing the excess of the Other and her otherness.

The excess of the height of the Other thus prompts one to move beyond the everyday calculative or economic approach toward ethics and the Other. Ethics, therefore, is beyond this economic approach toward the Other based on self-interest and should be “couched in the rhetoric of hyperbole.”¹⁶⁹ Because of the excess of the Other, Levinas’s ethics has an excessive nature though distinguished from “all thought of unity, ecstasy and mysticism.”¹⁷⁰ The uses of hyperbole with excessive language about the Other is precisely what Levinas uses to overcome ontology. The responsibility for the Other has a hyperbolic structure that cannot be conceptualized because it is prior to anything for perception and response. “Hyperbole is a figure that begs to be performed because it is a dramatic, even melodramatic and foolish attempt to break the consensus on the reason-able that comprises ordinary discourse.”¹⁷¹ Two of the hyperbolic terms for Levinas are height and excess (surplus). The height and excess of the Other has an excessive structure, similar to a hyperbole that is “always more than what the reader might expect it to be.”¹⁷² According to Levinas, the I, in responding to the demand of the

¹⁶⁹ Stephen H. Webb, “The Rhetoric of Ethics as Excess: A Christian Theological Response to Emmanuel Levinas,” *Modern Theology* 15, no. 1 (January 1999): 1.

¹⁷⁰ Webb, “The Rhetoric of Ethics as Excess,” 2.

¹⁷¹ Webb, “The Rhetoric of Ethics as Excess,” 4.

¹⁷² Webb, “The Rhetoric of Ethics as Excess,” 4.

Other, is a “surplus of being, the existential exaggeration that is called being me.”¹⁷³ The excessive height of the Other constitutes the self that is more than an identity that “I can call my own because I am the product of a confrontation with a persistence that always precedes me.”¹⁷⁴

To sum it all up, the excessiveness of the height of the Other, as the result of her alterity that cannot be reduced to something to be absorbed by the self, constitutes a New Host Self, a Self-for-the-Other. In the encounter with the Other, the self is interrupted by the face of the Other, and in this process, her freedom is called into question.

Paradoxically, though, the self is also established and elevated in the same process. This elevation of the self by elevating/welcoming the Other is precipitated as the Other helps the self to fully separate herself from the totality of being and becoming a subject by entering into the ethical by responding to the command of the Other. This excessive structure in Levinas, heeding the command of the Other and the responsibility for the Other, precipitates the constitution of a New Host Self, as a Self-for-the-Other.

¹⁷³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 17.

¹⁷⁴ Webb, “The Rhetoric of Ethics as Excess,” 5.

Chapter Three: Political Hospitality

After delineating the asymmetrical Other within the framework of Levinasian ethics, describing her excess and height as well as her role in establishing a New Host Self, I will next consider how Levinas's structure of subjectivity (the topic of ethics) orients us to become the kind of people who respond to the "widow, the orphan, and the stranger," as he liked to put it in Biblical terms. We may refer to this emphasis as Levinas' hospitable sense of politics transcending both rights and laws, rooted in his ethical understanding of the structure of human subjects. In order to highlight this Levinasian emphasis by way of contrast, I will juxtapose his project with Kant's approach to politics and hospitality. Whereas Levinas propagates a theory of subjectivity rooted in heteronomy, excess, and asymmetry because of the face of the Other, Kant presents a political theory emphasizing sovereignty and symmetry with no room for excess. Following the comparison with Kant, I will then explore how ethics and a new sense of "radical hospitality" inflects politics, or in Levinas' language, what is the move from the ethics of the face to a politics of justice. In exploring this idea, I will consider Critchley's idea of a "plumbline" and Pessin's concept of *bonomythy*, both advocating for an ethics of responsibility as a guideline for action instead of a set of norms or a moral code to follow. I will conclude this section by deliberating what it *feels* like to precipitate

a Levinasian “New Host Self” oriented towards the Other, by delineating the concept of “agnostic respect” of Connolly and Pessin’s modification of it.

Hospitality in Levinas: Excess and Asymmetry

When studying the etymology of “hospitality,” it becomes obvious that the Levinasian perspective on the subject matter recovers several important aspects of the true meaning (*etymon*) of the word, aspects that have been overlooked by others and have thus not received ample attention. It seems thus both necessary and beneficial to briefly delineate some of these etymological insights before deliberating the Levinasian perspective on hospitality. In the *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, Benveniste deliberates that “hospitality” is derived from Latin *hostis* and *hospes* (guest), which is a compound noun made up of the two elements *hosti* and *pet*. *Pet*, or *pot*, was originally just a reference to “personal identity.” In the family context it designated the one who “personified the family group,” e.g., the master/father of a home (*des-potes*). The notion conveyed by *hostis* is that of “equality by compensation, *i.e.*, a person who pays back a gift with another one. Combining the two would signify a father who reciprocates a gift with another gift, *i.e.*, “a master of hospitality,” or, “he who predominantly personifies hospitality, the one who is hospitality itself.”¹⁷⁵ Although *hostis* in Latin is closely connected to the prehistoric glossary of *gasts* in Gothic and *gosti* in Old Slavonic, it deviates from both *gasts* and *gosti* by adopting the notion of enemy

¹⁷⁵ Emile Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, trans. Elizabeth Palmer (Chicago: Hau Books, 2016), 61.

into its meaning.¹⁷⁶ Benveniste, rejecting any simplistic view about the connection of guest and enemy to favorable stranger and hostile stranger and referring to different authors (e.g., Festus) notes that *hostis* actually was someone who had the same right as a Roman citizen which indicates that *hostis* was neither a stranger nor an enemy. In contrast to the *peregrinus*, who lived outside the boundaries of the territory, *hostis* was “the stranger insofar as he is recognized as enjoying equal rights to those of the Roman citizens. This recognition of rights implies a certain relation of reciprocity and supposes an agreement or compact.”¹⁷⁷ The Greeks had a comparable tradition tied to the word *xenos* implying a treaty or a bond between men imposing certain duties on them and their descendants which under the protection of Zeus Xenios, entailed exchange of gifts between the parties.¹⁷⁸

Benveniste reiterates thus that the Gothic *gasts*, the Slavic *gospodi*, the Greek *xenia* and the Latin *hostis* of antiquity (Festus: *ab antiquis*) were identical in semantic range. It is in particular interesting that in none of these words, apart from *hostis*, does the notion of hostility appear. They rather indicate to true hospitality, equality, and respectful sharing of gifts. The change of the semantic range of *hostis* must have occurred later on in history due to social changes in society when the ancient custom of hospitality had lost

¹⁷⁶ Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 65.

¹⁷⁷ Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 65-67.

¹⁷⁸ Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 67.

its force in the Roman world and such kindred relationship was no longer possible in the new political systems. The emergence of nations abolished the relation of person to person or clan to clan and what became important then was the “distinction between what is inside and outside the *civitas*. By a development of which we unfortunately do not know the exact conditions, the word *hostis* assumed then a ‘hostile’ flavor and henceforward was only applied to the ‘enemy.’”¹⁷⁹ It is also noteworthy that the one who receives into the home was not the “master” of his guest since *pot* was not originally indicating master. As we will see in our discussion of hospitality, there was a blurring of fixed identities of host and guest, or the self and Other, in the moment of hospitality as the self was expelled from her mastery. To sum it all up, a careful study of the etymology of *hostis*, “hospitality,” reveals thus important aspects of its *etymon* (*ab antiquis*), such as true hospitality anchored in human identity, equality, respectful sharing and even aspects of asymmetry.¹⁸⁰

In the spirit of the *etymon* of “hospitality,” Levinas presents the notion going beyond rights and laws and sees it rooted in his ethical understanding of the structure of human subjects. Such hospitality frees the self from sovereignty and autonomy because it centers heteronomy and elevates the Other. The height and excess of the Other prevent any reduction of the Other to something that I can possess and grasp. Consequently, in the encounter with the Other, whatever I possess, my sovereignty or any objects of mine

¹⁷⁹ Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 68.

¹⁸⁰ Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 68-73.

are called into question. The priority of responsibility for myself is now replaced by a responsibility for the Other, the self is no longer a self-for-itself but a Self-for-the-Other. Not only can I not possess the Other any longer, but now, I also have to share my possessions, my world, with the Other. The Other grounds the structure of the subject and hospitality emerges as one of the keyways I relate to that Other. With Levinas, hospitality is no longer just a right for a guest to visit, but an invitation to approach a visitor as a host. We are invited to a structure of the self where the host is welcomed into her own home by the guest.

The Levinasian understanding of hospitality thus opens us up to the field of ethics and constitutes a challenge to the Kantian account of conditional hospitality (about which we will say more shortly). His ethical call for responsibility has in mind especially displaced populations, exiles, refugees, and immigrants. Derrida appreciates the role of Levinas in orienting our focus toward the dire situation of refugees all over the world. Their predicament, Derrida avers, “call for a change in the socio- and geo-political space - a juridico-political mutation, though before this, assuming that this limit still has any pertinence, an ethical conversion . . . It is intensified, one might say, by the crimes against hospitality endured by the guests (*hôtes*) and hostages of our time, incarcerated or deported day after day, from concentration camp to detention camp, from border to border, close to us or far away.”¹⁸¹ Levinasian radical hospitality has the potential to

¹⁸¹ Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 19990, 70-71).

bring about such ethical conversion precipitating a new political subject, a New Host Self. It is noteworthy that Derrida had highlighted the centrality of hospitality in Levinas already in the 1960ies by calling *Totality and Infinity* an “immense treatise of hospitality.”¹⁸²

Since the notion of hospitality is closely connected to the ethical project of Levinas and the structure of the subject who is separated from the material world and other Others, I want to further explore Levinasian hospitality in relation to the important notion of “dwelling” in relation to the aspects of labor, freedom, language and exile. While the commonsense notion of hospitality concerns hosting people in one’s home, Levinas’ philosophical approach also implicates details of the very structure of self. Home or being at home with oneself, therefore, holds extra philosophical significance in Levinas’ account of the hospitable structure of human subjects. The home protects and shelters its residents from enemies and is the place from which human activities originate.¹⁸³ It is not an end of human activity but the condition or the basis for it.¹⁸⁴ By extending a welcome to the self, the home enables the self to dwell in the world. Levinas insists, “to dwell is not the simple fact of the anonymous reality of a being cast into existence, as a stone one casts behind oneself; it is recollection, a coming to oneself, a

¹⁸² Derrida, *Adieu*, 21.

¹⁸³ M. Purcell, “Homelessness as a Theological Motif: Emanuel Levinas and the Significance of the Home,” *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 16 (1995): 88-104.

¹⁸⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 152.

retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome.”¹⁸⁵ According to Levinas, the act of separation and my separation (a separated subject that is distinct from the material world) is established through a home made by labor. It results from my “having limited a part of this world and having closed it off, having access to the element I enjoy by way of the door and the window.”¹⁸⁶ Looking out through the window, without being seen, mirrors her sovereignty in regard to the world. However, this independence is built on the dependence on the world, for the home that extends the interiority of my *ego* is still a dependent part of the world, as Levinas has noted well by stating that our sovereignty is “anterior to the world which is posterior.”¹⁸⁷ Consequently, recollection for Levinas and the care for oneself are not possible without a dwelling. The act of collection or recollection as gathering things to myself - “an economy of resources”- is to make a place or a home for myself - seeing the world for me without considering it for the Other. It is within this economy that the question of welcoming the Other emerges.¹⁸⁸

Such recollection though, as the result of separation from the objective world by dwelling in one’s home, is not sufficient as an act of possession and gathering objects in

¹⁸⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 156.

¹⁸⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 169-70.

¹⁸⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 170.

¹⁸⁸ Jeffrey Bloechl, "Words of Welcome: Hospitality in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*, ed. Richard Kearney and Sascha Semonovitch, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 235.

my home, because it still cannot separate me from them. Even “the relation with the Other who welcomes me (here the feminine, or the familial other and not the stranger Other) in the home” cannot achieve this.¹⁸⁹ The height and excess of the Other evades the reduction of the Other to my world and thus disrupts my orientation in the world as one-for-myself, my sovereignty. The face of the Other teaches me that the Other also inhabits the world

¹⁸⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 170. A few words about the feminine and the question of *eros*: Although there are different views about Levinas’s view about the feminine, the feminine cannot just be interpreted as a gender role, but rather in a way indicating that there is a special welcome though still different from the welcome of the Other. It is not that the feminine does not entail otherness, but the feminine in my home is already being reduced to the same, grasped by the self. The feminine is the familiar that is a host as much as the self is. The feminine or the familial other have a common life with the self, united, in contrast to Levinas’s project: “The Other who welcomes in intimacy is not the *you (vous)* of the face that reveals itself in a dimension of height, but precisely the *thou (tu)* of familiarity: a language without teaching, a silent language, an under-standing without words, an expression in secret” (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 155). Katz suggests, the relationship with the feminine in Levinas’s thought is most likely the relationship of love, because for Levinas love is a return to the same, yet, “the language that marks the ethical relation is absent from the erotic” (Claire Elise Katz, *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine: The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana Univ. Press, 2003), 61). The feminine in dwelling can be equated with the beloved, where the feminine provides the condition for the self/man that goes out into the world (Katz, *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine*, 62-3.) Yet there still remains the ambiguity of love, which while still being a need, at the same time also transcends it. This is why the feminine is before and beyond the ethical: “The beloved, the feminine who appears after the discussion of the ethical, in the form of *eros* and the possibility of fecundity, appears as both need (the present) and desire (the future). In other words, the beloved is the exterior or the beyond, and in this form, we may find her transcendence.” (Katz, *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine*, 63.) If we interpret the relation with the feminine through the discussion of exile of the self, the feminine or the beloved, does not expel the self from the home, for there is a form of unity that takes place in *eros* that is blinded to all the others. Furthermore, it is in the relationship with the Other (the face and not the beloved) that the political or the relationship with all others emerges: “Love excludes the third party. The couple is sealed as a society of two. It remains outside the political, secluded in its intimacy, its dual solitude. It is closed and non-public.” (Katz, *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine*, 64; Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 265.) This is why the question of hospitality concerns itself with the stranger (Other) and not just the loved one(s). To expand the parameter of loved ones to nonsexual relationships of the self with her immediate family, or community, hospitality goes beyond the circle of the loved ones to those non-loved ones who approach me from outside. Patience and not *eros/love*, Bloechl argues, provides the force for the responsibility for the Other. The centrality of passivity in hospitality resists any return into conceptualization – “or better, that what is called for is nothing less than limitless self-effacement and a patience that must be literally without end (for Levinas, “patience” is the unique passion of responsibility).” (Bloechl, “Words of Welcome: Hospitality in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas,” 239.)

even prior to my making of the world, or stated in the words of Levinas: “before solitude is community, and before self-indulgence is the need and desire of my neighbor...”¹⁹⁰ Consequently, the self must free herself from the possession that the welcome of the home establishes, which means that I need to “know how to give what I possess.” This is done by welcoming the Other who presents herself in my home. “My world becomes truly a home when it becomes available to me as what I can either keep for myself or offer to this Other person. But this alternative is not merely a question of my freedom.”¹⁹¹ It calls for an asymmetrical responsibility that puts the need of the Other above mine.

Furthermore, in the escape from being, and because of the shame of having too much being, the Other interrupts me, calling my freedom into question. By this calling into question, the Other frees me from the totality of being, for it demands a response: it enters into the ethical.¹⁹² Through language, which Levinas notes as the calling into question of the I, the objective world presents itself to everyone like when the Other also confirms the existence of the other object that I see. An objective world for everyone is present through language because we can confirm its intersubjective presence through language. “The Language, which designates it to the other, is a primordial dispossession, one where the generality of the word institutes a common world.”¹⁹³ Furthermore, it is through language

¹⁹⁰ Bloechl, “Words of Welcome,” 235.

¹⁹¹ Bloechl, “Words of Welcome,” 236.

¹⁹² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

¹⁹³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 173.

that we transcend the influence of materiality on us as we transform the materials into linguistic terms of meaning and sense (the emphasis on language distinguishes Levinas from Husserl). The freedom that is achieved in representation has a moral basis for Levinas, provided by language and the generosity that speaking implies. To offer one's view about the world requires generosity and thus dispossessing myself. This also requires an openness to the view of the Other. The calling into question by the Other requires me to go outside of myself and the possibility of freeing myself from myself by regarding a view other than mine, that of the Other. "Representation derives its freedom with regard to the world that nourishes it from the essentially moral relation, the relation with the Other. Morality . . . calls in question, and puts at a distance from itself, the I itself."¹⁹⁴ Hospitality and thus the responsibility for the other, is enacted in concrete life, including a dwelling with someone whom one offers one's possessions. Therefore, according to Levinas, the transcendence of the face is enacted in the world and its "economy," that is why "no human or interhuman relationship can be enacted outside of economy; no face can be approached with empty hand and closed home."¹⁹⁵ Since the relationship with the Other happens in the world, the first gift to the Other is "speaking the world to the Other," language. The making of a common world is "the offering of the world to the Other" . . . "which answers the face of the Other."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 172.

¹⁹⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 172.

¹⁹⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 174.

Levinas elucidates further the concept of radical hospitality and “dwelling” by the notion of “exile.” There are two forms of exile in Levinas’ project of hospitality: the exile of the Other and the exile of the self. The exile of the Other is established as the result of her alterity (height and excess), which is distinguished from the world of objects that is grasped by the self. As Levinas notes, “the face in its nakedness as a face presents to me the destitution of the poor one and the stranger; but this poverty and exile which appeal to my powers, address me, do not deliver themselves over to these powers as givens, remain the expression of the face.”¹⁹⁷ Doukhan expound on this and says that it is precisely because of the way the Other evades the constituted world of perception that she is in exile, for she does not deliver herself, as Levinas notes, to the power of the same that perceptualizes. Even etymologically, “the other remains in exile (*ex-sul*): outside (*ex-*) of the world (*sul*) constituted by the self.”¹⁹⁸ In presenting herself, the face always evades full presentation, exceeding my perception. As Levinas puts it: “the transcendence of the face is at the same time its absence from this world into which it enters, the exiling of a being.”¹⁹⁹ Prior to the advent of the Other, the self enjoys the world, the sensible world, prior to any conceptualization. This living from is the first experience of the self-awakeness to otherness, but as Levinas notes well, it does not fully separate me from the

¹⁹⁷ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

¹⁹⁸ Abi Doukhan, “From Exile to Hospitality: A Key to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas,” *Philosophy Today (Celina)* 54,3 (2010): 236.

¹⁹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.

world as it becomes assimilated by the self, turning the world, at the ends, for me.²⁰⁰ “In enjoyment I am absolutely for myself.”²⁰¹ In a world where everything is mine, the Other becomes destitute in a world where there is no room for her. The Other then is exiled. “In a world where everything is my possession, there appears a being, which not only will not be possessed - at least on a cognitive level - but which presents himself or herself as the dis-possessed - in that it is exiled from my ‘at home,’ it possesses nothing in a world where everything is mine.”²⁰² In a world where the self is at home, Doukan further explains, the Other appears as not at-home, as exiled. But how can one experience the Other who is exiled? For Levinas, an encounter is possible on the sensible level that does not operate in the cognitive realm. In the sensible realm, the exilic face affects the self, unlike the exilic face in the cognitive realm. It is precisely here that the absolute responsibility for the Other arises, for there is no escape from this affect, there is no choice or freedom in it. The affect, however, is indirect as it affects the relationship of the self with the world. My innocent enjoyment of the world is disrupted, now there is a shame of having too much being. The arrival of the Other, (exilic Other) problematizes my relationship with the world, and as Levinas holds, the Other “casts a shadow on my possession, without ever losing his or her exilic and destitute character.”²⁰³ The Other remains on the margin, exilic and destitute.

²⁰⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 137.

²⁰¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 134.

²⁰² Doukhan, “From Exile to Hospitality,” 239.

²⁰³ Doukhan, “From Exile to Hospitality,” 240.

Nonetheless, the Other transforms my innocent possession since the self realizes that the Other is dispossessed of the world because of my possession of it. The self is the very reason for the exile of the Other, the reason for her hunger since nothing belongs to her. I am the source of the suffering of the Other.²⁰⁴

But how can the self respond to the exilic Other? In order to respond to the Other, the self must somehow have the capacity to approach the Other. This approach is only possible when the structure of the self is transformed. We have been calling this transformed self a New Host Self. From the perspective of exile, this New Host Self must undergo exile, becoming decentered from being the center of the universe, to attain the possibility of approaching the exiled Other.²⁰⁵ Abraham serves as a poignant example of this concept. As an exiled stranger living in the foreign land of Canaan, he extends hospitality to other exiled strangers, represented by the three strangers. But how can this transpire? The interruption of the self by the Other disrupts our innocent possession of the world. This interruption opens the entrance into ethics.²⁰⁶ The self is called to respond to the suffering of the Other since it is the source of her suffering. The Other consequently changes the relationship of the self to the world as being at home. It exiles, pushes the self out from her feeling of being at home, and strips it of the assurance of being the sole owner

²⁰⁴ Doukhan, "From Exile to Hospitality," 240.

²⁰⁵ Doukhan, "From Exile to Hospitality," 235.

²⁰⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

of the world.²⁰⁷ Here we can see the effect of the Other in her trace, like a footprint that indicates the absolute Other. According to Doukhan, the feeling of exile, expulsion, however, does not always lead to hospitality. It might, in contrast, also lead to the opposite of hospitality. Levinas reminds us of the story of Abel and Cain and how Cain eventually killed his brother. The expulsion of Cain from the center of the universe, by the Lord accepting his brother's sacrifice, unfortunately led to the "expulsion" of Abel, though also Cain was now no longer the owner of the world but exiled.

But how can the exile of the self lead to hospitality? The natural tendency is to protect my sovereignty, identity, and centrality in the world by the expulsion of the Other. Over against such an approach, Levinas points out that there is also the possibility of responding to the plea of the Other that differs from murdering or refusing the acknowledgment of the Other.²⁰⁸ Such a possibility is characterized by generosity: "Positively produced as the possession of a world I can bestow a gift on the Other - that is, as a presence before a face. For the presence before a face, my orientation toward the Other, can lose the avidity proper to the gaze only by turning into generosity, incapable of approaching the Other with empty hands."²⁰⁹ In generosity, the self makes the world that was her possession prior to the advent of the Other available for the Other. The self is now

²⁰⁷ Doukhan, "From Exile to Hospitality," 241.

²⁰⁸ Doukhan, "From Exile to Hospitality," 243.

²⁰⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50.

exiled, homeless. This homelessness of the self makes room for the Other to find a home in the world. It is when the self acknowledges her own exile that generosity becomes possible.²¹⁰ This is where the New Host Self is constituted, and hospitality emerges. It is a *tsim-tsum*, a contraction of the self to make room for the Other. Although the Other remains ungraspable as an exiled one, nonetheless, it becomes approachable in generosity, in ethics.

But the self is not the only thing that is changed by the Other. Also, the symbol of her autonomy, the home, experiences a transfiguration. When the Other is welcomed into the home, “the home becomes a chosen place,” because of the presence of the Other “who graces it with the presence of the infinite.”²¹¹ It is here that the home embodies its full ethical potentiality by mirroring the common experience of exile that unites both guest and host because the guest “has no other place, is not autochthonous, is uprooted, without a country, not an inhabitant, exposed to the cold and the heat of the seasons.”²¹² This is so because, at the most primordial level, the host is also potentially homeless. The welcoming of the Other turns the home into an “inn” for the self/host also realizes her own “exilic status...and both of its inhabitants are self-admitted exiles.”²¹³ The hospitable home

²¹⁰ Doukhan, “From Exile to Hospitality,” 244.

²¹¹ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 164.

²¹² Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, 91.

²¹³ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 164.

becomes a real home by virtue of the fact of the “wandering” (exilic nature) and “the surplus of the relationship with the Other (metaphysics).”²¹⁴

One can see an analogy between the exiled Other and the exiled self with the concept of guest and host, because in relation to the Other, one acts as both host and guest, signifying the ideal notion of hospitality. In *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Jacques Derrida expounds on this simultaneity of being a guest and host in the structure of hospitality. The notion of “at home with oneself as in a land of asylum or refuge” Derrida insists, means that the inhabitant that dwells there is also “a refugee or an exile, a guest (*hôte*) and not a proprietor.”²¹⁵ Derrida, spinning off the etymology of the French term *hôte* and its double meaning of host and guest, notes that “the *hôte* who receives (the host), the one who welcomes the invited or received *hôte* (the guest), the welcoming *hôte* who considers himself the owner of the place, is in truth a *hôte* received in his own home. He receives the hospitality that he offers *in* his own home in actuality *from* his own home - which, in reality though does not belong to him. The *hôte* as host is a guest. The dwelling opens itself up to itself, to its ‘essence’ without essence, as a “land of asylum or refuge.” The welcoming one is first of all welcomed in his own home. The one who invites is invited by the one whom he invites.”²¹⁶ This view of hospitality and the welcome of the Other indicates to the reality

²¹⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 172.

²¹⁵ Derrida, *Adieu*, 29.

²¹⁶ Derrida, *Adieu*, 31-2.

of one's already being a guest in her own home. In welcoming the Other, one is welcomed herself. To say it differently, there is no welcome to one's own home or self without the welcome of the Other. This changes the nature of the home as a property or possession for the owner since the guest is already a welcomed guest in her own home.

A comparison between Heidegger and Levinas may further illuminate our discussion of home and place. Heidegger's political theory emphasizes the ontological significance of place, pointing out the fact that political practice in Greek was place-bound. Heidegger even translated *polis* as "site" rather than city-state: "the *polis* is the site of history, the *Here*, in which, out of which, and for which history happens."²¹⁷ Heidegger's view about politics and its boundness to space, which stands obviously against a cosmopolitan thrust of modern politics, is delineated well in Henri Lefebvre's statement, "there is a politics of space because politics is spatial."²¹⁸ Heidegger, though also expecting the arrival of the universal cosmopolitan state, unlike Kant did not welcome it, since he considered it to be the product of the metaphysical mode of thought.²¹⁹ As an alternative to the cosmopolitan state that encompasses everyone in the world, "the Heideggerian community houses a particular *Volk*."²²⁰ Levinas, similar to Heidegger, also emphasizes

²¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 162.

²¹⁸ Henri Lefebvre, "Reflections of the Politics of Space," *Antipode*, vol. 8 (2) (1976): 33, cited in Cecil L. Eubanks and David J. Gauthier, "the Politics of the Homeless Spirit: Heidegger and Levinas on Dwelling and Hospitality," in *History of Political Thought*, vol. 32 (2011): 133.

²¹⁹ Eubanks and Gauthier, "The Politics of the Homeless Spirit," 133.

²²⁰ Eubanks and Gauthier, "The Politics of the Homeless Spirit," 133.

the significance of space, and its critical importance for modern politics, but at the same time, he also criticizes the ontological turn of Heidegger, since political actors can utilize the institutions to totalize the Other by reducing the alterity of the Other to the same.²²¹ Levinas's approach is rooted in an ethical call to responsibility in a way that Heidegger's is not. The Levinasian universal ethical imperative, if we want to call it that, is embodied and unique in each encounter with the Other, since the reality of the responsibility for the Other is universal and there is no escape from it. Although one can consider also Heidegger's place-bound ethos as a protest against the globalization project, Levinas insists that "the Heideggerian stress on place is inherently cruel because its demarcation between sacred and profane space reinforces the distinction between native and foreigner that underlies nationalism."²²² Levinas insists, "one's implantation in a landscape, one's attachment to place, without which the universe would become insignificant and would hardly exist, is the backdrop of splitting humanity into natives and strangers."²²³

Hospitality, however, does not remain solely in the ethical domain but enters into the realm of the political, with the entrance of the Third (*vide infra*).²²⁴ Levinas poses the

²²¹ Eubanks and Gauthier, "The Politics of the Homeless Spirit," 133.

²²² Eubanks and Gauthier, "The Politics of the Homeless Spirit," 138.

²²³ Emmanuel Levinas, "Heidegger, Gagarin, and Us," in *Difficult Freedom: Essays in Judaism*, trans. Sean Hand (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 232.

²²⁴ It is noteworthy that ethics and politics always oscillates in Levinas' view. It is not a sequential phenomenon, where first one meets the other, and then the third will enter into the relationship. The third already penetrates the relationship with the Other.

rhetorical question: “To shelter the other in one’s own land or home, to tolerate the presence of the landless and homeless of the ‘ancestral soil,’ so jealously, so meanly loved - is that the criterion of humanity? Unquestionably so.”²²⁵ To reiterate Levinas’s project of hospitality, home is not a mere possession but a place of refuge. A person thus is both taking refuge and, on the move, indicating that being at home is both a place and a way of being. One cannot be at home by oneself, but one is always at home in the face of the Other. It is in the face of the Other that monadic possessiveness is called into question, and the home, to be hospitable to me, requires other possible inhabitants/guests. Levinasian reflections on home posit a normative standard by which the adequacy of the human relationship and hospitality can be ethically judged. More specifically, Levinas’s analysis outright suggests that “our status as moral beings stands or falls with our treatment of strangers who presents themselves on our doorstep.”²²⁶ By positing an ethics of hospitality, Levinas provides a moral gauge with which the home’s status as a legitimate entity can be assessed. Therefore, the home, becomes an “instrument of ethical compassion for the stranger, widow and orphan!”²²⁷ Hospitality is not merely a defining characteristics of ethics of responsibility for the Other; it also enters into the realm of the political and the quest for justice: “Hospitality, if hospitality there is, will evidently be the

²²⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, “the Nations and the Presence of Israel,” *In the Time of the Nations*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 98.

²²⁶ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 165.

²²⁷ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 164.

defining feature of a just distribution of goods, a new ethics and politics attuned to original plurality, and an authentic conversion to a responsibility for the Other person that would be prior to every form of responsibility for myself.”²²⁸

Hospitality in Kant: Sovereignty and Symmetry

To further clarify Levinas’s approach to hospitality, it is useful to consider Kant’s approach to hospitality and politics by way of comparison and contrast. Whereas Levinas provides a theory of the structure of subjectivity rooted in heteronomy, excess, and asymmetry in response to the face of the Other, Kant develops a political theory emphasizing sovereignty and symmetry, with no room for excess.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) largely developed his ideas on hospitality in *Toward Perpetual Peace: and Other Essays* (1983).²²⁹ This 1795 essay, *Zum ewigen Frieden*, was published shortly after the First Treaty of Basel, when all territory to the west of the Rhine river was ceded by Prussia to France.²³⁰ Ferreira points out that three historical specifics are crucial to understand Kant’s view: first, the intellectual impact of social relations in Europe as a result of the conquest of the New World; second, religious wars, e.g., Westphalian sovereign paradigm as a heritage from religious wars; and third, the French revolution and its impact on notions of free will over religious doctrine, the

²²⁸ Bloechl, “Words of Welcome,” 235.

²²⁹ Immanuel Kant, “To Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch (1795),” in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publications, 1983).

²³⁰ Jacques de Ville, “Perpetual Peace: Derrida Reading Kant,” *International Journal of Semiotic Law* 32 (2019): 336.

transferal of sovereignty from the king to the nation, and human rights, transferring from the rights of citizens to rights of man.²³¹ While written as a response to the treaty as well as a contribution to the debates of peace among the European powers of his time, the essay puts forth the following basic principles: (1) “All rational beings are equal members in a moral community of humanity;” (2) “All human beings share the qualities of freedom, equality, and independence, and these qualities must guide the normative evaluation of political institutions.”²³²

Toward Perpetual Peace (1795) was praised as one of the most important and influential political texts but was forgotten until the 1980s and 1990s, with copious commentaries emerging around its 200 years existence.²³³ The essay takes the literary form of a peace treaty and consists of a preface, six preliminary articles, three definite articles, as well as two supplements and two appendices.²³⁴ The preface starts with a reference to the “satirical inscription” on the signboard of a Dutch innkeeper, *Zum ewigen Frieden*, picturing a graveyard. The signboard provided Kant both the title for his essay and also the warning to make our concern the peace of the guest and not of the cemetery.

²³¹ Carlos Enrique Ruiz Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism: Evolution of the Species, Sovereignty and Hospitality” *Dados* (Rio de Janeiro), Vol. 63,2 (2020): 3-4.

²³² Nicholas Zvediuk, “Kantian Hospitality,” *Peace Review* 26 (2014): 170. It is important to note that with the signing of this treaty the German monarchy recognized the legal form as well as the boundaries of the revolutionary French Republic.

²³³ De Ville, “Perpetual Peace,” 335.

²³⁴ Garrett W. Brown, “The Laws of Hospitality, Asylum Seekers and Cosmopolitan Right: A Kantian Response to Jacques Derrida,” *European Journal of Political Philosophy* 9 (2010): 308-327.

Following some preliminary considerations, Kant presents three definite principles necessary for perpetual peace. In the first article, he addresses the necessity for establishing republican constitutions. The second article discusses the benefits of the establishment of a federation of free states. The third article, most important for our discussion, delineates the universal conditions of hospitality. In article three, Kant proposes a cosmopolitan “right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another’s country.”²³⁵ Kant then characterizes hospitality as having the following features:

(1) Hospitality is a right, not a privilege, indicating that citizens of a country have the duty to protect foreigners.²³⁶ He delineates the legal scope of hospitality in an attempt to mitigate potential hostilities between nation-states in a modern and global world that transcends the religious or spiritual undercurrent that has shaped the understanding of hospitality before him.²³⁷ The end goal of responding to a stranger with hospitality rather than hostility is to maintain peace among the nations.²³⁸ “The state of peace among men living in close proximity is not the natural state (*status naturalis*); instead, the natural

²³⁵ Kant, “To Perpetual Peace,” 118. The two historical phenomena that drew the attention of Kant to the problem of hospitality was the inhospitableness that coastal dwellers showed by robbing ships and making slaves of stranded seafarers and the attitude of civilized nations towards inhabitants of America, the lands occupied by blacks, when they incite war, famine, rebellion and treachery, cf. Kant, “To Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch (1795),” in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, 118-119.

²³⁶ Robin May Schott, “Kant and Arendt on Hospitality,” *Jahrbuch fuer Recht und Ethik* 17 (2009): 185.

²³⁷ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 8.

²³⁸ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 9.

state is one of war, which does not just consist in open hostilities, but also in the constant and enduring threat of them. The state of peace must therefore be *established*, for the suspension of hostilities does not provide the security of peace, unless this security is pledged by one neighbor to another.”²³⁹

In contrast to Kant, Levinas’s first approach to peace is as part of his ethical approach to the structure of subjectivity—and in that context, peace signals something much more primordial than the mere suspension of hostility between the self and the Other. “The opposition of the face, which is not the opposition of a force, is not a hostility. It is a pacific opposition, but one where peace is not a suspended war or a violence simply contained.”²⁴⁰ Violence is to indirectly ignore the opposition that the face presents by reducing it into a totality, a law, and the universal from “an indirect angel,” making the face into a submissive face (force).²⁴¹ Peace, for Levinas, is the intersubjective relationship that maintains the plurality of individuality by avoiding the totalization of the relationship of the self with the Other to a *genus*: The face that presents itself is “preeminently nonviolence, for instead of offending my freedom it calls it to responsibility and founds it. As nonviolence it nonetheless maintains the plurality of the same and the other. It is peace.”²⁴² Levinas returns to the notion of peace and the unity of

²³⁹ Kant, “To Perpetual Peace,” 111.

²⁴⁰ Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 19.

²⁴¹ Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 19.

²⁴² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 203.

plurality on the penultimate page of *Totality and Infinity*, stating: “Peace therefore cannot be identified with the end of combats that cease for want of combatants, by the defeat of some and the victory of the others, that is, with cemeteries or future universal empires. Peace must be my peace, in a relation that starts from an I and goes to the other, in desire and goodness, where the I both maintains itself and exists without egoism.”²⁴³ Here we may also speak in Levinas a direct line from his non-Kantian treatment of peace as part of an analysis of subjectivity-for-another to a political sense of peace that also exceeds a Kantian frame.

Kant’s concern is to provide laws and regulations that maintain peace amongst nations despite the movement of citizens into one another’s territory. The law thus puts obligations on both the host and the guest: on the one hand, the nations should not prevent the movement of people; on the other hand, visitors should not infringe upon the sovereignty of the host nation. Consequently, a common law for regulating the respectful visitation of a stranger (foreigner) becomes a necessity.²⁴⁴ “By removing hospitality from the field of moral or religious responsibility or benevolence, and placing it in the field of rights, Kant recommends situating the issue of hospitality under the command of legal and juridical regulations.”²⁴⁵ Kant calls it “the right of an alien not to be treated as an

²⁴³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 306.

²⁴⁴ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 9.

²⁴⁵ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 9.

enemy upon his arrival in another's country."²⁴⁶ This right implies that an alien is protected against theft, imprisonment, and particularly against enslavement. Kant propagates thus a "hospitality within the boundaries of the law alone,"²⁴⁷ and this on three levels: "constitutional law, international law and cosmopolitan law."²⁴⁸ While he deliberately links hospitality in his third definite article with the cosmopolitan law (*Das Weltbuergerrecht soll auf Bedingungen der allgemeinen Hospitalitaet eingeschraenkt sein*), in his second definite article he betrays a strong leaning towards international law.²⁴⁹ Much has been said about the seemingly inconsistency of Kant as regarding the *locus* of legal power. Jacques de Ville presents a variety of readings of Kant on the issue but eventually suggests that in reference to international law, a federation of states as an initial stage followed by a world state was his preference: "This world state would have a federal, republican structure and its members, which need not be republican states, would voluntarily give up their external sovereignty as states."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Kant, "To Perpetual Peace," 118.

²⁴⁷ Cf. "Religion within the bounds of reason alone."

²⁴⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 123.

²⁴⁹ Kant, "To Perpetual Peace," 118.

²⁵⁰ De Ville, "Perpetual Peace," 346. Nb.: De Ville delineates three possible readings: The first reading as reflected mainly in *Perpetual Peace* expresses "a preference for a federation of states" and "in *PP*, he rejects any kind of universal state." A second reading "point(s) in the direction of a world republic rather than a federation of states." In a third reading (v.s.) "the federation states" represent "only a preliminary stage, and a world republic a final stage or ideal in the progression of reason. This world state would have a federal, republican structure and its members, which need not be republican states, would voluntarily give up their external sovereignty as states."

Unfortunately, in the end, the aforementioned levels of legal power would be relegated to utopia and wishful thinking, while decisions on the ground were, for the most part, made according to the constitutional law of the nation-states. “Kant’s idea of the cosmopolitan right of citizens to visit one another’s territory without being treated as an enemy remains thus by-in-large modeled on the givenness of the nation-states and their sovereignty.”²⁵¹ The right to visit is only possible under the condition that the visitor is law-abiding and is a citizen of another country, “which implies that those who are classified as nomads, asylum seekers, or people who are displaced for a variety of reasons cannot be granted hospitality or a right to visit for they remain a potential menace to the integrity and sovereignty of the nation-state.”²⁵²

Hanna Arendt follows Kant in being skeptical concerning the efficiency of the international and cosmopolitan levels of law and thus focuses on “national rights as the precondition for human rights.”²⁵³ But in doing so, Schott warns us that “Arendt faces a worrying dilemma,” because “the history of the stateless populations in the 20th century makes evident, nation-states cannot be trusted to provide an anchor for human rights.”²⁵⁴ Hence, in a more than worrying conclusion, Arendt admitted that it is “by no means

²⁵¹ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 10.

²⁵² Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 11.

²⁵³ Schott, “Kant and Arendt,” 189.

²⁵⁴ Schott, “Kant and Arendt,” 189.

certain” whether one can guarantee “the right to have rights.”²⁵⁵ For Benhabib, this worrying conclusion raises the challenge to go beyond Kant’s argument for a theoretical loose federation of sovereign states and Arendt’s view that nation-states have historically provided the only guarantee for the “right to have right.”²⁵⁶ She argues that we must de-link “the right to have rights from one’s nationality status” and proposes the protection of rights through developing (a theoretical) international regime instead.²⁵⁷ But in the end, she also has to admit that this is nothing but a Kantian *deja-vue*: She notes that even though the rights of asylum seekers have been augmented by United Nations declarations, “sovereign states continue to jealously guard the decision as to whether they have an obligation to grant asylum.”²⁵⁸ Because of that “neither Kant nor Arendt were wholly wrong in singling out the conflict between universal human rights and sovereignty claims as being the root paradox at the heart of the territorially bounded state-centric international order.”²⁵⁹

(2) The right of hospitality is not a right to live (*Gastrecht*) but simply a right to visit (*Besuchsrecht*). While the former grant the visitor the right to live (*Gastrecht*) in the

²⁵⁵ Hanna Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 298.

²⁵⁶ Schott, “Kant and Arendt,” 189.

²⁵⁷ Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 64 and 68.

²⁵⁸ Schott, “Kant and Arendt,” 189.

²⁵⁹ Benhabib, *The Rights of Other*, 69.

host community for an extended period of time, the latter it is only a right to visit (*Besuchsrecht*) for a short period of time. It is only a right of protection for the foreigner in extreme situations. Kant argues that this right belongs to people “by virtue of their common ownership of the earth’s surface.”²⁶⁰ This common ownership of the earth’s sphere points out that there is a limitation for people to scatter on the earth, and consequently, they must “ultimately tolerate one another as neighbors, and originally no one has more of a right to be at a given place on earth than anyone else.”²⁶¹ Similarly, Reinhard Brandt, in his *Metaphysik der Sitten*, explicates the notion of human body and its need of a place to occupy. The human body needs a place, although it cannot claim that place as its possession.²⁶²

Kantian hospitality and the right to visit, thus, can be seen more in terms of establishing commerce between foreigners and the host country rather than explicating the conventional meaning of hospitality. Kantian hospitality, or “hospitableness” (*Wirtbarkeit*), is not the right to be a guest (*Gastrecht*) because that requires entertaining the foreigner and taking him into one’s own house; rather, Kant describes it as the right to visit (*Besuchsrecht*) in order to present oneself to society for the sake of establishing

²⁶⁰ Kant, “To Perpetual Peace,” 119.

²⁶¹ Jorgen Huggler, “Cosmopolitanism and Peace in Kant’s Essay on ‘Perpetual Peace’” in *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 29 (2010), 135.

²⁶² Reinhard Brandt, “Vom Weltbuergerrecht,” in *Immanuel Kant: Zum Ewigen Frieden* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 144. He writes: “wer also gegen seinen eigenen Willen an das Ufer eines Landes getrieben wird, hat das Recht des Besuchs, weil er einen Boden unter seinen Fuessen braucht.”

commerce.”²⁶³ As mentioned above, Kant starts the essay on *Toward Perpetual Peace* with the Dutch innkeeper that indicates to hospitality as a business transaction. Indeed, the word he uses most frequently, translated as hospitality or hospitableness, is *Wirtbarkeit* (cf. *Unwirtbarkeit* or *Unwirtbarste*, translated as “inhospitable”), whose root *Wirt* means innkeeper or landlord.²⁶⁴ Tracy McNulty, reiterating that Kantian hospitality does not designate a welcoming of the Other/stranger but refers only to a right of visit, bemoans that it does not indicate an openness for a relation with the stranger (the Other).²⁶⁵ Such an impersonal rule only indicates an abstract right of the guest/stranger/foreigner, which implies that the interaction with the guest is regulated through international laws and treaties signed among the sovereign nation-states.²⁶⁶

(3) Hospitality is a limited right. The foreigner has the right not to be turned away if this would mean his demise (*Untergang*).²⁶⁷ In a regular situation, when the threat of demise is absent, the country and its citizens have no obligation to provide hospitality. “If it can be done without destroying him, he can be turned away; but as long as he behaves peaceably he cannot be treated as an enemy.”²⁶⁸ Adam Knowles has suggested the

²⁶³ Kelly Oliver, *Earth and World: Philosophy After the Apollo Missions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 45.

²⁶⁴ Oliver, *Earth and World: Philosophy*, 45.

²⁶⁵ Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

²⁶⁶ McNulty, *The Hostess*, 55, 66-67.

²⁶⁷ Kant, “To Perpetual Peace,” 118.

²⁶⁸ Kant, “To Perpetual Peace,” 118.

broadest possible interpretation of “demise” (*Untergang*) as “whatever opposes human flourishing.”²⁶⁹ But when we turn to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which tries to capture the concept of *Untergang* in its Article 33 on the “Prohibition of Expulsion of Return (Refoulement),” we read: “No Contracting State shall expel or return (*refouler*) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”²⁷⁰ Regardless of the fact that the UN lacks the binding force of law that Kant had postulated for a cosmopolitan federation of nations, already the second ensuing clause of the article qualifies the first: “The benefit of the present provision may not, however, be claimed by a refugee whom there are reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgement of a particular serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country.”²⁷¹ The UN charter thus encourages the construction of camp-like complexes as an alternative to expelling or returning anyone to the “frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened.”²⁷² The demand of Kant for a *Besuchsrecht* and the right to become

²⁶⁹ Adam Knowles, “Hospitality’s Downfall: Kant, Cosmopolitanism, and Refugees,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 31 (2017): 348-349.

²⁷⁰ “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the UN General Assembly, 1951, accessed Oct. 1, 2021.

²⁷¹ “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the UN General Assembly, 1951, accessed Oct. 1, 2021.

²⁷² Knowles, “Hospitality’s Downfall,” 350.

a *Hausgenosse*, which refers to a resident of a household implying a more permanent and intimate association with the host community, has thus deteriorated *via* the UN-mandate to “a structure that serves as the symbol of the twentieth century’s political failures: the camp.”²⁷³

For Kant, hospitality is thus conditional, premised on legality in general and national laws in particular. Such Kantian conditional hospitality is concerned with the sovereignty of the host, the nation-state, indicating that the subjectivity of the host must remain intact. The sovereignty of the subject must not be interrupted by the Other, in the case of an opening up and welcoming of the subject of the guest/stranger. The conditional welcoming of the guest endeavors to prevent the vulnerability of the self/subject as the result of an encounter with the stranger. Kantian conditional hospitality, thus, privileges “ontology over ethics and identity over relation which inevitably leads to the elimination of relationality with the other.”²⁷⁴ Kantian hospitality does not designate a welcoming of the stranger but only constitutes a right of visit, which does not indicate an openness for a relation with the Other. Hospitality with Kant is thus just a limited right for the foreigner not to be turned away if this would mean her demise (*Untergang*).

This conventional understanding of Kantian’s hospitality, considering only in the realm of right and consequently law, might be too reductionist though, as it overlooks one aspect of Kantian hospitality, namely hospitality as ethics. *Toward Perpetual Peace*

²⁷³ Knowles, “Hospitality’s Downfall,” 350.

²⁷⁴ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 11.

simply portrays hospitality in the realm of law and right by promoting peace between states. Nevertheless, one can see in Kantian hospitality also ethical implications as reflected in some of his other writings. Kant built his ethical project, especially in *The Critique of Practical Reason* and *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, suggesting that human beings are free moral agents and exist as an end in itself and not as a means for arbitrary use of the will: “Now morality is the only condition under which a rational being can be an end in itself, because it is only through this that it is possible to be a legislating member of the kingdom of ends.”²⁷⁵ Ethics and law comply with different statutes, the latter with the “formal condition for external freedom” and the former more in a sense of internal freedom, producing the *materia* (an object of free choice), a finality of pure reason, which would imply the human “an obligation to possess.”²⁷⁶ Ethics, for Kant, therefore, relates to the “obligation of virtue,” while law relates to “the obligation of law.”²⁷⁷ Virtue, for Kant, is “the moral strength of a human being’s will in fulfilling his duty, a moral constraint by his own lawgiving reason, insofar as this consists in itself of an authority executing the law.”²⁷⁸ Albeit, ethics only provides the maxims for actions

²⁷⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Christopher Bennett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 48.

²⁷⁶ Carlos Enrique Ruiz Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism: Evolution of the Species, Sovereignty and Hospitality,” *Dados* (Rio de Janeiro), vol. 63, no. 2 (2020): 16.

²⁷⁷ Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism,” 16.

²⁷⁸ Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism,” 16.

and not laws for actions.²⁷⁹ Ferreira thus insists that although Kant is not investigating the issue of hospitality in the *Groundwork for Metaphysics of Morals* and *the Metaphysics of Morals*, the existence of the “obligation of virtue” can very well be integrated into the ethical duty of hospitality as it considers the happiness of others, “as an end which also constitutes an obligation.” Referring to Kant, Ferreira writes, “exposition of the obligations of virtue as law commitments,” or “the reason why an obligation is beneficial is this: as our self-affection is inseparable from our need to be loved (assisted if need be) by others, we ourselves become an end for others.”²⁸⁰ Here one can see clearly the symmetrical perspective of Kant even in his ethical project. It is thus possible, Ferreira insists, “to infer the proximity between the maxim of the search for the happiness of others with the imperative of hospitality.”²⁸¹

Highlighting another aspect of Kant’s ethical project, namely autonomy and comparing it with Levinasian heteronomy, might be illuminating as well. Autonomy, in Kant’s ethical project, should not be perceived as individual independence but rather as self-legislation (*Selbstgesetzgebung*). Although there are various views about the nature of the self and legislation, self as “empirical person, pure reason, or of a specific kind of principles” and legislation as “formulating the content of a law, and the authority or

²⁷⁹ Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism,” 16.

²⁸⁰ Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism, 17.

²⁸¹ Ferreira, “Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism, 17.

bindingness of the law,” the nature of the self and the obligation of the self toward the Other emerges from the self, while in Levinas, we have seen that it is the face of the Other that establishes the self, in responsibility to the Other, and thus ethics.²⁸² Autonomy is posited by Kant to explicate the authority of moral principles, the “unconditionality” of moral requirements, where in relation to self-legislation law is the “categorical imperative.”²⁸³ It is categorical for it is not based on the self-interest of the self where conditionality comes in. This unconditional authority and the categorical imperative thereby emerge only from the will as pure practical reason: “autonomy is a property of the will – *i.e.*, of the faculty of rational volition, which Kant elsewhere identifies with practical reason.”²⁸⁴ Similar to a political sovereign that does not obey outside authority with its own laws, the rational will is its own “sovereign lawgiving power” and is thus subject “only to its own though still universal lawgiving.”²⁸⁵ It is the rational will or the self that determines both the content and the authority of the law that obligates the self in Kant’s view. Autonomy is “both a condition and a principle of the moral law.”²⁸⁶ If for Kant, autonomy means lack of obligation, for Levinas it is precisely

²⁸² Oliver Sensen, ed., *Kant on Moral Autonomy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2.

²⁸³ Andrews Reath, “Kant’s Conception of Autonomy of the Will,” in *Kant on Moral Autonomy*, ed. Oliver Sensen (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 32-52.

²⁸⁴ Reath, “Kant’s Conception of Autonomy of the Will,” 32.

²⁸⁵ Reath, “Kant’s Conception of Autonomy of the Will,” 34.

²⁸⁶ Darin Crawford Gates, “The Fact of Reason and the Face of the Other: Autonomy, Constraint, and Rational Agency in Kant and Levinas,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40,4 (December 2002), 494; Gates insists that “Levinas’s notion of heteronomy allows for a certain conception of autonomy,” and

in heteronomy that obligation emerges.²⁸⁷ In our discussion of the height of the Other in Levinas, we have seen that the height of the Other not only obliges me to respond but also is the heteronomous authority that commands me.

Although both Levinas and Kant locate ethical relations outside the “historical totality,” Levinas argues in contrast to Kant, who begins with a self who legislates obligation, that “it is precisely the *autonomy* of the choice that makes it inadequate to the transcendence of the moral demand.”²⁸⁸ If decisions remain, as with Kant, the decisions of the self, there is a different directionality at work as in Levinas where the decision comes from the Other to the self. “Only in the face of the other does the self come to feel its own natural capacities as potentially murderous. Animality is truly surpassed and a genuine humanity arises in the experience of shame, an experience coming out of the face-to-face.”²⁸⁹ “Thou shall not kill” is the command of the face of the other which transforms the self into a moral agent, a New Host Self.

In Kant’s philosophy, the Other emerges from the self, and the responsibility for the Other, even the perception of the Other as an end and not as a means, emerges from

he argues “that important similarities in their respective notions of the *ethical* (especially concerning the *constraint* and *necessity* involved in their accounts of the ethical encounter) establish that Levinas is in fact committed to many of the central claims surrounding Kant’s notion of autonomy,” Gates, “The Fact of Reason and the Face of the Other,” 493.

²⁸⁷ Gates, “The Fact of Reason and the Face of the Other,” 495.

²⁸⁸ Cohen, *Elevations*, 125.

²⁸⁹ Robert Bernasconi, “Levinas and Derrida: The Question of the Closure of Metaphysics,” in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard Cohen (New York: State University of New York, 1986), 125.

the self and its ability to reason as the other person belongs to universal humanity.

Conversely, in Levinas' philosophy, the self emerges from and is constituted by the Other, and the responsibility for the Other emerges from the Other who calls the self into question, establishing the self's subjectivity before its capacity to reason.

In summary, it is thus only with Levinas that the issue of hospitality is freed more fully from the constricting force of rights and law and is transposed into a phenomenological ethics which in turn implicates a more responsive approach to politics. Levinas' self is also freed from sovereignty and self as well as autonomy as it establishes a heteronomy and is concerned with the Other. It is no longer just a *Besuchsrecht*, but also a *Gastrecht* - in fact, the visitor becomes the host! Whereas Levinas provides a theory of subjectivity rooted in heteronomy, excess, and asymmetry in response to the face of the Other, Kant propagates a political stance that emphasizes autonomy, sovereignty, and symmetry with no room for excess. Kant aims to protect the peace among the newly formed nation-states resulting from the increasing movement of people among different nations. Hospitality is conditional, premised on legality in general and national laws in particular. This conditional hospitality is concerned with the sovereignty of the host, the nation-state, indicating that the subjectivity of the host must remain intact and must not be interrupted by the Other, while at the same time encouraging welcoming the guest/stranger. Consequently, and because of the lack of the concrete elevation of the Other, there is with Kant no excess that transforms the self. Instead, he emphasizes a symmetrical process, where a sovereign self rules herself, which is different from the

kind of radical hospitality we have found in Levinas following the transformation of the self into a New Host Self.

Ethics & Politics: From the Face to Justice

Following this comparison of Kantian and Levinasian hospitality, I want to explore how ethics and Levinasian radical hospitality inflects politics, or delineated in Levinas' language: What is the move from the ethics of the face to a politics of justice? I will first explore the notion of the third person and how, according to Levinas, the ethical relationship with the Other already implies a relationship with all others, the rest of humanity, because my relationship with the Other (2nd person) always already implies the presence of all other people (3rd person), entering into society beyond the closed circle of two. This is where justice (politics) and thereby calculation or compromise emerges. I am now forced to decide between the demands of all other people who need my help and the Other who stands in front of me.

While Levinas is widely recognized as the philosopher of the Other, sometimes insufficient attention is paid to his account of the third party, the gateway to the political which is of utmost importance for our study on political hospitality.²⁹⁰ Any discussion of

²⁹⁰ In spite of the fact that Jeffrey Dudiak, "Structures of Violence, Structures of Peace: Levinasian Reflections on Just War and Pacifism," in *Knowing Other-Wise: Philosophy at the Threshold of Spirituality*, ed. by James H. Olthuis (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 165, laments, "the third party is given specific thematic attention only very rarely, remarkably rarely," several important essays have been published on "the third:" Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 225-237; Adriaan Peperzak, *To the Other* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1993), 167-184; William Paul Simmons, "The Third: Levinas's Theoretical Move from An-Archical Ethics to the Realm of Justice and Politics," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25 (1999): 83-104; Robert Bernasconi, "The Third Party. Levinas on the Intersection of the Ethical and the Political," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 30 (1999): 76-87; David J. Gauthier, "Levinas and the Politics of

the Third, or the third party, needs to begin with an examination of Levinas's three main accounts on this concept: *The Ego and the Totality* (1954), *The "Other and the Others"* from *Totality and Infinity* (1961), and "From Saying to the Said, or Wisdom of Desire" from *Otherwise than Being* (1974).²⁹¹ Levinas's discussion of "thirds" is complex and according to Bernasconi involves three separate elements: *illeity*,²⁹² the third person, and the Third as the "other to my Other;" and in what follows, our focus is on the ethico-political significance of the latter.²⁹³ Our task ahead is thus to elucidate the Levinasian understanding of the Third and its relationship to the Other in general and how the Third incarnates the an-archival relationship with the Other into politics in particular, while not

Hospitality," *History of Political Thought* 28/1 (2007): 159-160; Aaron, Simmons, "Levinas, Politics, and the Third Party," in *The Oxford Handbook of Levinas*, ed. Michal L. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 279-302.

²⁹¹ E. Levinas, "The Ego and the Totality," *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. A. Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 25-45; E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*. Trans. A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 212-214; E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 153-162.

²⁹² Michael L. Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 151: "The two other thirds (*Otherwise than Being*, 150), which are at times barely distinguishable, are the notion of the third person that represents the neutral observer whose standpoint corresponds to that of universal reason, and the notion of *illeity*, which is derived from the French third person singular personal pronoun *il*. What does Levinas mean with *illeity* and how is it different from the Third? First, God as *illeity* is present in the face of the Other, as the Other's ethical force, but the Third has a different relation to the face of the Other. The Third is other to my other; there is a third, a fourth, and so on. Secondly, God and *illeity* is what calls to me from the face of the Other, whereas the Third compels me to stand back and to judge and assess how I am to execute my responsibility to all others. The Third pushes me to judgment, deliberation, and the formulation of principles and rules. God and *illeity* pushes me to responsibility without any of these. Finally, God (*illeity*) is the author of responsibility and a kind of identity through substitution for the Other; God and *illeity* comes to mind when we seek to express the weight or burden that we feel toward the Other, while the Third is the author of justice through detachment and evaluation and separation."

²⁹³ Bernasconi, "The Third Party," 77; Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213; and Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 157-159.

supplanting the original ethical relationship with the Other, but instead, initiating a never-ending oscillation between ethics and politics.

The Other & The Third

Perhaps the most basic way to define the Third is to consider it in relationship to the Other. Whereas the Other refers to the other person before me (a Second, as it were), the Third refers to another person beyond that. Thus, the Third is not only another to the self but also another to the Other.²⁹⁴ Another basic principle that Levinas insists on is that the Other is equal to the Third because the face of the Other reflects the presence of the Third: “His equality within this essential poverty consists in referring to the third party, thus present at the encounter, whom in the midst of his destitution the Other already serves.”²⁹⁵ The Third thus occupies an equivocal position, as it is “other than the neighbor, but also another neighbor, and also a neighbor of the other, and not simply his fellow.”²⁹⁶ Since the Third exists in a condition of parity with respect to the Other, the self is no less responsible for the welfare of the Third than it is for the Other.²⁹⁷ While in Buberian language the relationship of the self to the Other approximately corresponds to an I-Thou, the Levinasian paradigm reflects an I-We, as the self faces both the Other and

²⁹⁴ Cf. Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 165. As we will see later on in our discussion, such a “basic” delineation of the Third will have to be qualified slightly in several instances.

²⁹⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

²⁹⁶ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 157.

²⁹⁷ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 165.

the Third simultaneously:²⁹⁸ “The thou is posted in front of a we.”²⁹⁹ The presence of the Third entails that the self is obligated to not only take responsibility for the neighbor that she faces but also for the rest of humanity.³⁰⁰ In the conclusion to *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas spelled out the implications of this claim for the relation of ethics to politics: “In the measure that the face of the Other relates us with the third party, the metaphysical relation of the I with the Other moves in the form of the We, aspires to a State, institutions, laws, which are the source of universality.”³⁰¹

The appearance of the Third complicates the self-Other relationship somewhat and entails a certain “betrayal” of the self’s “anarchical relation with *illeity*.”³⁰² Responsibility for the Other becomes a challenge when the Third enters into the picture.³⁰³ Maintaining that “the others concern me from the first,” Levinas still finds it

²⁹⁸ While Buber's I-Thou relationship is similar to the self-other relationship described by Levinas, there are, however, also important differences between the two. For Buber the relationship between the I and the Thou is reciprocal, for Levinas, however, the obligation of the self towards the other is asymmetrical and infinite in scope, cf. R. Bernasconi, “Failure of Communication as a Surplus: Dialogue and Lack of Dialogue between Buber and Levinas,” in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, ed. R. Bernasconi and D. Wood (New York: Routledge, 1998), 100-135; and A. Tallon, “Intentionality, Intersubjectivity, and the Between: Buber and Levinas on Affectivity and the Dialogical Principle,” *Thought* 53 (1978): 292-309.

²⁹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

³⁰⁰ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 166.

³⁰¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300. Cf. Robert Bernasconi, “The Third Party. Levinas on the Intersection of the Ethical and the Political,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 30 (1999): 78.

³⁰² Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 158.

³⁰³ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 157.

necessary to define more precisely the relationship between the Other and the Third: “The relationship with the third party is an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity in which the face is de-faced.”³⁰⁴ This correction precipitates an oscillation upon the Third and into the political. “The extra-ordinary commitment of the Other to the third party calls for control, a search for justice, society and the State, comparison and possession, thought and science, commerce and philosophy, and outside of anarchy, the search for a principle.”³⁰⁵ Bernasconi, after a careful scrutiny of the Levinasian sources, suggests that even if it might appear that, in a legal sense, politics is a “supplement” to ethics, in practice, an individual’s ethics are morphed by the larger socio-political exigencies. Levinas suggests an account where both ethics and politics coexist in tensions, each capable of questioning the other. The responsibility for the Other (asymmetrical) would keep the political order in check, even in the case of a political order based upon equality, while the presence of the Third in relation to the Other (second) “serves to correct the partiality of a relation to the Other” in a closed community of two and highlights the presence of all thirds (others).³⁰⁶

From a linguistic perspective, Levinas would even suggest that “the third party introduces a contradiction in the saying whose signification before the other until then

³⁰⁴ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 158-159.

³⁰⁵ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 161.

³⁰⁶ Bernasconi, “The Third Party,” 77; Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213; and Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 157-159.

went in one direction.”³⁰⁷ The appearance of the Third extends the an-archival responsibility for the Other into the realm of the said, ushering in the latent birth of language, justice, and politics. The an-archival relationship with the Other is the pre-linguistic world of the Saying. Language is unnecessary to respond to the Other. The Third, however, demands an explanation. “The third party looks at me in the eyes of the Other - language is justice.”³⁰⁸ With Levinas, language plays an important role in undermining the self’s identity as a self. With the insertion of the Third into the dialogue, a whole new situation of communication arises. Since language involves not just two interlocutors now, the intimate one-on-one dialogue is no longer sufficient because the whole human collective needs to be reached. In order to address all of humanity, language needs to be adapted to a more general form. The language that takes into consideration the presence of the Third ultimately has much in common with the “sermon” or “exhortation” or the “prophetic word” of the Old Testament.³⁰⁹ Language oscillates into a thematizing instrument that intensely solicits the self’s attention, as the Third exhorts the self to respond. In this respect, the Third is similar to the Other (as Second), and the demand on the self’s undivided attention is no less demanding. Faced now with two (and by extension, many more than two) parties, the self must weigh

³⁰⁷ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 157.

³⁰⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

³⁰⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

competing obligations. The self is now forced to consider also the welfare of those who fall outside the parameter of the self-Other relationship. In compelling the self to enlarge its sphere of moral concern, the Third ensures that its attempt to satisfy its asymmetrical obligation to the Other will not be pursued at the expense of the mass of humanity.³¹⁰

Levinas' philosophy champions the ethical relationship with the Other. However, this relationship with the Other could absorb the attention of the *ego* to the point of ignoring all other others. As Kant wrote, "complaisance toward those with whom we are concerned is very often injustice towards others who stand outside our little circle."³¹¹ Levinas' asymmetrical responsibility for the Other is interrupted by the appearance of another person, the Third, who is another to the Other, a neighbor to the Other.³¹² As long as the self is confronted only with the Other, then ethics is straightforward: the *ego* is infinitely, asymmetrically, and concretely responsible for the Other. However, with the appearance of the Third, the *ego*'s responsibility is extended because now, and simultaneously, the *ego* is confronted with the face of the Other and the Third.³¹³ The Third indicates that there are more than two people in the world (at least three—which is also to say, many more than three), thus precipitating the oscillation from the "ethical

³¹⁰ Gauthier, "Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality," 167.

³¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. J. T. Goldthwait (London: University of California Press, 1960), 59.

³¹² Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 157.

³¹³ Simmons, "The Third," 93.

perspective of alterity to the ontological perspective of totality.”³¹⁴ As Burggraeve suggests, in an encounter with the Other’s “naked face,” the self is confronted with every other person who needs my help as much as the Other (as Second) needs it.³¹⁵ The *ego* can no longer prioritize those in proximity; it must give attention to all. However, it is impossible to have a face-to-face relationship with each member of humanity. Those far away can only be reached indirectly.³¹⁶ Thus the appearance of the Third opens up the dimension of justice, and judgements must now be made. “It is consequently necessary to weigh, to think, to judge, in comparing the incomparable. The interpersonal relation I establish with the Other, I must also establish with other men.”³¹⁷

Ethics & Politics

Levinas distinguishes the ethical relationship with the Other from justice, which involves three or more people. The Third introduces us thus to the realm of politics. The *ego*’s infinite responsibility is now extended to all of humanity. Ethics is now being universalized and institutionalized to affect others. It is the entrance into the formation of

³¹⁴ Levinas and Kearney, “Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas,” 21.

³¹⁵ Burggraeve, “The Ethical Basis for a Humane Society,” 36.

³¹⁶ Simmons, “The Third,” 93.

³¹⁷ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 90.

the State, institutions, and laws.³¹⁸ As Levinas himself proclaimed, “our highest calling ... is not to a ‘wild philanthropy’, but to be about building just institutions.”³¹⁹

But what is the relationship between ethics and justice/politics? Levinas elucidates the oscillation between ethics and justice by the linguistic analogy of the Saying and the said. Ethics is found in the an-archival realm of the Saying, while justice is a part of the totalizing realm of the said. In this framework, the Saying marks the ethical subjectivity whereas the Said represents the ordinary realm of social and political life. Ethics and justice exist in both relation and separation. Neither can be reduced to the other. Thus, justice cannot diminish the infinite responsibility for the Other; the *ego* remains infinitely, asymmetrically, and concretely responsible for the Other. This responsibility always maintains its potency. However, the *ego* is also invariably transported by the Third into the realm of the said. The *ego* must weigh its obligations though, for it is not possible to respond infinitely to all others.³²⁰ Thus, Levinas’ peculiar formulation that justice is un-ethical and even a kind of entry to violence: “Only justice can wipe it (ethical responsibility) away by bringing this giving-oneself to my neighbor under measure, or moderating it by thinking in relation to the third and the fourth, who

³¹⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 300.

³¹⁹ Cited in Dudiak, “Structures of Violence, Structures of Peace,” 168.

³²⁰ Simmons, “The Third,” 94.

are also my others, but justice is already the first violence.”³²¹ In a discussion following the delivery of his lecture *Transcendence and Height*, Levinas spoke of the tears that the bureaucratic functionary cannot see.³²² He thereby acknowledged that, however justly and smoothly the political realm might be functioning, it remains insufficient from the ethical perspective. The invisibility of the face of the Other to the Third leads to “the tyranny of the universal and of the impersonal,” the tyranny of politics and of the judgment of history as seen from the standpoint of the victor.³²³ But this tyranny needs to be exposed by the face. The ethical needs to reorient the political.³²⁴ But on the other hand, Levinas also insists that “in no way is justice a degradation of obsession, a degeneration of the for-the-other, a diminution, a limitation of anarchic responsibility.”³²⁵

This “logic” of separation between the Saying and the Said can also be applied to the question of self-interest and reciprocity. The realm of the said is a synchronic world where all of humanity, including the *ego*, is co-present. In this realm, the *ego* is bound by the same institutions, the same justice, and the same laws as all the others. In this world, the *ego* can reasonably expect to be treated with reciprocity from the others. However,

³²¹ Levinas and Rötzer, “Emmanuel Levinas,” 62. By ‘first violence’ Levinas does not mean literal violence but a kind of marker of what the social and political realm is as separate from the intensity of ethical encounter in the structure of self.

³²² E. Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Levinas’ Basic Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996), 23.

³²³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 242-244.

³²⁴ Bernasconi, “The Third Party,” 80.

³²⁵ Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 159.

the reciprocity found in the world of the said does not negate the prior asymmetry of the an-archival relationship with the Other. Since the Third is known through the Other, reciprocity is only a secondary movement; the an-archival responsibility remains.³²⁶ Politics is thus not something that comes after ethics as a limitation of responsibility but instead signifies a deepening of responsibility - now lived out in communities of historical discourse. The Saying is not reducible to the said, but it is only as the said that the Saying continues to speak. Ethics is conceptually prior to politics in the sense of being its meaningful source, but politics is where ethics is transformed from a call to subjectivity into a lived social hope.³²⁷

Levinas thus uses the Third to move from the an-archival realm of ethics to the totalizing realm of the said, justice, and politics. This clearly indicates that Levinas is not only interested in the ethical relationship with the Other but is also a social and political thinker. However, by placing his emphasis on the ethical relationship with the Other, Levinas has radically altered the relationship between ethics, justice, and politics. Levinas argues for a place for both ethics and politics, or, to employ his metaphor, a place for both the Jewish tradition of ethics and responsibility and, along with it, the Greek tradition of language, justice, and politics.³²⁸ According to Levinas, ethics and politics are

³²⁶ Simmons, "The Third," 94.

³²⁷ Simmons, "Levinas, Politics, and the Third Party," 288.

³²⁸ Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 292.

both needed, but each has its own specific justification. Neither ethics nor politics should be taken to their extremes; each must be moderated by the Other because there is a “direct contradiction between ethics and politics, if both these demands are taken to the extreme.”³²⁹ Ethics must temper the political because politics unbounded leads to tyranny, absolute power of the strongest. Politics ignores the individuality of each citizen, treating each as a cipher, a member of a species. Further, without a norm outside of the scope of the said, there is no standard to judge political regimes. The call for a standard by which to judge regimes is what Levinas means by a return to Platonism because Plato, in the *Republic*, had used the Good-Beyond-Being as his standard and such a return to Platonism would restore “the independence of ethics in relation to history.”³³⁰ Levinas finds this standard in the ethical relationship with the Other. For him, the norm that must continue to inspire and direct the moral order is the ethical of the inter-human. If the moral-political order totally relinquishes its ethical foundation, it must accept all forms of society, including the fascist or totalitarian, for it can no longer evaluate or discriminate between them. This is why for Levinas, ethics must remain the first philosophy.³³¹

At the same time, though, ethics needs politics. Ethics must be transformed into language, justice, and politics. As *prima philosophia*, ethics cannot itself legislate for society or produce rules of conduct whereby society might be revolutionized or

³²⁹ Levinas, “Ethics and Politics,” 292.

³³⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, “Signature,” in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, 295.

³³¹ Levinas and Kearney, “Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas,” 30.

transformed.³³² Although this universalization eventually distances the *ego* from the Other, it must be done in order to reach the others, “thus we need laws, and - yes - courts of law, institutions and the state to render justice.”³³³ Politics is necessary because there are those who will refuse to heed the new law, ‘Thou shall not kill,’ preferring Cain’s position and rejecting the responsibility for the Other. Thus, politics is necessary to prohibit murder, in all its forms.³³⁴

Levinas is clear that ethics requires the move from the Other to the Third. But this shift from ethics to politics is not unidirectional and singular. Ethics and politics are constantly in productive tension and keep each other in check. Levinasian ethico-political thought oscillates between the Saying and the Said, anarchy and justice, ethics and politics. Levinas insists on the necessary balance between the Greek and the Judaic traditions: “The fundamental contradiction of our situation . . . that both the hierarchy taught by Athens and the abstract and slightly anarchical ethical individualism taught by Jerusalem are simultaneously necessary in order to suppress the violence.”³³⁵ William Paul Simmons describes this necessary relationship between ethics and politics as “a

³³² Levinas and Kearney, “Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas,” 29.

³³³ Emmanuel Levinas, “On Jewish Philosophy,” in *In the Time of the Nations*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 174.

³³⁴ Levinas, “As Old as the World?” 87.

³³⁵ Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” 24.

never-ending oscillation.”³³⁶ In the following section, we want to discuss how Levinas envisioned how such “a never-ending oscillation” inflects the political and the relationship with all others. The relationship of the self and the Other always already entails the responsibility for all others that are outside the closed society of two. Paradoxically, this means that the relationship to justice, law, state, etc., and the responsibility for all the others is also always already inflected by the ethical structure of the absolute responsibility for the Other, *ergo*: ethics inflects politics.

Ethics as an Optics: Neighbor, Plumbline and Bonomythy

After our exploration of the Third and its political implication in relationship to the self and the Other, we turn our attention to how Levinas delineates a structure of subjectivity (the topic of ethics) that helps us to become the kind of people who respond to the “widow, the orphan, and the stranger.” We may refer to such subjectivity as Levinas’ hospitable sense of politics. To better explain this concept, I want to consider Critchley’s idea of a “plumbline” and Pessin’s concept of *bonomythy*. Critchley points in particular to the “other’s decision in me” that indicates my infinite responsibility for the Other where politics becomes the task of the invention of any new decision, with each decision being inherently different. He characterizes this “other’s decision in me”³³⁷ as a

³³⁶ William Paul Simmons, “The Third: Levinas’s Theoretical Move from An-Archical Ethics to the Realm of Justice and Politics,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25 (1999): 83-104.

³³⁷ Critchley, “Five Problems in Levinas’s View of Politics,” 179, cf. Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 179, 180.

guideline for action, or a “plumbline,”³³⁸ as opposed to a categorical imperative or any other rule for action.

Reflecting on Levinas’ ethics, Critchley identifies the *hiatus* between ethics and politics in Levinas as an opportunity to build a bridge (*pontem facere*) that facilitates the incarnation of ethics into politics. Critchley envisions the possibility of a deduction from ethics to politics in Levinas’ thought, providing a passage by way of a new (experience of a) political decision. But how can ethics inflect politics in such a way that it does not assimilate the excess and the height of the Other into a totalizing system? Following Derrida, Critchley reformulates - indeed formalizes - a feasible incarnation of ethics into politics in several steps or axioms: The third step, which is actually a summary of the first two, suggests a non-foundational and non-arbitrary relation between ethics and politics, echoing Derrida’s claim in *Adieu* that “this relation is necessary, it must exist, it is necessary to deduce a politics and a law from ethics.”³³⁹ Against Carl Schmitt for whom the political is rooted in contest, already Derrida endeavored to present a “sense of a non-foundational, yet non-arbitrary, relation between ethics and politics with the notion of *the other’s decision in me*, a decision that is taken, but with regard to which I am passive.”³⁴⁰ It is non-foundational since any foundation will restrict the freedom of making decisions

³³⁸ Simon Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology* (London; New York: Verso, 2014), 16, 218, 220, 225, 226, 243.

³³⁹ Critchley, “Five Problems in Levinas’s View of Politics,” 179, cf. Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 144.

³⁴⁰ Critchley, “Five Problems in Levinas’s View of Politics,” 179.

by obliterating any possibilities or maybes. It is non-arbitrary for it will not concur with the concept of the sovereign will. In Critchley's understanding, this ensures that every political decision in a given context is informed by the infinite responsibility to the Other, justice, etc.³⁴¹ Critchley then deliberates further that he "would interpret the other's decision in me as an experience of *conscience*, where the content of the latter is the other's demand to which one is infinitely responsible and that counsels one to act in a specific situation."³⁴² Politics, then, according to the fourth step for Critchley, necessitates the invention of a new norm or rule (plumbline), considering both the infinite responsibility to the Other and finite context of such a demand.

Critchley compares this decision-making process to Derrida's Kierkegaardian notion of the madness of the decision, in *Force of Law*, where in any particular situation a decision is taken as a leap of faith. In the *Faith of the Faithless*, and again meditating on Kierkegaard's view on faith, Critchley describes the true nature of faith and its relationship with singular moments as "the rigorous activity of the subject that proclaims itself into being at each instant without guarantees or security," in the face of the infinite demand of the Other.³⁴³ Consequently, according to step five, each political decision is created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), not derived from any pre-existing moral content or

³⁴¹ Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics," 179.

³⁴² Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics," 179.

³⁴³ Simon Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology* (London; New York: Verso, 2014), 18.

one's sovereign will (non-arbitrary). This does not mean, however, that there is no rule, but rather that the other's decision in me requires a decision and creation of a norm or a rule for that specific situation: "the *singularity* of the context, in which the demand arises provokes an act of invention whose criterion is *universal*."³⁴⁴ In his five axioms, Critchley delineates thus "a relation between ethics and politics that is both non-foundational and non-arbitrary, that is, it leaves the decision open for invention whilst acknowledging that the decision comes from the other."³⁴⁵ In contrast to Kant's autonomous *Faktum der Vernunft* (fact of reason), the other's decision in me becomes a *Faktum des Anderen* (fact of the other), "an affective, heteronomous, prerational opening of the subject." It is the process of making political decisions, so Critchley concludes, which is "singular, situational and context dependent."³⁴⁶

Elsewhere, Critchley discusses the "fact of the other" (*Faktum des Anderen*) in terms of a guideline for action, rule of thumb, or a plumbline. In chapter four of *The Faith of Faithless*, titled "Divine violence," Critchley presents the notion of a plumbline by meditating on the commandment "thou shall not kill" as not a command that requires blind obedience. For him, ethical "action is guided by taking a decision in a situation that is strictly undecidable, and where responsibility consists in the acceptance of an

³⁴⁴ Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics," 180.

³⁴⁵ Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics," 180.

³⁴⁶ Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics," 180.

ineluctable double bind”³⁴⁷ Critchley advocates for an anarchic politics - a politics that is not *archic* (no beginning or foundation) by founding a moral code or system to be followed blindly. In Levinas, it is the welcome of the Other that unsettles the “archic assurance of our place in the world, our sovereignty.”³⁴⁸ And thus, the commandment of “thou shall not kill” can be translated also as “you will not kill” or “don’t kill” which is manifested in the face of the Other.³⁴⁹ As Levinas notes, the “other is the sole being that I can wish to kill.”³⁵⁰ It is expressed, however, in particular, in real moments of disagreement when I am about to kill her. It is then the exilic nature of the Other and her excess that resists my sovereignty. The fragility of the Other, her destitute position and defenselessness, Levinas explains, is “at once the temptation to kill and the call to peace, the ‘You shall not kill.’”³⁵¹ As Critchley points out, there is this “at once” or simultaneity that indicates the struggle in each encounter that the face of the Other presents, the possibility of killing what I cannot kill.³⁵² The commandment not to kill, the prohibition of nonviolence, arises in the face of the Other who resists my sovereignty, even in the moment of murder. The ethical resistance for Levinas, paradoxically, is “the resistance of

³⁴⁷ Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 221.

³⁴⁸ Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 224.

³⁴⁹ Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 224.

³⁵⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198; Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 224.

³⁵¹ Levinas, *Emmanuel Levinas*, 167.

³⁵² Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 225.

what has no resistance,” implicating the exiled, the hungry, the widow.³⁵³ According to Critchley, this is the rule of thumb for action that Levinas offers. Ethics entails action, getting our hands dirty, for the ethical responsibility for the Other in the realm of Saying (prerational) must always be incarnated in the realm of the Said where politics is concerned. The reality of nonviolent violence in the face of injustice, a war against war, nonetheless, calls forth a trembling and shuddering in each instance: “Such shuddering, such trembling, is the visceral experience of justice understood as the prohibition of murder that finds itself in a situation of violence with its provisional plumbline of nonviolence.”³⁵⁴ Regarding politics, Critchley notes, it is always a question of local conditions, local struggles, and local victories, and the plumbline evades dogmatic blindness: “To judge the multiplicity of such struggles on the basis of an abstract conception of nonviolence is to risk dogmatic blindness.”³⁵⁵

Also emphasizing that Levinas’s approach to politics is not about rules, Pessin reflects on both Critchley’s “plumbline” and the “Good” in Plotinus, proposing the concept of *bonomythy* as a kind of plumbline that helps orient us towards the neighbor in need. In the spirit of Critchley’s plumbline, inspired by Levinas’ notion of the trace of the

³⁵³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 199.

³⁵⁴ Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 226.

³⁵⁵ Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless*, 239.

Other and the alterity that cannot be traced, Pessin's *bonomythy* represents an invitation to live and act upon that trace of goodness which could never be found.

In the spirit of Levinas' ethics as first philosophy, indicating the primacy of ethics over ontology, Pessin presents *bonomythy* as a way in which ethics, similar to Critchley's plumbline, can inflect politics, by adopting a "goodward" lifestyle that alleviates suffering in our concrete daily encounter with others. She expresses concern with both theology's epistemological and ontological approach toward the divine, as well as the nihilistic deficiencies of atheisms. As an alternative, she offers *bonomythy* as an "ethically inflected spiritual-political alternative to theology," advocating for "a lived experience at the intersection of goodness (*bonum*) and transformational narrative (*mythos*)."³⁵⁶ The phenomenological structure of *bonomythy* insists on the necessity of engaging with the world with goodness in alignment with the "cultivation of ethical desire as a passionate quest for the sacred."³⁵⁷

Reflecting on Plotinus's idea of the "Good Beyond Being" and the Levinasian interpretation of it, where both authors highlight the priority of the trace of the goodness that is not graspable by the same in the ontological quest for what is the *ousia*/being of the Good, Pessin portrays the interruption of being as a "pause" that calls forth for a

³⁵⁶ Sarah Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life: Sacred-Ethical Invitations to Pause, Prayer, and Politics in Plotinus and Levinas," *Modern Theology* 39, no. 2 (April 2023): 255.

³⁵⁷ Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life," 255.

prayer, a concrete action.³⁵⁸ It is the encounter with the Other, which we have been exploring, that interrupts the self and its enjoyment of the world/being, almost like expulsing or exiling the self from being - a pause. This pause is the moment of subjectivity where responsibility enters, and the possibility of prayer/action emerges. A pause indicates the singularity of each context that demands a (different) response from the Other. Every interaction with the Other can be seen as a moment of pause, where there is a possibility for prayer, a goodward gesture toward the Other. It is in this pause that the hegemony of law is interrupted, and a search for the trace of goodness in each encounter is called forth.

To further explore the structure of pause, Pessin refers to both Plotinus and Levinas' primacy of ethics/good before politics/being, where our lives are oriented toward that incessant search for the good. For Plotinus, goodness precedes being, where God, who is the absolute Good, shares his goodness with the world. It is in the search for this goodness, as a pause and a turn toward this Good, that (human) being is constituted. Being, paradoxically, is "a *pause in being* where the trace of goodness creeps in."³⁵⁹ We find the same pausal structure with Levinas where goodness is given primacy over being. In contrast to Western philosophies preferring primacy of being over ethics, Levinas sees being as the *il y a* (there is) or the anonymous being that hinders ethics and breeds

³⁵⁸ Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life," 255.

³⁵⁹ Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life," 259-60.

violence. Pessin also notes that in Levinas' project, our relation to the *il y a*, the fact of my being there, already requires pardon. Being there, without the interruption of goodness is already "a site of unjustified sovereignty" that requires redemption or a pause in being. In Levinas' project, there is only one pause where goodness can emerge: "the pause of human being."³⁶⁰ For Levinas, Pessin further explicates, "human being is first of all a pause in being through which an individual precisely marks herself as separate from the anonymous being of *il y a*."³⁶¹ Subjectivity emerges when the self separates itself from the anonymous, being interrupted and paused by the trace of goodness in the face of the Other. Both Levinas and Plotinus, Pessin notes, propagate a bonomythical system that calls forth a life towards the good. It is precisely in this pause of being that we find the moment of subjectivity in which responsibility arises, and in which the self engages with goodness as prayer. "We move in this way within bonomythic frames from politics - the plumblime work of justice in our ever-searching orientation goodward - to pause to prayer."³⁶²

The trace of the Good, manifested by the excess and the height of the Other, calls forth a life lived with and in the trace of goodness that one could never grasp or find. It is precisely the indeterminacy of the Good and its resistance to being reduced to a

³⁶⁰ Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life," 262.

³⁶¹ Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life," 262.

³⁶² Pessin, "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life," 263.

metaphysical place/being/law that the possibility of the mythic lived experience arises: “it is about vulnerably reframing our lives so that we live from and into new inter-human spaces, in this way giving rise to the very possibility of new worlds.”³⁶³

Bonomythy, thus, can be perceived as a “‘storied journey’ of a self ‘goodward’ in and through eruptive spaces of meaning” which leads to a more embodied orientation of the self in discovering “whole new ways of seeing and being.”³⁶⁴ In its phenomenological structure with the emphasis on the lived experience of a goodward life, *bonomythy* provides a “practical and plumbline politics” that orient us to respond rightly to each singular situation. The singularity of each situation and the command that arise from the face of the Other, in Levinas’ thought calls for a “fragile experimental orientation for action” rooted in responsibility for the Other.³⁶⁵ For both of Critchley and Pessin, ethics as an optics orients us to engage with the world and the neighbor in need in concrete ways where each encounter demands an action where the suffering of the other is alleviated in some concrete manner like feeding the hungry.

On the “Feel” of Facing the Neighbor: Connolly and Pessin on Two Varieties of Agonism

At this point, we want to turn to Connolly and Pessin and their shared sense of the tensions inherent in even the most hospitable politics. As a critical reader of Levinas,

³⁶³ Pessin, “Bonomythy and the Goodward Life,” 258.

³⁶⁴ Pessin, “Bonomythy and the Goodward Life,” 256-7.

³⁶⁵ Pessin, “Bonomythy and the Goodward Life,” 258-259.

William E. Connolly argues for an agonistic respect in relationship to the Other. The increase in globalization and the proliferation of identities requires a positive ethos of engagement between diverse entities, best achieved through agonistic struggle and “agonistic respect.” In Connolly’s concept of “agonistic respect,” there is a deep appreciation for the irreducibility of opposing views, combined with a generous comportment for the extent to which my own identity and views are contestable. As Connolly points out, in a relation of agonistic respect, each person/group engages with the discomfort brought by the other/group that challenges some of its own beliefs. This leads to a self-acknowledgment of some of the comparative contestability of its fundamental beliefs. This is where the respect aspect of agonistic struggle emerges.

To explicate his view-point further, Connolly is convinced that numerous contemporary forces - globalization and migration mentioned explicitly in his list - intensify pressure for pluralization within and across territorial regimes. In order to define “pluralism,” he delineates a quadro-dimensional perspective: First, a pluralistic context is multifaceted, comprising diverse expression of faith, gender, ethnicity, cultures, existential orientations, etc.³⁶⁶ Second, there are ongoing tensions between existing identities and new and emerging movements that challenge the “established assumption about God, freedom, identity, legitimacy, rights, and the nation.”³⁶⁷ Third, the dynamics

³⁶⁶ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 201.

³⁶⁷ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 201.

of these first two dimensions require a positive “ethos of engagement” between diverse, interdependent constituencies and entities.³⁶⁸ And finally, the forces mentioned above necessitate periodic participation of each citizen “in cross state movement,” putting pressure on various national and international institutions.³⁶⁹

Under his third point, which is of great interest for our discussion, Connolly addresses the need for a positive ethos of engagement, a *sine qua non* in the relation with the Other. Concerning this point, it is noteworthy that, in the spirit of the concept of a plumbline, Connolly suggests “an ethic of cultivation” rather than a code of law that can be reduced to a “fixed teleology.”³⁷⁰ This is largely due to his philosophical theory of immanent naturalism influenced by Foucault, Nietzsche, and Deleuze. In brief, naturalism points to a world with no God or divine purpose to interrupt the mechanical progression of the universe, while immanence rejects any trace of transcendence in a materialistic universe infused with multiple energies.³⁷¹ Immanence allows, however, for a “world of becoming in which the existing composition of actuality is exceeded by open, energized potentialities simmering in it.”³⁷² Immanent naturalism, as the basis for the political philosophy of Connolly, refuses thus a morality based on universal laws but

³⁶⁸ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 202.

³⁶⁹ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 202.

³⁷⁰ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 207.

³⁷¹ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 211-2.

³⁷² Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 213.

propagates an ethic of “cultivation and a generous ethos of engagement between diverse constituencies.”³⁷³ Connolly, nonetheless, is aware that cultivating a generous engagement will not come easy, as he advocates for a never-ending plurality of contestable worldviews and incessant necessities of forming “collective assemblages of common action from this diversity,” calling upon interlocutors to appreciate the “profound contestability of the fundamentals” to which each hold, reminding us of the agonistic reality that no “constituency gets everything it wants.”³⁷⁴ In opposition to socio-politics as conceived by Habermas, for whom democratic consensus is achieved as the result of “free unconstrained communication,” Connolly emphasizes agonistic struggle as an ineliminable, insurmountable, constituting part of democracy.³⁷⁵ In this process of agonistic struggle, Connolly calls, however, also for “agonistic respect” as a mutual virtue where persons and groups “find themselves in intensive relations of political interdependence.”³⁷⁶ Connolly notes, in particular, that “agonism is the dimension through which each party maintains a pathos of distance from others with whom it is engaged” and emphasizes that “respect is the dimension through which self-limits are

³⁷³ Connolly quoted by Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 213.

³⁷⁴ William E. Connolly, *Why I am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 9-12.

³⁷⁵ Mouffe, Chantal. *The Democratic Paradox* (London, New York: Verso, 2009), 137.

³⁷⁶ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), XXVI.

acknowledged and connections are established across lines of difference.”³⁷⁷ It propagates an appreciation for the irreducible view of the other in conjunction with “a generous comportment” that arises from acknowledging the contestability of one’s view.³⁷⁸ It is not the content (creed) of a belief that needs to be transformed but the comportment (“the sensibility that infuses it”), ideally replacing “imperious comportments with generous comportments.”³⁷⁹ Agonistic respect and its dyadic structure of contestability and generosity also calls for mystery that transforms it into a triad. Mystery complements the agonistic ethics of Connolly as it helps delineate “the incompleteness of my beliefs and identity - religious or otherwise - and helps to bring about contestability.”³⁸⁰ The element of mystery in Connolly, Pessin notes, calls for both theists and atheists to “follow their mystery” since the beliefs and philosophies of both sides are filled with mystery.³⁸¹

In her comparison of Connolly and Levinas, Pessin affirms Connolly’s sense of agonistic struggle and connects his concept of generosity and interrupted identity to Levinas’ own sense of alterity. Pessin suggests that Connolly’s emphasis on generosity,

³⁷⁷ Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, XXVI.

³⁷⁸ William E. Connolly, “An Ethos of Engagement,” reprinted in *William E. Connolly: Democracy Pluralism Political Theory*, eds. Samuel A. Chambers and Terrell Carver (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 253.

³⁷⁹ Connolly, “Pluralism and Faith,” 285.

³⁸⁰ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 624.

³⁸¹ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 624.

which “subscribes to an agono-pluralistic ethics of contingent, relational, interrupted identities, shares especially with Levinas an interruption of identities and an agonistic empathy for difference.”³⁸² Pointing to a frequently overlooked section of Levinas in *Ego and Totality*, she deliberates on what Pessin calls his “impossibility of all-pardon” thesis.³⁸³ To emphasize the agonistic aspect of even the most hospitable Levinasian politics, Pessin highlights that the notion of the Third (which we have explored above) already implies that the relationship with the Other (the Second) is already inflected by all others (the Third) and thus entails entanglement with justice.³⁸⁴ The “impossibility of all-pardon” thesis prevails as soon as we go beyond the closed society of two, for despite all my efforts, I will always unintentionally and unknowably harm others that I do not even know and thus have no chance of asking for their forgiveness. Such a reality indicates that we can live even in the best scenario only in a realm of “partial justice,” or, in an agonistic realm with the possibility of nothing more than “interrupted justice.”³⁸⁵ Pessin suggests thus that an agonistic structure for both Connolly and Levinas is closely connected with “(1) the self as interrupted, being itself in direct relation to (2) the

³⁸² Sarah Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity: Agono-Pluralistic Ethics in Connolly v. Levinas (and the Possibilities of Atheist-Theist Respect),” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 24 (2016): 619.

³⁸³ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 619; cf. Emmanuel Levinas, “The Ego and Totality,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers: Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. A. Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 30.

³⁸⁴ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 620; cf. Levinas, “The Ego and Totality,” 31.

³⁸⁵ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 621.

possibility for a non-violent future” where politics is grounded on “instability” and “impossibility” in which “I learn to live always with incompletenesses and yet respectfully with my neighbor.”³⁸⁶

But even as Pessin sees agonistic links between Levinas and Connolly, she ultimately prefers Levinas’ approach over Connolly’s, because, as she explains, where Connolly assumes a kind of easy generosity - and even laughter - in the tense encounters between political opponents, Pessin finds in Levinas a more somber sense of impossibility and hardship, which she nonetheless sees as the very ground from which the Levinasian political subject engages responsibly with neighbors in a spirit that she will eventually describe as “sleeve-rolling in the face of impossibility.”³⁸⁷

Connolly describes laughter as the result of the moment of disagreement with the Other that displays the contingencies of one’s belief and identity. Laughter provides thus a reciprocal acknowledgement of one’s individual dissonance, and in relation to the agonistic respect, can orient us toward a “deep pluralism.”³⁸⁸ According to Connolly, laughter communicates, in the framework of agonistic respect, “appreciation of mystery and a mood of honesty” between opposing identities and beliefs. It has the potential to

³⁸⁶ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 621-622.

³⁸⁷ Sarah Pessin, “Conversation about Levinas’s Ethics” (Personal Communication, September 8, 2023, Zoom Meeting).

³⁸⁸ William E. Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 124; Cf. John Lombardini, “Civic Laughter: Aristotle and the Political Virtue of Humor,” *Political Theory* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 204.

“unpursued possibilities in oneself that exceeds one’s identity,” giving room for modification of some of our enclosed beliefs and privileges.³⁸⁹ Connolly appeals for a life in a more humorous way, where one learns to occasionally laugh at one’s own beliefs and the predisposition to make one’s own moral impulse a universal law simply because it is mine. Laughing thus interrupts the insistent link between ethical view and “self-reassurance” while upholding the exigency of ethical judgment. “Such laughter pays homage to fugitive elements in life that exceed the organization of identity, otherness, rationality, and autonomy.”³⁹⁰ From *Identity/Difference and Pluralism*, one can detect a shift in Connolly’s views about laughter. It is a shift from an invitation to mutual laughter “directed at others to a suddenly erupting laughter that signals the acknowledgment of shared contingency.” As Lombardini notes, if the former has the tendency to be turned into antagonism, the latter assumes acknowledgment of relation “across lines of difference it is meant to engender.”³⁹¹ Without an acknowledgment of relation, there prevails thus with laughter the danger of turning into antagonism, but with such acknowledgment, it is not always clear what laughter contributes to such an acknowledgment in the end.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxx.

³⁹⁰ Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 181.

³⁹¹ Lombardini, “Civic Laughter,” 208.

³⁹² Lombardini, “Civic Laughter,” 208.

It is this inefficiency and ambivalence of laughter that beckons for a different perspective such as Pessin's emphasis on trembling in the encounter with the neighbor. The subject rooted in Levinas' infinite responsibility for the Other does not expect others to take on her own beliefs and is in this way inflected with an open and trembling comportment. As Pessin expounds, trembling—more than laughter (at least as Connolly seems to understand it)—is a comportment that can help both theists and atheists approach one another: the theist will be able to draw on the model of trembling before God; and the atheist can find other non-theological models of formidable unknowns in whose presence one rightly feels humbled. Pessin, inspired by Levinas, even explores different kinds of laughter, one tending to an open direction, while the other to a more trembling one. Favoring the more trembling one, she insists that it is more suitable for it is more about rupture than a Nietzschean “triumph” of the “will.”³⁹³ In Levinas' phenomenology of the face there is “an eruption of alterity that fosters a spirit of fear and trembling (though not in the sense as in Kierkegaard's text of the same name, where this can erupt in a ‘closed society’ encounter with God outside of any encounter with my human neighbor) alongside irredeemable originary guilt (different in kind not only from Heideggerian guilt, but from God-centered [as opposed to neighbor-centered] Christian theologies of original sin).”³⁹⁴

³⁹³ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 632-3.

³⁹⁴ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 633.

In this regard, she considers the charged political case of atheists and theists living non-violently together, and she emphasizes that this reality suggests that real civic relationships will often be much less upbeat—and laughter-dependent—than Connolly’s own approach to agonism seems to suggest. In this regard, she speaks of a “trembling” Levinasian political subject, and she concludes by emphasizing what is most important about Levinas’ own political approach over and above Connolly’s: “Interconnected with all aspects of his ethical phenomenology, Levinas emphasizes a self who is at once open and trembling. Returning to our comparison with Connolly, Levinas’ ‘open and trembling’ comportment is more compelling than Connolly’s laughing one because it highlights a viable civic mood in which both theists and atheists can generously reach out across the aisle, in this way better helping us arrive at Connolly’s own stated goal of a respectful agonistic pluralism.”³⁹⁵

Rudolf Otto’s phenomenological approach toward religion in the *Idea of the Holy*, where he explicates the non-rational aspect of religion and religious experience, can further illuminate the structure of trembling in the encounter with the Other. Otto employs the idea of the holy (*Das Heilige*) as something wholly other, *das Ganz-Andere*, which he calls the numinous. For Otto, the numinous, using (semi)apophatic language, is something of its own kind (*sui generis*) - a category of value or state of mind that cannot be easily defined due to its otherness. Therefore, and because of its otherness, the

³⁹⁵ Pessin, “From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity,” 634.

numinous can only be awakened and not taught through rational concepts.³⁹⁶ One can see here some resemblance with Levinas' idea of the face of the Other and its prerational affect that interrupts the self and calls it to responsibility. Otto insists that though God is not easily accessible for us, not even by reason, He nonetheless reveals himself to us in special revelation and *via das Heilige*: the concept of the holy entails a *mysterium* that combines the *tremendum* (negative) and the *fascinans* (positive).³⁹⁷ For Levinas, the face of the Other, in a similar fashion, is like an epiphany that cannot be comprehended, yet leaves an affect, a trace on us. Furthermore, in Otto's project, the *tremendum* is not a fear that the natural faculty can experience but something beyond it that touches the numinous. This *tremendum* comprises different elements: first, the "element of awfulness," a universal feeling that underlies any religious feeling that transcends the natural feeling of human beings, and their natural faculty, belonging to the realm of spirit. Such a feeling is manifested as one perceives a ghost or the wrath of God (not the moral wrath) in the Old Testament. Second, the element of "overpoweringness" (*maiestas*) creates the feeling of creaturehood instead of createdness, resulting in the abasement of oneself in the presence of the wholly other. The *mysterium* is a "state of wonder," "stupor," when one encounters something wholly other; while fascination, the last

³⁹⁶ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 7.

³⁹⁷ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 3.

element of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, denotes the feeling of bliss, or fascination which creates a beatitude toward the *numen*, e.g., experienced in private devotion or corporate gathering. It creates a self-surrendering to the *numen*, seeking the *numen* for its own sake and not merely for “expiation or propitiation.”³⁹⁸ We can in this way connect aspects of Otto’s *mysterium tremendum* to Levinas’ own sense of encountering the Other, as well as to Pessin’s description of meeting the Other in a spirit of trembling. The height of the Other that Otto calls *maiestas* creates a feeling of creatureness, which is reflected in the encounter with the Other in the formation of a New Host Self, one whose mastery is interrupted by the Other. This sort of arresting encounter with the Other in absolute responsibility opens us onto the New Host Self who concretely responds to the Other in a spirit which we may liken to an embodied form of prayer.

In exploring Connolly and Pessin, we have thus a more robust way of considering Levinas’ own hospitable approach to politics: Drawing on Connolly (even though Connolly does not connect this aspect of his view to Levinas), we may speak of Levinasian hospitality as a comportment of “agonistic respect;” and adding Pessin’s insights, we may further elaborate a “trembling” sense of inter-human generosity. Viewing Levinas’ hospitable politics in relation to our findings with Kant, Critchley, Connolly, and Pessin, we may speak of a political New Host Self that faces the Other in a spirit of trembling generosity, approaching the Other in an asymmetry that marks a

³⁹⁸ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 14-36.

radical interruption of the self's own sovereignty, while also blurring the line between self-as-host and self-as-guest.

The New Host Self, therefore, is a self that in her ethical structure as a subject gives rise to a mode of political agency—an arc that Levinas has in mind when he describes ethics as an optics for politics.³⁹⁹ This phenomenological structure indicates that as an optics, ethics becomes the lens through which the political or our daily interaction with the Other is kept in check with a trembling structure that is informed with agonistic respect. Ethics as an optics functions like an eschatological vision, not an eschatology in the sense of the end of history or totality, but rather an eschatology that establishes a relationship beyond history within the flow of history. This relationship signals the Other's excess, alterity, and infinity from outside of history reflected within history. Ethics as an optics liberates individuals from the hegemony of history as a totalizing system by restoring the significance of each instance and thus calling every individual to full responsibility. It refuses any reduction to a system of thought or a moral code. The absolute responsibility for the Other becomes the lens through which every historical, social, and political situation/decision/action is held accountable. This inflection precisely results in a newly transformed political subject, a New Host Self.

In thinking about how ethics can inflect politics, we might also offer an analogous point from within a Christian theological context—and in particular, in the contest between Herod and Jesus. In this Christian context, while Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)

³⁹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 23, 29.

Herod stands as an antithesis to Christ – the antichrist. Returning to the interplay of ethics and politics, we may speak of Herod as the embodiment of political, social, and economic totality that opposes and reduces any alterity. Through its hegemony, dominance, and control, this totality—represented by Herod— always stands in opposition to the ethical arrival of the Messiah. Thinking in a Christian context, we may in this sense frame the story of the birth of Jesus as the story of how politics—as the realm of the same—does everything in its power to obliterate infinity, in this case, the arrival of the Messiah.

Reflecting on the Christian account of Bethlehem children massacred at the *parousia* of the Messiah, we may note that when politics blocks the arrival of the messianic infinite, it blocks the possibility of the “thou shall not kill.” Emphasizing the radically hospitable opening to the Other as a New Host Self, we may also consider the Christian sense of *anticipation* for the Messianic *parousia*, not simply its realization as a fixed and finite moment in history. This always-anticipated messianic—and we might here add, ethical—hope comes from the outside of history to inflect history and in this way invites us once again to not kill.

To summarize, ethics as an optics for politics does not give us a list of dos and don'ts, rules, code, etc., rather, it orients us to the political, inviting a certain comportment to neighbors and strangers. Ethics as an optics for politics is about how the Other-directed structure of subjectivity helps us activate in certain ways over others in the world. It helps us become the kind of person who responds to the “widow, the stranger, and the orphan.” It orients us not by way of ordinary lists or codes but through the

concrete work of literally feeding the hungry. It means, as Levinas puts it, that we have to get our hands dirty. In this regard, Pessin - drawing on Critchley and Butler – notes: “Levinas’ call to fragile, experimental orientations precisely cannot be set in stone, but it nonetheless radically calls us to operate from a deep responsibility for the Other.”⁴⁰⁰

⁴⁰⁰ Pessin, “Bonomythy and the Goodward Life,” 259.

Chapter Four: Abrahamic Perspectives on Hospitality - Height and Excess

To further explore the topic of radical hospitality and the New Host Self, it is also helpful to consider the figure of Abraham in Jewish and Islamic sources as well as related ideas of radical service and transformation in Christian sources. By turning to these particular religious frames—something that Richard Kearney also does in his account of hospitality—we equip ourselves to better understand Levinas’ own radical ethical framing since Levinas himself often invokes the figure of Abraham and a number of related religious themes. Furthermore, by turning to three religions practiced by migrants and migrant-relief workers across the globe, we are able to better connect the philosophy of radical hospitality to the lived experiences—including text traditions—of many people impacted by contemporary refugee crises. In support of this turn to religious sources, Connolly reminds us: “A pluralistic society is marked by recurrent tension between already existing diversity and new movements that press upon this or that established assumption about God, freedom, identity, legitimacy, rights, and the nation.”⁴⁰¹ The concrete plight of migrants in the world today further underscores the importance of

⁴⁰¹ Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism,” 201; Gioacchino Campese and Pietro Ciallella, eds. “The Irruption of Migrants: Theology of Migration in the 21st Century,” *Theological Studies* 73 (2012): 9.

turning serious attention to religion and the way religion operates in the lives of people far and near. Here we might also consider Caroline Brettell's and James Hollifield's call for an interdisciplinary—and we might include, religious—approach to migration.⁴⁰² We might also consider Yegenoglu's emphasis on the intertwined reality of religion, culture, and politics throughout history, alongside Jonathan Fox's *World Survey of Religion and the State*:⁴⁰³ After analyzing 62 variables measuring governmental involvement in religion across 175 countries from 1990 to 2002, Fox, , reminds us that “All paths lead to religion.”⁴⁰⁴

Hospitality and Jewish Tradition

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while

⁴⁰² In an effort to “reboot” migration theory through “interdisciplinarity, globality, and post-disciplinarity,” they have assembled a team of specialists in anthropology, sociology, economics, geography, history, demographics, political science, and law to investigate the phenomenon of international migration. Conspicuously absent in this “talking across disciplines” on migration is religious studies/theology - an absence all the more surprising as both editors are professors at a Christian university with a large divinity school, Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds., *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2007), VIII; cf. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

⁴⁰³ Yegenoglu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality*, 7; Jonathan Fox, *A World Survey of Religion and the State* (Cambridge: University Press, 2008).

⁴⁰⁴ Fox, *A World Survey of Religion and the State*, 4-5, 361.

they ate. They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son” (Gen. 18:1-10, New Revised Standard Version - NRSV).

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאַלְגֵי מִמְרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פְּתַח־הָאֵהָל כְּהֵם הַיּוֹם:
וַיֵּשֶׁא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְרִים עֲלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרֶץ לִקְרַאתָם מִפְּתַח הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה:2
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם־נָא מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶל־נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:3
יִקְח־נָא מֵעֹטְמוֹתַי וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַחַת הָעֵץ:4
וְאִקְחָה פַת־לֶחֶם וְסַעְדוּ לְבָכֶם אֲתֵר תַעֲבֹרוּ כִי־עַל־כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עָלַי־5
עַדְכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַעֲשֶׂה פֶּאֶשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:
וַיִּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהָלָה אֶל־שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־רִי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קָמַח סֹלֶת לְיֹשֵׁי וְעֹשֵׂי עֲגוֹת:6
וְאֶל־הַבָּקָר רֶץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּשַׁח בְּוֶבֶקָר רֶדָּ וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַנֹּעַר וַיִּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ:7
וַיִּשַׁח חֲמָאָה וְחֵלֶב וְכֹל־הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לְפָנֵיהֶם וְהוּא־עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאבְלוּ:8
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אֵיךְ שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בְּאֵהָל:9
וַיֹּאמֶר שׂוֹב אֲשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כְּעֵת סִיָּה וְהִנֵּה־כֵן לְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ וְשָׂרָה שִׁמְעַת פְּתַח הָאֵהָל וְהוּא אֹחֲרֵיו:10⁴⁰⁵

We can start with Rabbinic readings of the Abrahamic narrative of the Oak of Mamre, the Sinai narrative of Jethro, and the exemplary story of Job which ultimately give way to their sense of Abraham, Moses, and Job as important exemplars of hospitality. Haggadic literature abounds with legend illustrating their generosity and hospitality. For instance, it is mentioned that Job had forty tables consistently set for strangers and twelve tables for widows.⁴⁰⁶ One of the earliest Jewish teachers expounded the precept, “Let thy house be open wide; let the poor be the members of thy household.”⁴⁰⁷ Some rabbis even proposed that every house should have doors on all four

⁴⁰⁵ Albrecht Alt et al., eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: = Torah, Nevi'im u-Khetuvim*, 5th edition (Stuttgart: Dt. Bibelges, 1997).

⁴⁰⁶ Emil G. Hirsch, Julius H. Greenstone, and Solomon Schechter, “Hospitality,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed September 5, 2022, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7905-hospitality>.

⁴⁰⁷ Hirsch, “Hospitality,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

sides to allow easy access for the poor from all direction.⁴⁰⁸ In Jerusalem, it was customary to display a flag in front of the door to indicate that the meal was ready for guests. The removal of the flag signaled the completion of the meal, prompting guests to cease entering.⁴⁰⁹

In addition, a summary of the etymology of *hachnasat orchim* can shed further light on our discussion. In Judaism, *hachnasat orchim* (hospitality) is considered a Mitzvah (commandment or obligation). While the *Niphal*-form, *lehichanes*, simply means “to enter,” *hachnasat orchim* is built on the causative *Hiphil*-form, meaning to “bring in.” This distinction diverges from the conventional understanding of hospitality, seen as “inviting in” those willing to enter. Instead, it involves going outside and welcoming a stranger or guest into one’s own house. Given the communal nature of Jewish life and the requirement for a *minyan* (quorum) in most recitations and celebrations, the act of bringing others in becomes integral to the Jewish community. The experience of the Jewish people before the Exodus prompted rabbis to emphasize the importance of hospitality as an obligation, stemming from the acknowledgement that “we were strangers in Egypt.” “Bringing people in” requires a shift in the host’s routines and patterns, reflecting an openness to encountering the unknown, which can be both exciting

⁴⁰⁸ Hirsch, “Hospitality,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

⁴⁰⁹ Hirsch, “Hospitality,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

and intimidating. Consequently, *hachnasat orchim* implies not only a hospitable demeanor but also a hospitable home.⁴¹⁰

Despite the extensive praise for hospitality in the Jewish traditions, the Abrahamic model remains the centerpiece of any discussion on *hachnasat orchim*. Abraham, at the Oak of Mamre, is seen as having interrupted a divine visitation after his circumcision to welcome three mysterious guests in apparent need of hospitality. This unique reading of the Biblical narrative strongly suggests to the rabbis that extending hospitality is a greater priority than receiving the divine presence.⁴¹¹ Elevating hospitality to an asymmetrical level of height is a surprising hermeneutical proposition.⁴¹² R. Yonatan Eibshutz undergirds this elevation of hospitality by emphasizing that Abraham not only had to chase after the guests but, in doing so, consciously departed from the divine presence,

⁴¹⁰ Susan Freeman, *Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities* (Denver, Co: A.R. E. publishing, 1990), 102.

⁴¹¹ Prior to welcoming his guests, Abraham says, "Please, my *Adon*, do not pass from before your servant." The Talmud (Shavuot 35b) records a debate as to the proper understanding of this verse. According to one interpretation, the phrase "my *Adon*", my master, is a respectful reference to one of his potential guests. The verse thus relates his extending of hospitality to the travelers who were passing by. According to the second possibility, though, "my *Adon*," is meant to be read as God's Name (not *Adoni*, but rather *Adonai*). If so, Abraham was essentially asking God to wait, and to not remove His presence, while he was interrupted so that he could attend to guests. The notion that Abraham not only ended the session with God, but asked that He wait in the meantime, makes the decision all the more remarkable, cf. Daniel Z. Feldman, "My House Is Your House," in *Divine Footsteps: Chesed and the Jewish Soul* (New York, N.Y.: Yeshiva University Press, 2008), 17.

⁴¹² Kearney also notes that in the Mamre narrative in the act of hospitality, the reception of the three, divinity and the presence of God is implied. *The New Jerusalem Bible* offers for example an interesting interpretation of this scene. As the narrative progresses, the "three men" who first appear out of the desert mutate into a single "guest" once invited to the table before finally appearing as *Ha-Shem* himself in the final scene of annunciation. It is interesting that the stranger is often treated as the *human* persona of the divine. Indeed, what appears as an all-too-human other, emerging out of the night to wrestle with us, is only subsequently recognizes as divine, cf. Kearney, *Anatheism*, 18.

even turning his back on it. This adds an extra layer of impressiveness act of prioritization of hospitality.⁴¹³ R. Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky points out that Abraham, in putting hospitality and the Other over the benefit of receiving the divine presence, waived a spiritual reward, showcasing a surprising act of altruism of attending to the needs of strangers.⁴¹⁴

Talmudic literature goes on to ask how Abraham himself knew that prioritizing hospitality over divine presence would be appropriate. The response provided is that Abraham derived this lesson from God Himself. R. Yechiel Michel Charlop deliberates that hospitality was already modeled by God Himself in the Garden of Eden, where we are told, “and the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Genesis 2:15). The word for “put him” (*va-yanicheihu*) can also be read, “He allowed him to rest,” indicating that God provided hospitality for Adam in the garden.⁴¹⁵ Rabbi Feldman, along with other rabbis, similarly ascribes a higher priority to hospitality than receiving the Divine presence, also suggests that Abraham learned from

⁴¹³ *Medrash Yehonatan* to Genesis cited in Daniel Feldman, “My House Is Your House,” 18. Rabbi Yonatan Eibshutz was a German rabbi who oversaw three communities in Altona, Hamburg, and Wandsbek in the 18th century. He wrote prolifically in Talmudic studies halachic rulings (posek), kabbalah, and homiletics. *Medrash Yehonatan* to Genesis is a collection of his own insights and interpretations on the book of Genesis.

⁴¹⁴ *Torat Maharitz* to Genesis cited in Daniel Feldman, “My House Is Your House,” 18. R. Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky was a renowned 20th century orthodox rabbi and the third Rebbe of the Dushinsky Hasidic dynasty of Jerusalem.

⁴¹⁵ This is extracted from R. Zevulun Charlop, in his introduction to R. Y.M. Charlop’s *Chof Yamim to Massekhet Makkot*, cited in Daniel Feldman, “My House Is Your House,” 19. R. Yechiel Michel Charlop was a renowned Orthodox Jewish rabbi and Torah scholar in the 20th century, particularly known for his expertise in Jewish law, ethics, and philosophy.

God's model of hospitality that hosting guests, and thus benefiting others, was a mitzvah calling for an *imitatio Dei*.⁴¹⁶ Also R. Eliezer Menachem Mann Schach understood that such an *imitatio Dei*, prioritizing hospitality, was considered to be greater than receiving His presence.⁴¹⁷

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik takes us a step further by connecting the divine model of hospitality not only to the Garden of Eden but also to its underlying concept of creation and *tsim-tsum*. In Kabbalah, *tsim-tsum* (translated as contraction or withdrawal) explains the process of the creation of the universe. It denotes the infinite and all-encompassing God (*Ein Sof*, meaning without end) contracts its own presence, to make room for the finite world to come into existence.⁴¹⁸ The Lord Almighty Himself is the great welcomer of guests—*machnis orchim*—because his hospitality made it possible for humanity to exist and for the world to come into being. For God to create the cosmos, He had to undergo contraction. Only then it became possible for a world to emerge in space

⁴¹⁶ Feldman, "My House Is Your House," 19.

⁴¹⁷ R. Meir Tzvi Bergman, *Sha'arei Orah* (vol.1, *Parashat VaYishlach* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publication, 1998), 50); Cf. R. Moshe Yosolovsky, *Kishutei Torah* (Genesis 18:3), and R. Moshe Scheinerman, *Ohel Moshe*, Genesis p. 329.

⁴¹⁸ Agata Bielik-Robson and Daniel H. Weiss, eds., *Tsimtsum and Modernity: Lurianic Heritage in Modern Philosophy and Theology*, 1st ed. (Boston: DE GRUYTER, 2020), xiii. There are other thinkers who hold *tsimtsum* as concealment. "If *tsimtsum* is only metaphorical and God's withdrawal does not change his essence, which remains immutable, then this gesture can only mean self-concealment, as in Moses Cordovero, Luria's Safed contemporary, who can be said to elaborate on the traditional biblical motif of *hester panim*, the 'veiled face.' But if *tsimtsum* is literal, then it must imply a non-absolutist notion of God capable of sustaining a change—more than that: a damage. Depending on whether *tsimtsum* is only a self-concealment of God who remains unbound or an actual depletion/restriction of God's power, there appears another controversy" (xiii-xiv).

and time. God's *hachnasat orchim* presupposed thus a form of *tsim-tsum* because only after some form of withdrawal from a part of his abode could a stranger be "invited into his 'tent,' which is the universe, to occupy the empty parts that God had vacated?"⁴¹⁹ God, in an act of *tsim-tsum* (contraction), made room in His tent for the Other and, in an act of *ekstasis*, extended hospitality and His love to her. This complementary understanding is found already with Rabbi Nachman of Breslav (1772-1810), in his *Likutey Moharan*. In section 64 of this work, we find one of Rabbi Nachman's most famous and commented-upon teachings. The opening statement reads as follows: "God created the world because of His compassion, because He wanted to reveal His compassion, and if the world had not been created, to whom would He show His compassion? Therefore, He created all of creation, from the beginning of the emanation to the final center point of the physical world in order to show His compassion."⁴²⁰ *Hachnasat orchim*, therefore, can be perceived as the master withdrawing from a portion of his dwelling so that a stranger can reside in the vacated place. As E. Mordochai Kahan insists, hospitality indicates placing one's resources fully at the disposal of one's guests. In other words, bringing the stranger into one's realm completely.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Goshen-Gottstein, "Judaism: The Battle for Survival, the Struggle for Compassion," 39.

⁴²⁰ Quoted in Goshen-Gottstein, "Judaism: The Battle for Survival, the Struggle for Compassion," 39.

⁴²¹ Daniel Feldman, "My House Is Your House," 20.

Also in Post-Rabbinic literature, scholars contemplate the story of Abraham precipitating valuable insights about hospitality. Martin Buber, for instance, reflects on the story of Abraham being visited by angels, specifically noting how Abraham stood over the guests while they were eating (Genesis 18:3). This action deviates from the common Biblical or Hebrew tradition where the host, even if not eating with the guest, typically remains seated with them. Standing up, however, indicates that Abraham was elevated above and over the angels. Angels possess both virtues and flaws; the former being their inability to deteriorate and the latter being their inability to improve. Through a genuine sense of hospitality, one acquires the virtues of the guests. In this instance, Abraham adopts the virtues of the angels, including their incapacity to deteriorate, thereby surpassing them.⁴²² This act is intriguing because, through the gesture of standing in service, Abraham positions himself in a lower rank, not even sitting on the floor to at least show mutuality. This asymmetrical readiness to serve results in a paradox: in lowering and debasing his position, Abraham is actually lifted up, indicating a notion of excess in the responsibility for the Other. He is elevated even above angels. There is further enlargement evident in the expansion of his family and the birth of his son. By providing not only material, but also social and ethical support - beyond mere sustenance - and by placing the stranger in a position of height, Abraham received both spiritual and material blessings.

⁴²² Freeman, *Teaching Jewish Virtues*, 107.

Here, we may turn once again to Levinas for his own interpretation. The details of his overall relationship to religion aside, it is noteworthy that for Levinas, the Hebrew Bible and its concept of transcendence play a fundamental role in shaping his philosophical outlook,⁴²³ a point he emphasizes in *Ethics and Infinity*: “The Bible is the Book of Books wherein the first things are said, those that *became* said so that human life has a meaning”⁴²⁴ In the same vein, he elaborates on the “extraordinary presence of its characters, that ethical plenitude and its mysterious possibilities of exegesis which originally signified transcendence for me.”⁴²⁵ Schonfeld thus suggests that, for Levinas, the Hebrew Bible “functions as the origin of meaningfulness, an origin that has to be revived in order for philosophy to regain its ethical inspiration, in order for the West to regain its moral orientation.”⁴²⁶ In this regard, Levinas’ engagement with Biblical themes very much connects up to his insights on hospitality. In his own account of the Oak Mamre narrative, Levinas is fascinated by the Biblical account of Abraham welcoming three strangers. He suggests that in this text, Abraham is portrayed not only as a host but also as guest who received from the strangers the promise of a son.⁴²⁷ According to

⁴²³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, trans. Sean Hand (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 133; cf. Eli Schonfeld, “Levinas and the Bible,” in *Oxford Handbook*, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 385-400.

⁴²⁴ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 23.

⁴²⁵ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 23.

⁴²⁶ Schonfeld, “Levinas and the Bible,” 386.

⁴²⁷ Genesis 18:1-15.

Levinas, at the time, Abraham was not firmly rooted in the Promised Land, yet he cared for the need of the strangers (the Other). Levinas remarks, “to the myth of Ulysses returning to Ithaca, we wish to oppose the story of Abraham who leaves his fatherland forever for a yet unknown land.”⁴²⁸ In the Oak Mamre Narrative “Abraham shows beautifully that when a subject engages with an *Other*, she is both at home and in exile, neither distant from, nor completely within the home from which she speaks.”⁴²⁹

The home, for Levinas, becomes both a place of refuge, “recollection, a coming to oneself,” and a site of hospitality where the Other is welcomed in my home “by opening my home to him.”⁴³⁰ In hospitality, not only does the self undergo transformation as a result of the encounter with the Other, but her home, as a symbol of sovereignty, also experiences transfiguration. The presence of the welcomed Other transforms the home into a “chosen place” who graces the home with the “presence of the infinite.”⁴³¹ Here, the home embodies its full ethical potentiality by mirroring the common experience of exile that unites both guest and host, because the guest “has no other place, is not autochthonous, is uprooted, without a country, not an inhabitant, exposed to the cold and the heat of the

⁴²⁸ Emmanuel Levinas, “The Trace of the Other,” in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 348.

⁴²⁹ Sultana, “On Being Host and Guest,” 60.

⁴³⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 171.

⁴³¹ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 164.

seasons.”⁴³² The host, even in its primordial level, is also potentially homeless: in welcoming the guest, the host recognizes her own exile. “The home that houses the guest becomes an ‘inn’ and both of its inhabitants are self-admitted exiles.”⁴³³ The hospitable home becomes a real home by virtue of the fact of “wandering” (exilic nature) and “the surplus of the relationship with the Other (metaphysics).”⁴³⁴

Levinas, in his phenomenological project of explicating the structure of the subject, suggests that the self is on a journey, both taking refuge and being an itinerant. Being-at-home is thus always both a place and a peripatetic mode of being. While on life’s journey, recollecting oneself is a “coming to oneself, a retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome.”⁴³⁵ A human subject continually “goes forth outside from an inwardness.”⁴³⁶ Levinas holds that when an individual encounters another, she is at once both host and guest. In *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Derrida, as seen above, explains perhaps best his friend’s position by employing the double meaning of the French term *hôte* signifying both the guest and the host, which

⁴³² Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, 91.

⁴³³ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 164.

⁴³⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 172.

⁴³⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 155-156.

⁴³⁶ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 152.

“would make of the inhabitant a guest (*hôte*) received in his own home, ... of the owner a tenant, of the welcoming host (*hôte*) a welcomed guest (*hôte*).”⁴³⁷

Beyond the Biblical account of Abraham, Levinas favors two additional Biblical passages that elucidate the practice of hospitality in the Jewish tradition.⁴³⁸ In *The Nations and the Presence of Israel*, Levinas cites Deuteronomy 23 verse 8: “Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother; thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land.” Regarding the Edomite, the Israelites are instructed not to mistreat them since they are called as brothers, not necessarily sharing the same vision for the new nation of Israel but simply because of their belonging to the human race. Levinas insists, right after quoting the above-mentioned verse in Deuteronomy, fraternity equates humanity where the alterity of the Other is preserved: “Fraternity (but what does it mean? Is it not, according to the Bible, a synonym of humanity?) and hospitality: are these not stronger than the horror a man may feel for the Other who denies him in his alterity?”⁴³⁹ Since the Edomites are brothers, and in this context strangers in relations to the Israelites, they demand hospitality from the host, the Israelites. “The Israelites are ordered to respond accordingly by subordinating all local, provincial, and national loyalties to a greater

⁴³⁷ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 42.

⁴³⁸ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 175.

⁴³⁹ Levinas, “The Nations and the Presence of Israel,” 97.

commitment to the human plurality. In this light, the extension of hospitality to the national stranger is coeval with a corresponding embrace of human fraternity.”⁴⁴⁰

The Israelite are also commanded to not mistreat the Egyptian, this time because they themselves were once strangers in Egypt. The Egyptians demand respect from the Israelite not due to fraternity, but because the Israelites once were their guests. Levinas notes that although Exodus indicates servitude and slavery and thus “liberation *par excellence*,” it is also the place where the Israelites were welcomed - Abraham and Jacob found refuge and Joseph was given authority to take care of the economic atrocity facing the region.⁴⁴¹ For Levinas, belonging to the Messianic order is manifested when one admits “others among one’s own.” The acceptance of foreigners, despite their differences, the way they speak or smell, “that a people should give them an *akhsaniah* [place of accommodation in Hebrew], such as a place at the inn, and the wherewithal to breathe and to live-is a song to the glory of the God of Israel.”⁴⁴² Gauthier further explicates that this commandment also orders the Israelites to welcome the Egyptians “to reciprocate what is rightly owed. At the same time, the commandment effectively orders them to forego any attempts at vengeance. The commandment thus enjoins both remembrance of past kindness and forgiveness of previous transgressions.”⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 175.

⁴⁴¹ Levinas, “The Nations and the Presence of Israel,” 97-8.

⁴⁴² Levinas, “The Nations and the Presence of Israel,” 98.

⁴⁴³ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 175-176.

Levinas also points to the reality of the Israelites as sojourners and stewards, meditating on Leviticus 25 verse 13: “No land shall be irrevocably alienated, for the earth is mine, for you are but strangers dwelling in my abode.” The Covenant of God with the Israelites indicates stewardship of the land rather than ownership.⁴⁴⁴ Also Rosenzweig avers, “even when it has a home, this people, in recurrent contrast to all the other peoples of this earth, is not allowed full possession of that home.”⁴⁴⁵ To attribute ownership of the land to a particular people is perceived as a form of ungratefulness to the Lord of Hosts as the real possessor of the land (world), enabling the land to be possessed in the first place.⁴⁴⁶ Gauthier points out that in Levinas’ view, it is in welcoming the stranger in one’s homeland that any attempt of possessing the land is repudiated. Given the current xenophobic political climate, Gauthier highlights that “this represents an amazing antidote to prize one’s own nationality to be better than the rest of humanity. Tolerance of foreign strangers represents a decisive monotheistic political act,” a tolerance that only God can make possible.⁴⁴⁷

It is crucial to note that the insights Levinas gleaned from his Jewish tradition on the concept of hospitality have not only religious implications but can be directly applied

⁴⁴⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, “Contemporary Criticism of the Idea of Value,” in *Value and Values in Evolution*, ed. A. Maziarz (New York: Gordon and Beach, 1979), 184.

⁴⁴⁵ Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 300.

⁴⁴⁶ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 176.

⁴⁴⁷ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 176.

to the political realm. According to Levinas, “a nation will distinguish itself as either noble or base - as either a State of Caesar or as a member of the Messianic order - by virtue of how it treats foreigners.”⁴⁴⁸ Levinas’ thought indicates a connection between the religious and the political, especially in regard to hospitality, for the “criterion of our humanness” lies in sheltering the Other in one’s home(land).⁴⁴⁹ This “criterion of humanness,” Gauthier suggests, signifies perhaps the essential “formula that political actors are expected to apply when practicing a politics of hospitality.”⁴⁵⁰

To return to the notion of responsibility as one of the core characteristics of Judaism, an ancient adage holds that *kol Israel ‘arevim zeh lazeh* - every Israelite is responsible for every other. Levinas expands this notion to all humanity, holding every person as responsible for every other person. Putnam refers to Levinas’s discussion of a passage in the Talmud (Sotah 37) and various instances where God and Israel made a covenant to further explicate the notion of *kol Israel ‘arevim zeh lazeh*, indicating that any person who cleave to the divine law, worthy of the name, is responsible for each other. In recognizing the Other, I become the guarantee of the Other, of his fidelity to the law. His concern becomes mine, but at the same time, my concern also becomes his. He becomes responsible for me, and thus *kol Israel ‘arevim zeh lazeh*.⁴⁵¹ This basic symmetrical

⁴⁴⁸ Levinas, “The Nations and the Presence of Israel,” 98.

⁴⁴⁹ Levinas, “The Nations and the Presence of Israel,” 98.

⁴⁵⁰ Gauthier, “Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality,” 177.

⁴⁵¹ Hilary Putnam, “Levinas and Judaism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 43-44.

relationship, Putnam points out, is transformed into an asymmetrical one by Levinas: “I always have, myself, one responsibility more than anyone else, since I am responsible, in addition, for his responsibility. And if he is responsible for my responsibility, I remain responsible for the responsibility he has for my responsibility. *Ein la-Davar sof*, ‘it will never end.’”⁴⁵² This is an infinite process where I am always asymmetrically responsible for the Other and her responsibility, moving beyond the reciprocal aspect to a non-reciprocal orientation toward the Other.

By the same token, Alon Goshen-Gottstein emphasizes the importance of the religious teachings of the Jewish traditions, which have the potential to elevate the lived experience of history to “spiritual heights, providing meaning and direction, and raise the people of Israel beyond the vicissitudes of history and their natural reactions to them.”⁴⁵³ This is especially true for the concept of hospitality, which needs to be viewed as an act *coram deo* (a Latin phrase meaning before God).⁴⁵⁴ Awareness of God as the conscious center of Judaism results in a rediscovery of its deepest commonalities with humanity. In the Book of Chronicles, both Israel and the foreigners are ascribed the status of *gerim*

⁴⁵² Putnam, “Levinas and Judaism,” 44.

⁴⁵³ Goshen-Gottstein, “Judaism: The Battle for Survival, the Struggle for Compassion,” 35.

⁴⁵⁴ *Coram Deo* refers to the concept of living with a constant awareness of the presence of God. This translates into a life lived under God’s authority and ultimately seeking to glorify Him. In Judaism, the closest concept is *L’taken LeFanav*, which translates to “before God.” This concept emphasizes living with the same awareness of God’s presence as described in *Coram Deo*.

coram deo (strangers before God)⁴⁵⁵ because being alien is fundamental to human existence. “For we are aliens and transients before You, as were all our ancestors; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope.”⁴⁵⁶ Goshen further suggests that our existence “like a shadow,” as a communality shared by all of humanity, provides the deepest bond of fraternity. Together we live this status of *gerim coram deo*. Thus, in the presence of God as the ultimate host, we all become aliens and guests; it is God who is the ultimate host, while we are all aliens in His sight. By shifting to a *coram deo* perspective, our focus is changed from human society to God, who allows us an existence in His presence and a resorting of relations between peoples, as well as mutual appreciation.⁴⁵⁷

In an interesting way, Rabbi Yishmael interprets the givenness of the law in the wilderness (landlessness for the people of Israel) as a place where the Others can and are always already welcome to receive it: “the Torah was given in an ownerless place, for had

⁴⁵⁵ This denotes that both sira-elits (hosts) and strangers (guests) are *gerim coram deo* (*gerim*, a Hebrew word for strangers, and *coram deo*, a latin phrase meaning before God).

⁴⁵⁶ 1. Chronicles 29:15.

⁴⁵⁷ Though Levinas and Goshen-Gottstein stand for similar emphases, the latter takes a much more ontological approach and even warns of a misguided perspective on the Other. Acknowledging the commonplace contemporary philosophy that one needs the Other in order to construct one’s own identity, he warns that in a dialogical context such a perspective means one thing in an antagonistic context it means quite another and it would be tragic if the negative attitude to the Other would be needed in order to establish one’s own identity. Authors who refer to studies on xenophobia in Israel pointing to this factor that Israeli antagonism to Arabs is based, at least to some extent, on the role that Arabs as an “other” play in the shaping of Israeli identity he finds alarming. Self may be constructed in dialogue with the Other, but it cannot be defined exclusively in reaction to the Other. In fact, constructing one’s identity only in reaction to an “other” may betray a deep sense of loss of self and identity. Goshen-Gottstein reminds thus his readers of the famous Hassidic dictum, attributed to Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk that states: “If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then neither you nor I truly is; but if I am I, because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then both I and you truly are.” Goshen-Gottstein, “Judaism: The Battle for Survival, the Struggle for Compassion,” 34-36.

the Torah been given in the land of Israel, the Israelites could have said to the nations of the world, “You have no share in it. But now that it was given in the wilderness publicly and openly, in an ownerless place, everyone who desires to receive it can come and receive it.”⁴⁵⁸ To relate this to the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), we find additional emphasis on being an itinerant and a sojourner. The liturgical and bodily experience of Sukkot, homelessness in the middle of the desert, underlies a powerful attitude toward the self and the Other. In Sukkot, people from every walk of life live together under one roof, albeit temporarily, to relive the experience of the wilderness. Sukkot strips everyone from their sovereignty and the feeling of being a host in one’s own home. The self and the stranger all become guests in the presence of God and each other. It is thus not surprising that many non-Israelites fled with the Israelite and celebrated Sukkot with them, as exodus 12:38 notes: “Many other people went up with them, and also large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds” (NIV).

In summary, there emerges an emphasis on hospitality across the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinic writings, and Jewish thinkers like Levinas. And in the details of these traditions, we may point to the asymmetrical hospitality of height and excess: Hospitality is deemed so important as to place it at times above even the presence of God.

Hospitality in the Islamic Tradition

Has the story reached thee, of the honored guests of Abraham? Behold, they entered his presence and said: “Peace!” He said, “Peace!” (and thought, “These

⁴⁵⁸ Cited in Michael Faigenblat, *A Covenant of Creatures: Levinas’s Philosophy of Judaism* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2010).

seem) unusual people.” Then he turned quickly to his household, brought out a fattened calf, and placed it before them... He said, “Will ye not eat?” (When they did not eat), he conceived a fear of them. They said, “Fear not,” and they gave him glad tidings of a son endowed with knowledge. But his wife came forward (Laughing) aloud: she smote Her forehead and said: “A barren old woman!” They said, “Even so Has thy Lord spoken: an He is full of Wisdom and Knowledge.” (Quran 51: 24-30).⁴⁵⁹

- (24) هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ
(25) إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ
(26) فَرَاخَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ
(27) فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ
(28) فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَحْزَنْ وَبَشِّرْهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ
(29) فَأَقْبَلَتْ إِمْْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَاطَةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ
(30) قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ⁴⁶⁰

The Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim (HNI) in the Quran is extant in four different variants. Sura 51: 24-30 is considered the oldest version (1. Meccan Period, 610-616 C.E.), while the two versions found in Sura 37: 99-113 and Sura 15: 51-56 are ascribed to the 2. Meccan Period (616-619 C.E.), and the latest version, Sura 11: 69-73, to the 3. Meccan Period (619-622).⁴⁶¹

I want to mainly focus on Sura 51 as the oldest version and originating during the early Meccan period. Sura 51 is characterized as a Sura of Judgement. It announces in verses 1-6 the recompense of God upon those who fear God and, in verses 7-23, the judgement upon those who reject God. The Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim, which is the

⁴⁵⁹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Qur'an: A Translation*, 7th U.S. ed (Elmhurst, N.Y: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 2001).

⁴⁶⁰ Ali, *The Qur'an*.

⁴⁶¹ Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 638-639.

focal point of our discussion, then further deliberates on God's recompense (Verses 24-30), while the concluding verses of Sura 51: 31-37 delineate the judgement of God upon Sodom.

When considering the visitors who appeared to Abraham, some Islamic traditions emphasize that they were ordinary humans in an attempt to avoid "*shirk*," the theological error of associating God with other deities.⁴⁶² In the early version of Sura 51: 24 the visitors fall under the concept of "guest (*dayf*)," and in the somewhat later text in Sura 11 uses *rusulu(na)*, "messengers."⁴⁶³ At-Tabari (839-923 C.E.), in his commentary on Sura 11, considers them to be "messengers of God," meaning "angels" disguised as young men. Influenced by the Jewish traditions, he ventures out to call them Jibril, Mikhail and Israfil.⁴⁶⁴ The guests/messengers, after having entered, in Sura 51: 25 use the standard greeting of *salam* (peace), while the Kufian variant reads *silm* (security).⁴⁶⁵ Following the reply of *salam*, Ibrahim and his household (*ahl al-bait*) prepare a fatted calf (*ajil samin*) in order to extend hospitality to the guests without questioning the reason for their visit. So far, HNI reveals all standard hospitality characteristics: guests are received without a background check, the greeting of peace is exchanged, and the fatted calf is served. At-

⁴⁶² Christiana Reemts, *Abraham in der christlichen Tradition* (Muenster, 2005), 249-258. For Judaism, see bYoma 37a, bBM 86b. The Islamic concept of *shirk*, "making partners," indicates to theological deviants like polytheism, idolatry, or any association of God with other deities.

⁴⁶³ In Quranic Arabic *dayf* (sg.) can serve as singular or plural.

⁴⁶⁴ At-Tabari, *Commentary on Sura 11*, quoted in Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 267.

⁴⁶⁵ Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 268.

Tabari, influenced by Jewish traditions, even leaves room for excess and height by allowing for angelic beings. He also asserts (though he is the only Islamic interpreter to do so) that the refusal to eat reflects an old Jewish tradition suggesting that angels do not eat, causing Abraham anguish and puzzlement.⁴⁶⁶ In spite of the fact that Ibrahim has meticulously fulfilled all requirements of hospitality, the visitors reject his generous offer, causing alarm and fear according to Sura 51: 27. In certain Arabic traditions, the rejection of offered food by a guest not only signals resentment but also implies that the guest refusing food harbors ill intentions.⁴⁶⁷ The probable disruption or confusion in the story likely stems from the challenge of *shirk* (the angels smacking of divinity), which had to be rectified by Islamic theology. Consequently, various attempts in Islamic exegesis were made to elucidate why the visitors turned down Ibrahim's food and ultimately Islamic theology prevailed in rejecting any possibility of anthropomorphism or *shirk*, attributing lies and mistakes and the inferiority of the Jewish traditions and orientalist who inaccurately claimed that God or angels had visited Ibrahim.⁴⁶⁸

In the further unfolding of the narrative, it is surprising to see that despite the obvious theological intention to eliminate traces of the divine from the story, the Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim continues to indicate height and excess. Already in the

⁴⁶⁶ At-Tabari, Tafsir XII, 70-71; cf. TB Hagigah 16a, Targum Yerushalmi Gen 18,8, Gen Rabba 48,14; Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 268.

⁴⁶⁸ Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 269.

following verse 28, the response of the visitors is couched in typical “angelic” language: “Fear not (*la tahaf!*)” and “they brought Good Tidings (*basharu*).”⁴⁶⁹ This closely resembles the annunciation narrative in Matthew 2: “And the angel (circumscribed in verse 9 as *malaku rabbi*) said to them: Do not be afraid (*la tahafu!*) I bring you Good Tidings (*ana ubashirukum*) (Matthew 2:10)!” It is important to note that the annunciation of a son is dubbed as *euangelion* (*bishara*) is a story of hospitality in its own rights. Mary and Joseph could not find any hotel room (*katalyma*-Luke 2:7) in Bethlehem, and their son had to be born in a stable in a humble abode (*phate*-Luke 2:7; *oikia*-Matthew 2:11), shared not only by humans but also by animals. Nevertheless, this humble abode was in the end graced by unexpected divine concern and presence. Angels would announce the *parousia* of the gift of the son, and the *oikia* was even blessed by the visit of the Wise Men of the East (*magoi*), bringing along the *dona superaddita*, gold, frankincense, and myrrh of unspeakable value. Divine presence, height, excess, and the *parousia* of the gift of the son are encapsulated in Luke 2:14 in the climactic crescendo of the angels’ song: “*Gloria, in Excelsis Deo!*”

Elements of excess, as found in the Christian and Jewish traditions, are also alluded to in the Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim in Sura 51: the appearance of the *rusulu* (At-Tabari: Jibril, Mikhail and Israfil), the human fearful reaction, the comforting

⁴⁶⁹ Linguistically, the Quranic *bushra*, has in the first place just the meaning of “message,” without a positive or negative connotation, which is a circumstance that in the Sura of Judgement (51) it could stand in reference to both the anticipated blessing (51,24-30) or punishment (51,31-37). The exegetical context clearly indicates, however, a positive circumstance, *i.e.*, the annunciation of a son.

counter-reaction of the angels (*la tahaf!*) as well as the annunciation of Good News (*bushra/bishara*) of the *parousia* of a son. The son is characterized by wisdom (*alim*), both in Sura 51: 28 and 15:53, indicating, according to At-Tabari, that the son will become a man of wisdom.⁴⁷⁰ Any doubt about excess and height are dispelled by the Lord himself in the climactic statement (*vox dei*) of the concluding verse 30 of the Sura 51: “Your Lord (*rabbuka*) has spoken: He is Wisdom and Knowledge (*Hua al-Hakimu al-Alimu*)!”⁴⁷¹ From a literal and exegetical standpoint, the question arises: Is there any connection between the wisdom of the Lord and the wisdom of the son? The correct Islamic theological answer would be, of course, “No!” Yet, from the perspective of At-Tabari, who allowed for some carry-over from the ancient traditions of the Abraham narrative (angels, Good News), and from a literary viewpoint, the composer may have intended to attribute excess and height to the promise of the son by ascribing to him the same epithet as to the Lord (*alim*).

In summary, with the Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim in Sura 51, *par*, we have thus established all the characteristics of a radical hospitality. Guests are received unconditionally, the greeting of peace is exchanged, the fatted calf is served, and in spite of obvious Islamic theological reservations, the aspect of a promise and a gift, as well as excess and height, are maintained.

⁴⁷⁰ At-Tabari, Tafsir XXVI, 208-210.

⁴⁷¹ Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 272.

Turning to the religious history of Islam, the importance of hospitality can also be seen in relation to Muhammad's own effort to escape persecution: In 622 CE, many of the *sahaba* (companions) of Muhammad, facing an inhospitable attitude in their native city of Mecca, left and migrated to Yathrib, later named Medina. Despite knowing the potential risk of facing a more economically and militarily influential Mecca, the people of Medina chose to extend hospitality to the refugees, knowing that they were inviting risks and dangers coming their way. The concept of *Hijra* in Islamic tradition, implying a command for those facing inhospitality to leave in order to receive hospitality elsewhere, is regarded as an archetypical concept and the starting point of Muslim civilization, and the foundation for Islamic society (*umma*). This migration, in particular, marked the beginning of the Islamic era. (And we may here note that Jewish and Islamic communities have shared resources for elevating hospitality inasmuch as both are rooted in the decision of a group of people to leave oppressive circumstances and follow the command of their God, establishing a new community of believers—in the case of Judaism, this is exemplified in the Exodus narrative, where the people of Israel escaped 400 years of slavery in Egypt.⁴⁷²)

Thinking further about the history of Islam, even before the migration of the Prophet to Medina, a group of Muslims sought sanctuary in *Habasha* (Abyssinia), a

⁴⁷² Devorah Schoenfeld, "You Will Seek From There: The Cycle of Exile and Return in Classical Jewish Theology," in *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*, eds. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Christian State (615-622 CE), in order to escape persecution. The Christian king of *Habasha* extended hospitality to the *sahabah*, a group of people who were strangers, foreigners, and refugees with no means of protecting themselves from the persecutors, despite the potential danger from the powerful people of Quraish. The Quranic report clearly favors those who embraced the path of migration over those who remained behind and suffered death. This preference arises from the fact that they had the option to migrate to other places on earth, which belonged to God, yet they chose to endure under oppression.⁴⁷³ The command to migrate implies the existence of individuals and communities willing to extend hospitality to those who migrate.

The commandment to migrate, to leave one's own home(land), parallel to the story of Abraham, becomes a central point in the creation of the subject in Islam. The *hijra* of the prophet and the *muhajirin* reflect not only a form of liberation but also the formation of a community between the guests/refuges and the host. It was a commandment that defined the integration of an individual into the Muslim community, as highlighted in the following Quranic verse: "Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of God and those who gave shelter and aided – they are allies of one another. But those who believed and did not emigrate – for you there is no guardianship of them until they emigrate. And if they seek help of you for the religion, then you must help, except against a people between

⁴⁷³ Al-Deeb Abu Sahlieh, Sami A, "The Islamic Conception of Migration," *The International Migration Review* 30,1 (1996): 38.

yourselves and whom is a treaty. And God sees what you do” (Quran 8:72). Khalid Masud, commenting on this verse, asserts, “*hijra* was an obligation of physical movements towards self-definition, refusal to migrate meant exclusion from the society and *hijra* established a bond of relationship among Muslims.”⁴⁷⁴ Many hadiths, so Masud points out, reflect an obligation upon Muslims to migrate, placing it even on *par* with “attention (*sam‘*), obedience (*ta‘a*), migration (*hijra*), struggle (*jihad*), and organization (*jama‘a*).”⁴⁷⁵ The commandment to migrate in Islam, to leave one’s own place, sovereignty, mastery, resembles the notion of being a sojourner in Judaism, and Christianity, integral to the formation and structure of the subject. Such a view of seeing oneself, and consequently every other human being, namely, as a sojourner became more prevalent with the expansion of Sufism as they adopted “homelessness as a way of life and were not strangers as ordinarily understood; they were at home everywhere but, as we shall see nowhere in this material world and constituted thus a special type of strangers.”⁴⁷⁶

Closely linked to the commandment to migrate, there are also numerous commandments to extend hospitality to strangers. A Quranic verse emphasizes the importance of caring for and doing good to strangers and the travelers: “Worship God

⁴⁷⁴ Khalid Masud, “The Obligation to Migrate: The Doctrine of Hijra in Islamic Law,” in *Muslim Travelers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Migration*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (London: Routledge, 1990), 86.

⁴⁷⁵ Masud, “The Obligation to Migrate,” 87.

⁴⁷⁶ Franz Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” *Arabica* 44 (1997): 42.

and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, God does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful” (Quran 4: 36). This verse differentiates between two kinds of neighbors: “*jāri dhī l-qurbā wa l-jāri l-junūbi*. Yusuf Ali translates ‘the near neighbor’ and ‘the neighbor farther away’ as ‘neighbors who are of kin’ and ‘neighbors who are strangers,’” the former including both friends and local neighbors, the latter including people from afar and those whom we don’t know.⁴⁷⁷ In Islamic tradition, we also find two words for stranger, one being *gharib*, perhaps indicating the closer neighbor, while *ajnabi* implies the farther neighbor, the outsider.⁴⁷⁸ Quran 4: 36 implies thus hospitality toward the Other, encompassing both the Muslim Other and the religious Other, the neighbor and the stranger. In the same spirit as in the Biblical narrative, we find thus the command to do good/justice toward the poor, the orphans, and the strangers. Refusing to do good toward them is equated with pride and self-delusion resulting in being disliked by God. As Siddiqui notes according to various hadiths: “the traveler or wayfarer must be acknowledged irrespective of his character, his origins or his destiny.”⁴⁷⁹ In a welcome departure from many of our own worst contemporary sensibilities, Rosenthal also

⁴⁷⁷ Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 36.

⁴⁷⁸ Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 37.

⁴⁷⁹ Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 59.

emphasizes that in the medieval period neither *ajnabi* (foreigner) nor *Gharib* (stranger) entailed the notion of stranger as an enemy; in fact, neither was approached with a xenophobic attitude.⁴⁸⁰ Such a view of the stranger left no room for negative connotations resulting in a more welcoming attitude toward the Other. In medieval Islam, a stranger was simply someone who had left their homeland.⁴⁸¹

From the hospitality narrative of Ibrahim and other Islamic sources we have learned thus that the Islamic tradition is rich with “ethical impulses or virtues,” e.g., *diyafa* (hospitality), *muakha* (brotherhood), and *ijara* (support and protection). The discussion of these virtues goes beyond the scope of this project but presents “untapped potentiality.”⁴⁸² Abu al-Fadl encourages Muslim leaders to focus more on their native moral and ethical resources and to develop them, lamenting that unfortunately “for the most part, in response to the growing problems of forced migration and displaced populations, contemporary Muslims have not leveraged their own ethical tradition.”⁴⁸³ Following Abu al-Fadl’s suggestion, we aim to closely examine the concept of *diyafa* (hospitality), to determine if it provides additional leverage to the normative obligation of *hijra*, the act of escaping oppression and persecution, and if it complements and

⁴⁸⁰ Franz Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” *Arabica* 44 (1997): 40-41.

⁴⁸¹ Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” 41.

⁴⁸² Abu Al-Fadl, “Islamic Ethics, Human Rights and Migration,” 16.

⁴⁸³ Abu Al-Fadl, “Islamic Ethics, Human Rights and Migration,” 16.

empowers the concept of *hijra*.⁴⁸⁴ The agreements established between immigrants and the *ansar*, as well as the community-building achieved by Muhammad through *diyafa* at the time of the *hijra*, indicates that these concepts remain vital for community building.”⁴⁸⁵

Diyafa (hospitality), being a part of Islamic culture, is integral to the structure of any Muslim society.⁴⁸⁶ The Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim in Quran 51: 24-30 offers a compelling narrative for Muslims to welcome strangers, for the stranger becomes a guest “and welcoming the guest into one’s home means not simply inviting someone into our most personal space, but inviting that person with humility, grace and generosity.”⁴⁸⁷ Siddiqui bemoans that although the Ibrahim narrative appears in two *Suras*, *Hud* and *Hijr*, it is more prominent in the Jewish and Christian traditions.⁴⁸⁸ Muslim scholars, for some reason, have not drawn enough from such narratives to develop a theory of

⁴⁸⁴ Abu Al-Fadl, “Islamic Ethics, Human Rights and Migration,” 15.

⁴⁸⁵ Al-Deeb Abu-Sahlieh, „The Islamic Conception of Migration,” 38.

⁴⁸⁶ There is a saying in Kurdish that guests are the beloved of God (Sorani: *miwan habibi khwaya*). I grew up hearing that from my parents often and it became a part of our proverbial vocabulary of our Sunni tradition.

⁴⁸⁷ Mona Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam: Welcoming in God’s Name* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 21. When I lived in Kurdistan of Iraq, I have heard multiple times from my American friends that they have never experienced such hospitality in their own country.

⁴⁸⁸ As we have seen above, the Ibrahimic hospitality narrative is found in four suras, ascribed to the following periods: Sura 51,24-20 is considered the oldest version of the story (1. Meccan Period, 610-616 C.E.), additional versions like Sura 37,99-113 and Sura 15,51-56 are ascribed to the 2. Meccan Period (616-619 C.E.), and Sura 11,69-73 to the 3. Meccan Period (619-622), cf. Josua, *Ibrahim der Gottesfreund*, 638-639.

hospitality.⁴⁸⁹ Siddiqui insist that hospitality is often conflated or assimilated into generosity, emphasizing that if there is any narrative on hospitality “it must be teased out from the Quranic and Islamic literature which deals with the imperative to give from one’s wealth, to give charity, to exercise generosity and to treat those who are vulnerable with compassion.”⁴⁹⁰ The Hospitality Narrative of Ibrahim in Sura 51: 24-30 has undoubtedly precipitated aspects of unconditional hospitality, underlining its significance in the Islamic context. Such *diyafa* provides the paradigm to welcome strangers and refugees, treating them as guests, akin to Ibrahim’s actions, rather than merely as charity cases. This serves as an ethical principle for Muslims and Muslim societies to “tap into their own rich normative tradition to improve upon the universal standards that humanity sets for itself.”⁴⁹¹

It is also important to note that the etymology of the word *dyafa* sheds light on the concept of hospitality in Islam and its close relation to the notion of excess that we have seen throughout this project. The root of the word is *dyf*, from which is formed also *idafa*, meaning “addition.” As Mohammad says, whenever God wants to grant blessings to a house or a nation, He will give them a gift. In response to what that gift would be,

⁴⁸⁹ This concern of Siddiqui has been well taken, but as we have seen in our exegetical section above, the reluctance to embrace HNI fully, may be due to theological reasons, since the Ibrahim narrative on hospitality contains contested elements (asymmetry, excess) that smack of *shirk* and are ascribed to earlier traditions and are taken in consideration only by some Islamic scholars, e.g. At-Tabari.

⁴⁹⁰ Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 22.

⁴⁹¹ Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 21.

Mohammad answers: a guest, who brings blessings and sustenance upon entering the house but also wipes away the sins of a household as he exits the house.⁴⁹² Even in defying the economic realm of calculation and logics, Mohammad, in accordance to the excess that the height of the Other/stranger/guest will bring, confronts the fear of not having financial ability to provide for the guest by asserting that “a guest brings blessings (financial blessings) even faster than a blade cutting the hump of a camel.”⁴⁹³ In showing hospitality, one offers or adds something to the Other/guest, be it food, shelter, etc. Paradoxically, in giving away something, there occurs addition and excess for the host: her home is blessed, the divine is met, and as we have seen in the case of Abraham, a promise is received.

It is thus not surprising that *diyafa* played a significant role in accelerating the process of integration of Muslim refugees in Germany. The following delineates an example of practical *diyafa* in the context of Islamic societal integration of refugees in Germany and shedding light on how *diyafa* can function as ethical marker in the migration process, especially in terms of integration and community building. Research from the *Research Center of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees* of the German Federal Republic (*Bundesamt*), indicates that between 4.4 and 4.7 Million

⁴⁹² "جایگاه میهمان در سیره نبوی" [The Status of Guests in the Prophet's Biography], WikiFeqh, accessed February 24, URL: <https://fa.wikifeqh.ir/جایگاه میهمان در سیره نبوی>.

⁴⁹³ Muttaqi Hindi, Ali. *Kanz al-Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Afāl*, ed. Bakri Hayani and Tahqiq Sheikh Safwat al-Saqqa, Vol. 9, p. 267. Beirut: Dar al-Risalah, 1989.

migrants reside in Germany, constituting 5.4 and 5.7 percent of the population.⁴⁹⁴ Similar to all Abrahamic religions, the Islamic community supports integration into the European societies, viewing migration and integration has become “the medium through which Muslims are challenged most to participate in multi-religious democracies.”⁴⁹⁵ However, this process has not been without challenges; a poll commissioned by *Welt am Sonntag* revealed that 40 percent of Germans with a personal migration history and 45 percent of Germans without one believed that Germany should receive fewer refugees.⁴⁹⁶ Prejudices about refugees and religion thus obviously exists also among the Muslim minority in Germany. Despite these challenges, awareness of solidarity within the global Islamic community, the *umma*, and the significance of the concept of escape and emigration (*hijra*) in Islam creates a natural bond between those who were once refugees and those who are newly arriving. Islamic associations in Germany have emerged as proponents of accepting migrants. “Given that the majority of migrants are Muslims, these associations encourage their members to commit themselves to care for refugees.”⁴⁹⁷ In an effort to contextualize the modern experience of *hijra*, Islamic scholars have recalibrated the

⁴⁹⁴ “Wie Viele Muslime leben in Deutschland?” accessed March 13, 2021.

⁴⁹⁵ Mohammed Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis: The Importance of Islamic Citizens’ Initiative in Germany,” in Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith, eds., *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 87-88.

⁴⁹⁶ Freia Peters, “Migranten wollen weniger Flüchtlinge in Deutschland,” *Die Welt am Sonntag*, November 29, 2015, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article149391575/Migranten-wollen-weniger-Fluechtlinge-in-Deutschland.html>.

⁴⁹⁷ Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis, 88-90.

definition of *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* by pointing out “that not all the states without Muslim majority were considered *Dar al-Harb* - otherwise, the first followers of Muhammad could not have migrated to Abyssinia.”⁴⁹⁸ Referring to the view of the twelfth-century Islamic scholar Alauddin Abu Bakr al-Kasani who considered any countries that allowed the practice of Islam as *Dar al-Islam* and noted “where the Muslim is not denied legal security, the area is not *Dar al-Harb* but rather *Dar al-Islam*.”⁴⁹⁹ Inferring from Kasani’s view, Germany was considered as *Dar al-Islam* for its constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and thereby freedom of practicing Islam by the Muslims.

Islamic associations in Germany have initiated programs for refugees at various levels of the migration process. Notably, the campaigns of the *Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland (ZMD)*, the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, have been particularly successful.⁵⁰⁰ ZMD as an umbrella organization affiliated with more than 300 mosques “is one of the most important associations of Muslims in Germany.”⁵⁰¹ To demonstrate solidarity with the refugees and make them feel welcomed, ZMD utilized various Islamic feasts. As a sign of hospitality, ZMD with the help of 150 volunteer members of various

⁴⁹⁸ Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis, 92.

⁴⁹⁹ Al-Kasani, cited in Shaik Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Begriff des Krieges im Islam*, vol. 6, ed. Oberster Rat fuer islamische Angelegenheiten (Cairo: Ansiklopedisi, 1952), 374.

⁵⁰⁰ For the details on the activities of the ZMD, see <http://www.zentralrat.de/>, accessed March 3, 2021.

⁵⁰¹ Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis, 93.

communities, distributed gifts among refugee children during *Eid al-Adha* in 2015.⁵⁰² Moreover, during Ramadan in 2015 and 2016, ZMD organized inclusive *iftars* (fast-breaking) throughout Germany, welcoming local and regional politicians, representatives of other religions, and refugees.⁵⁰³ During these *iftar*-receptions, “the refugees were welcomed at richly laid tables, thus concretely experiencing the hospitality of the community of Muslims in Germany as well as the local guests as their new host society. In 2015, these *iftars* took place in approximately 50 cities, with almost 1.000 refugees participating in one evening alone.”⁵⁰⁴

Several Islamic scholars even argue that the concept of hospitality may have roots in pre-Islamic Bedouin culture, where it was seen as a reflection of noble character.⁵⁰⁵ This might suggest that hospitality in Islam might not merely be an abstract religious concept, but rather a concrete lived response to the presence of the Other. The harsh desert climate, where the survival of strangers and sojourners often dependent on assistance, likely fostered a hospitable attitude toward the Other/stranger. Additionally, specific Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of providing goods to those in need,

⁵⁰² Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis, 93.

⁵⁰³ Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis, 93.

⁵⁰⁴ Khallouk, “Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis, 93.

⁵⁰⁵ Allard, Silas, “In the Shade of the Oaks of Mamre: Hospitality as a Framework for Political Engagement between Christians and Muslims,” in *Political Theology* 13.4 (2012): 419; Mona, Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam: Welcoming in God’s Name* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 35.

as evidenced by Mohammad's statement that best part of Islam is "offering food and extending the greeting of peace to those you know and those you do not know."⁵⁰⁶ It is said that the prophet stated that "there is no good in the one who is not hospitable."⁵⁰⁷

Similar to Judaism and Christianity, Islam also acknowledges the notion of the sovereignty of the self being interrupted by God. God alone is the sovereign and everyone and everything owes obedience to him.⁵⁰⁸ Consequently, in Islamic theology, the creator (*Al-Khaliq* in Arabic), the lord and the sovereign of the universe, is responsible for its creation and sustenance. He also created human being, the created one (*makhlooq* in Arabic). To create (*khalq* in Arabic⁵⁰⁹) means to bring about something with no precedence, denoting separateness, and otherness. The self, the human being as a *makhlooq* is in an accusative form being interrupted by the *Khaliq* the nominative, the one who commands me. The human being is constituted, and her subjectivity is established by the creator (al-Khaliq). Al-Khaliq, which also entails sovereignty, portrays the reality of human beings called into responsibility to the wholly other, the creator.

In summary, we can find in Islamic (and pre-Islamic) traditions important connections to radical hospitality, including emphasis on the concept of migration in

⁵⁰⁶ Reynolds, "Toward a Wider Hospitality," 185.

⁵⁰⁷ Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 11.

⁵⁰⁸ Ilyas Ahmad, "Sovereignty in Islam (Continued)," *Pakistan Horizon*, 11, no.4 (1958): 247-8.

⁵⁰⁹ There is also the notion of be (*kun* in Arabic) in relation to creation which primarily denotes the moment of being.

general and *diyafa* in particular. As we have seen, the hospitality narrative of Ibrahim in Sura 51 reminds us that guests are to be received unconditionally and that greetings of peace and hospitality must be extended to strangers. Mindful to not reduce different traditions of thought, we may find in Islam's own emphasis on excess and height a connection to the Levinasian sense of Radical Hospitality and a New Host Self.

Hospitality in the Christian Tradition

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

“τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, διὰ ταύτης γὰρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους.”⁵¹⁰

The New Testament appears to carry on many traditions of the Old when addressing the Other, particularly in regards to hospitality and caring for the stranger and the vulnerable.⁵¹¹ This emphasis on hospitality is central to the Christian understanding of God and how Christians are called to emulate God in their lives and relationships with the Other(s).

⁵¹⁰ Kurt Aland, Carlos Maria Martini, et al., eds., *Nestle-Aland 27th Edition Greek New Testament (Morphological Edition) (NA27)*, 27th ed., (Stuttgart: Dt. Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

⁵¹¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 110. Levinas meditates on texts like Matthew 25, which combined discussion about God with a concern for the Other. He often reminded his Christian interlocutors that in Matthew 25 “the relation to God is presented as a relation to another person. It is not a metaphor on the other, there is a real presence of God.”⁵¹¹ For Levinas, Matthew 25 was simply a continuation of Isaiah 58.

Ross Langmead meditating on the relationship between Christian hospitality and foreigners/others/immigrants, asserting that “the greatest mystery of Christian hospitality is that in extending God’s welcome as a host we so often become the guest, both because our guest becomes our host or because, more profoundly, the Jesus we serve through the poor and hungry (Matthew 25) becomes our host. Hospitality frequently becomes a holy or divine moment and the occasion for the transformation of all involved.”⁵¹² As mentioned earlier, hospitality can be the occasion for an unexpected divine presence: Abraham and Sarah’s welcoming of strangers who turned out to be angels of the Lord bringing good tidings of the promise of a son (Genesis 18); the prostitute Rahab showing hospitality to Joshua and Caleb, who were spying out the Land, and, in return, her household was spared by the Israelite (Joshua 2); the disciples of Jesus on the road to Emmaus experiencing the resurrected Jesus by offering hospitality and food to a stranger, who in return, became their divine host (Luke 24).⁵¹³ These examples shed further light on the meaning of Hebrews 13:2 and how extending hospitality can lead to the unknowing welcome of divine presence in their midst. Matthew 25 emphasizes this notion of Christian hospitality even more strongly, indicating that welcoming the most vulnerable and needy is, in fact, welcoming Christ himself.⁵¹⁴ “Truly I tell you, whatever

⁵¹² Langmead, “Refugees as Guests and Hosts,” 184.

⁵¹³ Langmead, “Refugees as Guests and Hosts,” 185.

⁵¹⁴ Langmead, “Refugees as Guests and Hosts,” 186.

you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25: 40).” Langmead has effectively understood the Levinasian recommendation of this Christian text to perpetuate the traditions of the Hebrew Bible.

Matthew 25 resonates also with the story in Luke, emphasizing offering hospitality to the least without expecting any return or benefit: “When you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you (Luke 14:13-14).” This reflects the hospitality of God in welcoming the undeserving with a table prepared for them. Jesus, God incarnate, is depicted as a vulnerable guest who was not even welcomed in his home (*kosmos*) (John 1:11).⁵¹⁵ There is also an intermingling of guest and host in the person of Jesus in Matthew 25: 31-46 and Luke 14:12-14 suggesting that God not only welcomed the needy and the stranger but is welcomed in them.⁵¹⁶

On the other hand, Christine Pohl, in her book *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, offers a more critical assessment of the role of hospitality in the modern Christian tradition. She laments that the “rich Christian tradition of hospitality has, over the centuries, gradually been eroded by other social and economic discourses and dynamics.”⁵¹⁷ While Early Christianity was indeed a social movement

⁵¹⁵ Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 16-17.

⁵¹⁶ Pohl, *Making Room*, 23.

⁵¹⁷ Pohl, *Making Room*, 7.

known for caring for the sick and poor, as well as attending to the needs of stranger, Pohl argues that with the growing secularization of civic institutions by the sixteenth century and the State assuming welfare responsibilities in the twentieth century, the practice of hospitality “has largely been forgotten by the Ecclesia... .This ancient ethical practice has now become the domain of secularized commercial and professional institutions and was increasingly depersonalized and institutionalized.”⁵¹⁸

Despite this loss, Pohl asserts that there is great lack with the gospel without emphasizing the centrality of hospitality, and its restoration to the practice of the Church is thus crucial. Quoting Krister Stendahl, a New Testament scholar, Pohl insists that “wherever, whenever, however the kingdom manifest itself, it is welcome.”⁵¹⁹ Hospitality serves thus as a lens through which one can understand the gospel, and a practice through which one can welcome Jesus himself. Communities that engage in hospitality demonstrate that love is possible and that the world is not condemned to the struggle between the oppressed and oppressor; class and race struggles are not inevitable.⁵²⁰

Pohl further emphasizes that hospitality is not optional for Christians but a necessary practice for those who claim to follow the teachings of Christ. Even the etymology of the word *philoxenia* (hospitality) “combines the general word for love of

⁵¹⁸ Pohl, *Making Room*, 53.

⁵¹⁹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 8.

⁵²⁰ Pohl, *Making Room*, 9-11.

affection for people who are connected by kinship or faith (*phileo*) and the word for stranger (*xenos*).”⁵²¹ The etymology of hospitality closely connects this practice to the notion of love in Christianity, which is manifested in the care for the stranger and the needy, rather than being merely a feeling.

In general, hospitality was regarded in antiquity as a fundamental moral practice essential for protecting vulnerable strangers, but was in particular reflected in Christian circles of the Early Church, such continuing the Hebrew tradition that associated hospitality with “God, covenant, and blessings.”⁵²² In doing so, it stood at times over against the reciprocal Hellenistic tradition that emphasized benefit and reciprocity, focusing instead on the Christian emphasis on (asymmetrical) hospitality towards the weakest who were unable to reciprocate.⁵²³ Jean Zizioulas, a Greek Orthodox theologian and emphasizing the Early Church traditions, regards communion and otherness as complementary, viewing the former as the basis for genuine otherness. His project of community and otherness can be summarized as follows: “the possibility of personhood in which the distance of individuals is turned into the communion of persons” creating a “perfect unity which does not destroy but affirm otherness.”⁵²⁴ He insists that the alterity

⁵²¹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 31.

⁵²² Pohl, *Making Room*, 17.

⁵²³ Pohl, *Making Room*, 17.

⁵²⁴ Jean Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, trans. Paul McPartlan (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 307.

of the other remains intact in the relationship of the three persons of the Trinity, the relationship between God and humans, and the intersubjective relationship between humans.

While maintaining this alterity, Zizioulas believes that the being of the other (ontology) can be reintroduced to the notion of alterity for if the Other that we desire is not a particular being then we are left only with our Desire. “Given that the Other we infinitely desire is one who attracts our Desire but does not himself desire us or any other, other-ness finally evaporates in a Desire without the Other.”⁵²⁵ The Patristic Fathers though considered God as the Other *par excellence* and the object of infinite desire that knows no satisfaction, while being the destination for the Desire to rest. Zizioulas avers, “Desire cannot move beyond the Other, the desired one; the Other *is* the ‘term’ of Desire. At the same time, the Other, who is the term of Desire, is also the *cause* of desire, as he moves himself towards us, even to the point of uniting with us (incarnation).”⁵²⁶ This description suggests that desire is not a movement of the self, but that the other initiates the desire for her: “there is an event of communion of Desire at the very heart of otherness.”⁵²⁷ This implies that in relationship with the Other, the alterity of the Other cannot be absorbed by the self, as the source of desire lies with the other.

⁵²⁵ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 51.

⁵²⁶ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 51.

⁵²⁷ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 51. However, in attempting to identify the destination of desire, Zizioulas contradicts himself by asserting that what Levinas considers as the core of his project - maintaining the alterity of the Other and the desire that does not rest on a destination - is not so important.

Shepherd, building on this idea, explores the connection between the otherness of the other (alterity) and the Other being (ontology). He proposes a “Christian theology that provides an alternative ontology which protects the uniqueness and particularity of both the Other and the self, while simultaneously positing peaceful human relationality and communion/unity as possibilities.”⁵²⁸ The Shepherdian delineation of a Christian theology with an alternative ontology of personhood draws heavily on the Torah. However, it eventually incorporates also various specific Christian theological *loci* relevant to his concerns. He begins his deliberations though with the shared narrative of the Judeo-(Christian) doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and reminds us that the account of creation differs from other ancient accounts/philosophies. If in Ancient Near East cosmologies, the world was created from existing material, and as the result of the struggle between gods where human beings are placed in a low status, the Biblical account of creation speaks of a world that came into existence not through violence or

Levinas has an interesting account of desire which differs from the traditional understanding where lack or need is satisfied by the fulfilment of a lack or arrival at a determinate destination. For Levinas, Dalton points out, desire does not operate out of a sense of lack; instead, it arises from an abundance, superabundance, or excess. Secondly, it does not strive toward any specific or determinate object; rather it seems to strive toward a kind of indeterminacy or otherness. Thirdly, it does not have any end, determinacy, or satisfaction.⁵²⁷ Drew M. Dalton, *Longing for the Other: Levinas and Metaphysical Desire* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2012). Levinas encourages a shift in how we perceive desire, asserting that there is nothing to be consumed. Restlessness finds its proper outlet in a proper ethical relationship with the Other. This desire can be satisfied without being satisfied; it does not find its end but finds a way to rest in this restlessness. It creates a paradox where desire gives a repose from constant hunger and protects us from perpetual lack. The desire in relationship compels a desire that erupts beyond the self and the other.

⁵²⁸ Andrew Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other. Levinas, Derrida, and a Theology of Hospitality* (Cambridge: James Clark, 2014), 101.

death but rather through the creative word of God, with humanity representing the climax of the creative activity of God.⁵²⁹

Drawing initially on the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* to challenge the assumptions of Greek philosophy regarding the eternal existence of being, Shepherd then turns to the distinctive Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which offers an ontology that responds particularly to the critique of power and hierarchy. He reminds us that by the time of the Cappadocian Fathers, there transpired a replacement of a *substantialist* ontology with a *personalist* ontology, in which freedom and otherness became possible.⁵³⁰ The effect of this Cappadocian shift was both to introduce “a revolution into Greek ontology,” and Eastern theology of the Trinity, because *Being* was now considered *personal* and “that person became the *ultimate* ontological category to apply to God.”⁵³¹ With Cappadocian theology, therefore, as interpreted by Zizioulas, the Trinity is best understood as a *communion of persons*: “The being of God is a relational being: without the concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of the being of God.”⁵³²

This notion of the relationship of the persons in the Trinity is best delineated in the concept of *perichoresis*: the three persons of the godhead are neither independent nor

⁵²⁹ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 101.

⁵³⁰ Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330–379), Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 325–389) and Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330–ca. 395).

⁵³¹ Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 186.

⁵³² Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

interdependent identities; rather, the three persons of the Trinity are “interior to one another.”⁵³³ According to this conception of the Trinity and the belief that “in eternity Father, Son and Spirit share a dynamic mutual reciprocity, interpenetration and interanimation,” relations between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constitute God (and His being) and are not “secondary to the divine *ousia*.”⁵³⁴ According to Colin Gunton, “God is not God apart from the way in which Father, Son and Spirit in eternity give to and receive from each other what they essentially are. The three do not merely coinhere, but dynamically constitute one another’s being.”⁵³⁵ Trinitarian theology hinges especially on love, with the Spirit playing a special role in it as the *vinculum amoris*. Zizioulas explicates: “The only exercise of freedom in an ontological manner is *love*. The expression ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:16) signifies that God ‘subsists’ as trinity, that is, as person and not as substance. Love is not an emanation or ‘property’ of the substance of God . . . but is *constitutive* of His substance, *i.e.*, it is that which makes God what He is, the one God.”⁵³⁶

As a social trinitarian theologian, Shepherd, aligning with many Eastern orthodox theologians, sees community within the Trinity as a model for human identity in general

⁵³³ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 111.

⁵³⁴ Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 163.

⁵³⁵ Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 164.

⁵³⁶ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 46.

and a guideline for cultivating a “hospitable self” in particular. This perspective emphasizes a concept of personhood that is not based on rationality but rather “on a personal, existential encounter with the divine” where “the person cannot be defined, it cannot be captured, by conceptual thought.”⁵³⁷ To view this from a different angle, it is the call to responsibility towards the other, a *hinneni* (here I am response) response, that defines the relationship with the Other, rather than the Other’s being established by a rational concept. Terry Veling reflecting on the concept of *hinneni* (Here I am), states: “The priority is not with the *I* constituting itself, but with the call of the other who asks after me. It is this call that comes first, that is always prior, that is always before me, and constitutes my identity as a response-ability and answer-ability ... This is the election of the *I* as chosen and responsible before the face of God and neighbor.”⁵³⁸

Beyond the narrative of creation and the concept of a personalist ontology reflected in the Trinity, Shepherd also emphasizes the concept of the *imago Dei* as a model for human identity and for the hospitable self, because as humans created in the

⁵³⁷ Corneliu Boingeanu, “Personhood in Its Protological and Eschatological Patterns: An Eastern Orthodox View of the Ontology of Personality,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 78 (2006): 3.

⁵³⁸ Terry A. Veling, *Practical Theology: “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 85.. Velling expounds on Levinas’s notion of *hinneni* and notes that in *Otherwise Than Being*, Levinas deliberates: “The word *I*, means *here I am*,” and it is interesting that elsewhere he also explicitly links the *hinneni* with election: “I am, as if I had been chosen (Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 114. Levinas, *Outside the Subject*, 35); Unlike traditional Western philosophy, it is not the consciousness of the self (*cogito*) that establishes the self, but as Levinas notes, “my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other . . . makes me an individual ‘I’. Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, “Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 27.

image of God, “we are designed to exist as God exists.” Humanity reflects the *imago Dei*, “not through our nature - our substance/*ousia* - but rather through our mode of being.”⁵³⁹

The way different persons of the Trinity make room for one another (in love), expressed in particular in the *ekstasis* (self-outpouring) of God in creation and the *perichoresis* of the Trinity, serves as a paradigm for human identity and our concern for the Other and hospitality. Since our very existence is a “result of the gift of life breathed into our nostrils,” and results from the movement of *ekstasis* with God, then according to the Christian doctrine of *imago Dei*, our very identity as created humans is one of “being gift-receivers” called to become “gift-givers,” *i.e.*, human gift-giving (hospitality) is “predicated on the gift-giving (hospitality) of God.”⁵⁴⁰ This gift-giving structure of hospitality indicates embodiment by meeting the need of the Other person, the poor, the stranger. In giving, one undergoes a *kenosis* of what one is (has) and making room for the Other. *Kenosis*, meaning “emptying” in Greek, refers to the concept that Jesus, though fully God, emptied himself of some aspects of his divine attributes to become human. This act of self-emptying allowed him to identify with human beings and share their suffering, ultimately leading him to give his life for humankind. In Philippians 2:5-8, Apostle Paul urges believers to embody the *imago Christi* (image of Christ) in their relationship with one another: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a

⁵³⁹ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 124.

⁵⁴⁰ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 124.

thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (ESV). Paul encourages believers to live a kenotic lifestyle, always emptying oneself of one’s sovereignty and one’s self-interest for the sake of the Other. Interestingly, the act of self-emptying entails an excessive structure which leads to Christ exaltation above every other name:

“therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9, ESV). *Kenosis* is not just a concept, but a call to action. *Kenosis* does not deny the self but rather accepts limits for the sake of the Other, the self, “and the good of all creation.”⁵⁴¹ As Sallie McFague notes, “kenosis, self-emptying, is not an ascetic, world-denying practice of the saints; rather, it is a catchall term for the way the world works: it works at all levels through restraint, pulling back, sharing, reciprocity, interrelationship, giving space to others, sacrifice.”⁵⁴²

This brings us to the figure of Jesus within the Christian tradition. Shepherd propagates a Christian theology of hospitality, according to which “Jesus, as the representative of humanity, in living a life of obedience, of genuine sacrifice/gift-giving, prevails over the ontological obstacle to *communion*, death. Refusing to abide by the

⁵⁴¹ Shauna Kubossek, “Kenotic Hospitality and the Eucharist: An Alternative Economy,” *Anglican Theological Review* 104, no. 1 (2022): 71.

⁵⁴² Sallie McFague, *Blessed Are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 36.

death-dealing logic of an economy based on debt and violence, but rather offering his life *freely* back to God, Christ, the second Adam, reestablishes the original peaceful pattern of relationality, reconstituting an economy of grace and freedom.”⁵⁴³ Jesus took the responsibility for the sin of all mankind upon himself, in an asymmetrical manner: “While we were sinners, he sent his only son” (Romans 5:8). Such act was not based on mutuality but sheer responsibility for all mankind. It is in the response to the call of Christ, participating in His death and resurrection that a person finds her true self/subjectivity. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Wholly Other in me as the part of the structure of the subject, transforms one’s desires and passions, where the self is now “incorporated into a new form of life, which goes beyond individuality and results in the sociality of the *ecclesia*.”⁵⁴⁴ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit results in a new birth for Christians. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John 3, to enter His kingdom, one must be born again by the Spirit. The self is constituted, with a new structure, a New Host Self, that is indwelt by the Other and moves wherever the Spirit (*ruach/pneuma*) moves, responding to the call of the Other. This new community of New Host Self(s), as community of covenant people (like the covenant of God with Israel), is established by the gift of God, called to partake in the hospitality of God. The members of this community “are empowered to live lives which welcome rather than distance *Others*.”⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 208-209.

⁵⁴⁴ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 209.

⁵⁴⁵ Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other*, 209.

Christianity, and Biblical narratives, are not being reduced to “a universal ethic” that shows us how to become more “ethical,” but witness the formation of New Host Self(s) where individuals and communities (*ecclesiae*) as a covenant people, participate in the hospitality of the Triune God, are becoming a hospitality-giving people in the *ecclesia* and beyond. Accordingly, Miroslav Volf emphasizes the importance of embracing the Other into community: “*the will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity. The will to embrace precedes any ‘truth’ about others and any construction of their ‘justice.’*”⁵⁴⁶ Such willingness to embrace is built upon the Christian message of love as a presupposition that *no one should ever be excluded from the will to embrace* which is possible through the empowerment of the Spirit of the Messiah: “The Spirit enters the citadel of the self, de-centers the self by fashioning it in the image of the self-giving Christ, and frees its will so it can resist the power of exclusion in the power of the Spirit of embrace.”⁵⁴⁷

Especially the ordinances of the Eucharist and the Lord’s Supper further elucidate the hospitality of God and, hence, hospitality in Christianity. The embodied grace of God manifested in the Eucharist is seen through the lens of grace that “gravitates toward the most unlikely places” in contrast to the world’s economic structure of gravitating toward

⁵⁴⁶ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 29.

⁵⁴⁷ Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 29.

power and position.⁵⁴⁸ Kris Rocke and Joel van Dyke meditate on the grace of God, stating: “Grace is like water - it flows downhill and pools up in the lowest places.”⁵⁴⁹ The Eucharist, as a sacrament re-enacting the drama of salvation, searches for the lowliest places to find the poor and the stranger and to welcome those who have been overlooked, rejected, and not welcomed. N.T. Wright calls the Eucharist “dramaturgical,” combining the liturgy of the Eucharist with its dramatic structure and portraying the overarching symbolism of God’s creation and its restoration.⁵⁵⁰ For Hesselgrave the dramatic characteristics of the Eucharist can be seen as a “summary” of God’s redemptive story. The Eucharist has also been described as an “embodied drama” as Jesus did not merely tell a story about how he would offer his life for humanity; instead, he “incarnated it in his own body and blood - both as a private act and as a community drama” that included the whole of humanity, now embodied in the life of the *ecclesia*.⁵⁵¹ The Eucharist (a shared Passover meal), therefore, is a “celebration of the *divine hospitality*, of acceptance and forgiveness of sins - *both* individual and corporate - through Christ.”⁵⁵² This “Eucharistic hospitality,” where God is “always welcoming, accepting and forgiving,”

⁵⁴⁸ Ronald P. Hesselgrave, *The Supper: New Creation, Hospitality, and Hope in Christ* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf&Stock, 2019), xii.

⁵⁴⁹ Kris Rocke and Joel Van Dyke, *Geography of Grace: Doing Theology from Below* (Tacoma, WA.: Street Psalms Press, 2012), 1.

⁵⁵⁰ Hesselgrave, *The Supper*, 6.

⁵⁵¹ Hesselgrave, *The Supper*, 6-7.

⁵⁵² Hesselgrave, *The Supper*, 17.

becomes the source from which human hospitality emerges and the means through “which human hospitality is extended to Others (Matthew 6:12).”⁵⁵³ If, in Judaism, in the message of repentance, the irredeemable is redeemed, where one “finds something in the present with which he can modify or efface the past,” in Christianity, through the Eucharist, which triumphs over time, this emancipation takes place every day.⁵⁵⁴ It welcomes those who were not welcomed, opening up the Other, despite their past, reincorporated in the drama of salvation, to experience hospitality and to extend hospitality. In Eucharist (liturgy), there is a suspension (a pause) that creates a new relationship with the world, a relationship of wonder. In this pause in Being, which emerges from the advent of the Other, or the pause in the ritual, I am turned toward the Other and the world with wonder/prayer, experiencing a welcome, a Eucharistic welcome.

In summary, we have seen that the Christian tradition depicts an asymmetrical hospitality of height and excess reflected in the concepts of *creatio ex nihilo*, *imago dei*, and trinitarian theology. These ideas, along with God’s *ekstasis* (self-outpouring), the *kenosis* (self-emptying) of Jesus, as well as the concept of *perichoresis* (mutual indwelling) withing the Trinity, serve as important paradigms for radical hospitality within the Christian community. This hospitality is particularly expressed through the

⁵⁵³ Hesselgrave, *The Supper*, 18.

⁵⁵⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, “Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism,” trans. Seán Hand, *Critical Inquiry* 17,1 (1990), 65.

community of the *ecclesia* and the Eucharist. And without reading away differences between Levinas and Christian theology, we can find in both a similarly excessive and radical sense of facing the Other in relation to a New Host Self.

Levinas and Radical Hospitality Revisited: Excess, Strangers, and Hagar

Mindful of the different traditions and details of hospitality in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we will here work to highlight some of the themes that connect us back to the notion of Radical Hospitality in Levinas.

First, it is worth highlighting how the ability to offer hospitality in these three traditions originates from having first received it (hospitality/home). “The experience of being welcomed into a home is the wellspring of welcoming.”⁵⁵⁵ This experience acknowledges the risk and vulnerability of being dependent on another, fostering a humility that recognizes shared humanity and the preciousness of welcome. As Levinas stresses, hospitality and the welcoming of the Other indicates the reality of having already been a guest in her own home. In other words, there is no welcome to one’s own home or self without the welcome of the Other. A person is both taking refuge and on the move, indicating that being at home is both a place and a way of being. One cannot be at home by oneself; instead, one is always at home in the face of the Other. It is in the face of the Other that the monadic possessiveness is called into question and the home to be hospitable to me requires other possible possessors. This importance of the experience of

⁵⁵⁵ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 180.

a home/hospitality was emphasized both in the religious context of three religions and within the philosophical context of Levinas and his commentators.

Secondly, hospitality can be viewed as a radical paradox of both hosting and being hosted by the Other, creating space to receive the Other. This unique approach toward the Other entails and requires vulnerability. The reception of hospitality/home triggers a centrifugal force (*ekstasis*), turning outward as a gesture of welcoming others. Receiving the generosity of hospitality/home leads to the acknowledgement that it is best reciprocated by offering the same to the Other.⁵⁵⁶ In hospitality, here, the host ultimately receives a gift from the guest—and we can in this regard speak of a paradox in which the host/giver ultimately becomes a receiver/guest. This paradoxical structure results in a deterioration of mastery where the host/self becomes “vulnerable and dependent as well.”⁵⁵⁷ As vulnerable human beings, we express in hospitality the ability to empathize with the alien or foreign, knowing that all human beings are strangers in one sense or another and at one time or another.⁵⁵⁸ The remembrance of having been a stranger who was welcomed into a home and the acknowledgement of shared vulnerable humanity foreclose the notion of superiority, privilege, or power over the Other, instead, it marks the humble recognition that one has been gifted with something to give. “Hospitality is

⁵⁵⁶ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 180.

⁵⁵⁷ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 181.

⁵⁵⁸ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 180.

founded upon the premise that a host *can* and *should* give because she or he has first received - that is, since it has already been given to you, you are now able to give to others.”⁵⁵⁹ The importance of sharing home/hospitality was also a notion set forth in both the religious context of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as with the philosophical premises of Levinas.

Hospitality, thirdly, might lead to a reception of an unexpected *donum superadditum* (Latin for superseded gift).⁵⁶⁰ As the host shares her home with the guest, in a paradoxical way, the host receives a gift, “unexpectedly becoming more than he or she was before; the host becomes honored and enhanced.”⁵⁶¹ While the guest receives the gift of hospitality, the host, at the same time, is blessed with an unexpected *donum superadditum*.⁵⁶² Both the self and the Other in this way come forth with an enrichment from the experience of sharing home and hospitality. Obviously, “disagreements and conflicts may occur,” but in the end, “a mutual indebtedness (might) emerges in which both host and guest remain distinct yet fundamentally connected, vulnerability to vulnerability,” which might leads to the “possibility of genuine transformation.”⁵⁶³ The

⁵⁵⁹ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 181.

⁵⁶⁰ It refers to the special gift of original righteousness that God bestowed upon humanity at creation, in addition to their natural human faculties.

⁵⁶¹ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 182.

⁵⁶² It refers to the special gift of original righteousness that God bestowed upon humanity at creation, in addition to their natural human faculties.

⁵⁶³ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 182.

importance of the unexpected *donum superadditum* is a concept delineated both in the religious context of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as in Levinasian philosophy.

The blessing of an unexpected *donum superadditum* leads us to our final observation on the concept of hospitality. This *donum superadditum* represents the “more” that Levinas attempts to explain in non-theological language yet clearly hinting at the theological root of hospitality. Thinking in theological terms, we may align this with the claim that: “God is revealed in and blesses through the stranger.”⁵⁶⁴ In our discussion of Levinas’ methodology, we already observed that Levinas pushes the perimeter of general phenomenology to point us to the “more,” and he in this context resorts to metaphysical and theological language. Within the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, of course that “more” in hospitality often points us directly neither to the host nor the guest but to “the God of both who is discovered redemptively in the encounter.”⁵⁶⁵ In the Jewish tradition we see this in Genesis 18 when Abraham and Sarah welcome three mysterious guests. In the narrative, the guest receives honor but ironically turns out to be a divine visitor who bestows honor and an unexpected *donum superadditum* upon the hosts: God blesses Abraham and Sarah by granting them a son. “Hospitality, then, is a window into blessing, opening to veritable traces of God’s presence.”⁵⁶⁶ In the words of Jonathan Sacks, this “is the Hebrew Bible’s single greatest

⁵⁶⁴ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 182.

⁵⁶⁵ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 182.

⁵⁶⁶ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 182.

and most counterintuitive contribution to ethics. God creates difference; therefore it is in one-who-is-different that we meet God.”⁵⁶⁷ In the Christian tradition, the same principle is displayed poignantly in stories that mention hosts “entertaining angels unaware” (Hebrews 13:2). In the Islamic tradition, we find it with the claim of the prophet, “Gabriel impressed upon me (kind treatment) towards the neighbor (so much) that I thought as if he would confer upon him the (right) of inheritance.”⁵⁶⁸ Snjezana Akpinar in a *tafsir* emphasizes that throughout the body of Islamic literature, and poetry in particular, “God is portrayed as a guest for whose visit one must be always prepared, since a visit by a stranger, be he friend or foe, offers an opportunity to transform rancor and anger.”⁵⁶⁹ The principle is also spelled out in *A Common Word*: “Love of the neighbor is an essential and integral part of faith in God and love of God because in Islam without love of the neighbor there is no true faith in God and no righteousness.”⁵⁷⁰

We have seen thus how a similarly radical sense of hospitality can be found within philosophical and religious contexts. The possibility of employing theological language in the religious context, however, adds a special dimension to its description. In

⁵⁶⁷ Jonathan Sack, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (New York, N.Y: Continuum, 2002), 59.

⁵⁶⁸ *Sahih Muslim* 32/6354.

⁵⁶⁹ Snjezana Akpinar, “Hospitality in Islam,” *Religion East and West* 7/1 (October 2007): 23–27.

⁵⁷⁰ *A Common Word*, section 2; cf. Quran 49:13: O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (A. Yusuf Ali).

the Abrahamic traditions, welcoming the Other, the neighbor as well as the stranger, is grounded in a loving openness to God and bestows welcome toward another as loved by God. The experience of a home/hospitality precipitates the desire to welcome others, and in the welcoming of the Other, a strange mixing and reversal occur. Eventually, hospitality can only be delineated in transcendental or theological categories: “The host who initially offers a gift to the guest ends up becoming blessed by the guest, receiving the presence of God.”⁵⁷¹ Because of this final and metaphysical aspect of hospitality, it would have been a loss not to invite the Abrahamic traditions to the table of our discussion. As already Homer stated, “religious faith, hospitality and civilization are always found together.”⁵⁷² Our common global society and the fruitful coexistence of migrant and citizen in the 21st century, therefore, depends upon nurturing together the best resources we have from within our various traditions, philosophical and religious.

*

In the conclusion of this chapter, I want to consider the story of Hagar.

With a closer look at the Hagar narrative, as a vital part of the Abraham narratives, we can glean some additional insights concerning the notion of hospitality and the structure of the subject as being simultaneously at home and also in exile. Amir Hussain, contesting the “Abrahamic” approach to the notion of hospitality and drawing

⁵⁷¹ Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 186.

⁵⁷² Homer, *Odyssey* 6.19.

from Thomas Michel, emphasizes the important role of Hagar as a mother of faith for the monotheistic religions: “The image of Hagar and her child in the desert is part of today’s reality. The low-born, hard-working domestic laborer, used and misused and cast out by her employers, the single mother abandoned by the father of her child, the foreigner, and the refugee far from her native land, desperately trying to survive, frantic in her maternal concern for the safety of her child - this Hagar I have met many times.”⁵⁷³ There are two accounts in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 16:1-15; 21:8-21) where Hagar was cast out into the wilderness. The first expulsion occurred when she was pregnant with Ishmael and the second after the birth of Isaac. In the first occasion, Hagar is visited by God (angel of the Lord) and after finding courage and comfort, ascribes to God the name “El Roy”, meaning, the God who sees (16:13). Hagar, though in the wilderness, displaced and away from home, retrieves her subjectivity to a point where she even finds herself in a position to ascribe God a new name. The passage is almost narrated like a reversal of the creation story when God assigned Adam and Eve to name the animals while here God has presented Himself to Hagar to be named by her. In the narrative, we find excess for both God and Hagar as both experience an increase, both become more than what they were before: Hagar receives the promise of the blessings of a son, while God receives a new name, representing an excess/addition to the infinity of God. In Genesis 21, the

⁵⁷³ Amir Hussain, “Toward a Muslim Theology of Migration,” in *Theology of Migration in Abrahamic Religions*, eds. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 178; Thomas Michel, “Hagar: Mother of Faith in the Compassionate God,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 16, 2 (April 2005): 99.

promise of God is repeated to Hagar and Ishmael, in spite of the fact that this time Hagar finds herself in a dangerous situation placing her son under a bush because she thought that he was going to die of thirst. But God again intervenes showing hospitality and revealing a well of water to Hagar.

In Islamic tradition, though Hagar is not mentioned in Quran, she is prevalent in many hadiths (Sahih Bukhari). In Sahih Bukhari, Abraham went to the dessert together with Hagar and Ishmael till they arrived at Mecca. There he provided for them some water and left. At this instance Hagar asked: “Abraham, to whom are you leaving us?’ He replied, ‘(I leave you) in the care of God.’ Hagar answered, ‘I am satisfied to be with God.’⁵⁷⁴ Till today her story is being reenacted in Islamic tradition in the context of the *haj*: Hagar ran out of water (according to tradition in the contemporary region of the Ka’ba) and was frantically running from one hill, Safa, to the other, Marwa, to find water for herself and her son. Consequently, an important part of the *haj* till today, is to move between these two hills remembering the example of Hagar and Ismael finding relief at *Ain Tsamtsam* eventually.⁵⁷⁵ When Ibrahim had left Hagar with only a leather bag containing some dates and a small water-skin, Hagar, after having used it up was running in despair between the mountains seven times looking for water. Eventually, while standing on Marwa, she heard the voice of an angel in the location where the *Tsamtsam*

⁵⁷⁴ Michel, “Hagar: Mother of Faith in the Compassionate God,” 102.

⁵⁷⁵ Amir Hussain, “Toward a Muslim Theology of Migration,” in *Theology of Migration in Abrahamic Religions*, eds. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 178.

Sabeel is found today. There, angel Jibril “was digging the earth with either his heel or his wing” till water came gushing forth which was collected by Hajar by “pushing the earth around the water to make a basin.” As the waters kept gushing forth, Hajar would shout “t^some, t^some,” meaning “stop, stop!” In spite of the fact that the etymology of *tsamtsam* is uncertain, it is still interesting to note that there is some similarity between the two Semitic terms *tsim-tsum* (to reduce, Hebrew) and *tsam-tsam* (stop, e.g. reduce the flow of water, Arabic). The wilderness in this narrative gives up some of its mastery, going through a *tsim tsum /t^some t^some*, making space for a well to spring up in order to save Hagar and Ishmael, representing some form of contraction. It is in this *t^some t^some* that the wilderness is transformed from a barren place to a place where one can see God, or to say it better, is seen by God. Hagar, thus, is the first person who encounters God in the wilderness in the Biblical narratives.⁵⁷⁶ According to Islamic tradition, Hajar was saved eventually by the Bene Jurhum, a Yemeni tribe, but the waters kept gushing forth and still provide refreshment to millions of pilgrims today.⁵⁷⁷ The liturgical reenactment of the ancient Hagar tradition, as one of the formative and delineating practices of the *haj* - etymologically, it is significant that *hajar* (Hagar) and *haj* (to go, or repair) are from the same root (though phonetically using two different letters for the first letter “h”) -

⁵⁷⁶ Thomas B. Dozeman, “The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story,” *JBL* 117,1 (1998): 24.

⁵⁷⁷ Hajar and the Miracle of Zamzam, <https://muslimhands.org.uk/latest/2021/04/story-of-hajar-and-zamzam-well-in-the-quran-and-hadith>, accessed on November 11, 2023.

highlights that being a sojourner/stranger/migrant and the cultivation of hospitality towards others is essential to a life of a Muslim.⁵⁷⁸ After having been abandoned even by Ibrahim and trying hard by herself (hands-on) to escape her demise she was eventually invited by Angel Jibril (and Bene Jurhum) receiving a special blessing of an overflowing well (excess) in the desert.

We might here turn to Delores Williams' portrayal of Hagar as a black slave, situated within the marginal triangle of race, class, and gender—a notion that is also important for Muslims since Muhammad claimed to be a descendant of Hagar and Ishmael.⁵⁷⁹ Similar to the African-American experience of slavery, we see that also Hagar, in Genesis 16, was depersonalized by being objectified as an Egyptian slave. She is always acted upon and never spoken to by Abraham and Sarah. She is not given a voice of her own in the narrative, yet eventually gains her voice in the encounter with God and we hear her talk for the first time. Hagar, interestingly, is also the first person in the Biblical narratives who experiences God in the wilderness, which was to become one of the prominent places for Biblical figures, e.g., Moses, to encounter God.⁵⁸⁰ Through an African-American lens of reading the Bible, which actually emphasizes the concept of

⁵⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that etymologically also in Hebrew Hagar is considered to be the mother of all strangers, as her name means “the stranger” (*HaGer*); *Hagirah* is the Hebrew word for migration.

⁵⁷⁹ Amir Hussain, “Toward a Muslim Theology of Migration,” in *Theology of Migration in Abrahamic Religions*, eds. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 178.

⁵⁸⁰ Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1993).

letting the Bible read us, Hagar's God, *El Roi*, becomes her personal God, similar to the African-American experience of God as personal God and not an abstract idea, of a God "who gave them a feeling of "somebodyness," and who became the bedrock of black identity and sanity."⁵⁸¹ Hagar, is also plucked out from her state as an anonymous being, the realm of "no-oneness," being a slave, a surrogate mom, an object that is used and reduced by the Other. We may in this context speak of Hagar's transformation into a somebody, a self, a New Host Self in the encounter with the (wholly) Other.

It is important to note that the master/slave/concubine relationship between Sarah/Israel and Hagar/Egypt represents also a reversal, as the Israelites became slaves/captives for 400 years in Egypt after Jacob's descendants moved there. Hagar and the Israelites can in this sense both be seen in relation to slavery and abuse as well as liberation and escape—in the case of Hagar, her flight from Sarah (Genesis 16:6) and in the case of the Israelites, their flight from Egypt (Exodus 14:5).⁵⁸² In both of these stories, subjectivity is formed, as the result of an exile, flight, or going out of the place where one had been positioned/home, dispossessed and yet paradoxically possessing one's own subjectivity and freedom. In an analogy to the story of Moses and the liberation of Israel where God expedited the expulsion of Israel, God also orchestrated the expulsion of

⁵⁸¹ James C. Okoye, "Sarah and Hagar: Genesis 16 and 21," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, no. 2 (December 2007): 174, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089207085881>.

⁵⁸² Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story," 28.

Hagar by directing Abraham to fulfil Sarah's wish.⁵⁸³ Expulsion, going out (*lech lecha*), an act which we may connect to the interruption of the self—paradoxically becomes an act of liberation, entailing the formation of subjectivity, or a New Host Self. Even if there is a return to one's home, it will be the return of a different subject, separated (*kaddosh*) and coming back not as the same but as a New Host Self. In the process of *lech lecha* Hagar is transformed from a concubine to a wife. It is interesting to note that the place where Hagar experienced God is called Kaddesh, coming from the root of *kaddosh*, meaning "holy" or "separated." It is thus in the encounter with the Other that the true separated self of Hagar emerges.

Hagar becomes thus a model for all people "who are abandoned and desperate in the desert of our modern metropolises and rural areas, who are emblematic of the poor people of this world and for whom God has special care, whose dignity is recognized by God, to whom God shows compassion in their distress."⁵⁸⁴ As Thomas Michel further explicates, Hagar gives God the name "The God Who Sees" which is the first instance in the Biblical narrative where God is introduced as the one who cares for those who are suffering. Only later on is Hagar joined by other prophets like Amos, Isaiah, etc., who portrayed God as the God of those who are on the margin, "the poor, widow, and the stranger." We see that also Jesus's message focuses on the poor of every age as special

⁵⁸³ Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story," 30.

⁵⁸⁴ Michel, "Hagar," 104.

members of God's reign (Luke 6,20). In Islam also, *Zakat*, as one of the pillars of Islam, obliges a portion of the wealth of the Muslims for the poor and the needy. There is a strong condemnation and the punishment of hell for the person who "neither believed in God almighty nor encouraged others to feed the needy" (Quran 69:30-37).⁵⁸⁵

The wilderness experience of Hagar provides thus a paradigm for a subjectivity that is called to responsibility by the Other. It was in the wilderness that Hagar retrieved her subjectivity, her uniqueness and individuality, formed not in relation to her master, but in the relation with the promise and the uniqueness that her life would become. From Hagar we learned that the Other interrupts me, expels me, exiles me, and yet it is in accepting responsibility for the Other that a New Host Self is formed.

⁵⁸⁵ Michel, "Hagar," 104.

Chapter Five: Welcoming the Migrant: Autobiographical Reflections

By way of conclusion, I intend to apply the litmus test, examining how this new concept of hospitality will fare in the context of the perhaps most difficult societal challenge of our time: migration and the plight of the migrant. I will do so by sharing my personal experience as both a migrant and a migrant-relief worker, and offering closing reflections on possible intersections with radical hospitality. Through autobiographical vignettes that explore some of my own experiences as a migrant and my work with refugees, I aim to explore how this radical and excessive new sense of hospitality can reorient our political selves, providing an improved approach to the neighbor in need. I will share various aspects of my flight from Iraq, my experience with a Kurdish refugee drawing parallels to the Hagar narrative, my involvement with refugees and migrants within both US and German contexts, as well as my engagement with sustainability projects, collaborating with individuals and communities in developing countries.

The Flight of Hagar

One of the most formative experiences in my life was fleeing from Iraq to Greece *via* Turkey and witnessing a traumatic experience of a Kurdish woman and her family. But how did I end up in this situation? I grew up in the Province of Kurdistan in the Northwest of Iran in the context of a nice family with four other brothers. I was the

youngest, and unlike my brothers who were mainly into making money and becoming rich, I was more interested in finding a higher purpose in my life alongside a love for sports and readings. While searching for meaning and direction, I was dissatisfied with the socio-economic-political situation in Iran in general, but with its even more oppressive and marginalizing form in Kurdistan in particular. During my late teens, I became more and more frustrated with our situation and was looking for ways to get out of Iran. Through one of my friends, I became affiliated with a Kurdish political resistance party, banned in Iran (its headquarter was located in Northern Iraq) and started carrying out activities for them in secret. After one of my best friends was arrested, I knew that this was the time to leave Iran and join the party in Northern Iraq. Though just almost nineteen years old, I decided to leave behind everyone and everything that meant home to me. A friend connected me to a smuggler, and without telling my parents or anyone, I boarded a bus heading for the border of Iraq. I spent the night in a tiny room in some remote village, thinking of my parents and my home. I was being uprooted from my homeland with the possibility of never being able to return (*lech lecha*). More than 16 years have passed since, and if there is no change in the political situation, I might never see my home(land) again. Early in the morning, we got into a small truck and continued our journey towards the border. Eventually, we had to get out of the car and started walking with the smuggler through the forests and rocky terrain of the Zagros mountains, hiding from the border police, evading landmines, and reaching a small village with a tiny tea shop on the Iraqi side of the border, where truck drivers and smugglers gather

before crossing the border to Iran. Lost, disoriented, without legal documents and on the other side of the border, I waited for a member of the political party to pick me up and drive me to the refugee camp that had been used by these political activists for years. After spending four years in this refugee camp in Iraq, I decided to continue my journey from Iraq to Europe. Unfortunately, because I did not possess any legal documents, I was barred in my new context from establishing a proper life and pursuing any formal education. Consequently, I enlisted the service of another smuggler to take me to Turkey first and from there to Western Europe.

Lech lecha, I boarded a bus for the border city of Zakho in Iraq and met the smuggler waiting for me there with another person who also wanted to cross the border into Turkey. Once again, we had to cross the mountains, together with smugglers carrying goods on the back of donkeys across the border. Inadvertently, I was reminded of the Kurdish proverb, “No friends but the mountains!” expressing the feeling of abandonment and loneliness of the Kurdish people due to their history as semi-stateless minority without reliable allies. For hours we hiked through forests and across the Zagros mountains, passing by Kurdish guerrilla units who demanded bribes from the smugglers, circumventing Turkish military bases, and hiding from military patrols. Adrenalin kicks in quickly under such circumstances of immense pressure and fear of being caught, pushing the body to extreme achievements in spite of pain, suffering, and exhaustion.

I prayed to not get apprehended, as getting caught would result in deportation back to Iran, potentially leading to execution or long-term imprisonment. Eventually, we

ended up in a small village in Eastern Turkey, spending a few days in the house of an associate of the smuggler until the situation became clear for our journey to Istanbul. Although displaced, disoriented, and living off the mercy of the smuggler and his household, we experienced wonderful hospitality from him and his family, being served delicious meals during our stay with them. After a few days hiding in their house, the smuggler put us on a shuttle with other Turkish people who were travelling to the larger regional city, Van. Before entering the vehicle, I had the impression that there might be checkpoints and soldiers that could stop us on the way. I had a prompting which I believed came from God, telling me to behave as if I were deaf and mute if such a situation should arise. After driving half an hour, we came to a check point and the soldiers asked for papers. When they checked the people in front of me, they handed their documents to them. Then he approached me, looking into my eyes and asking for my documents. Immediately, as I had preconceived, I pretended that I was deaf and mute and started making noises like a person with hearing and speaking impairments. The soldier looked at me first, then at the other passengers and threw his hands up in bewilderment, anger, and frustration. To our surprise though, he turned around and left the car, telling the driver to take off.

The following night, we had to spend in a motel which only had a few metal beds on the top of the roof which we had to share with other passengers. The next day, we headed to the bus station and boarded the bus for Istanbul. After spending one week with my cousin in Istanbul, one morning, we got word that today would be a suitable time to

cross the border to Greece. Immediately, he dropped me at the hotel designated by the smugglers. There I was joined by over 150 other refugees, mainly from Syria, to cross the border. This was the time when many refugees were leaving Syria because of the war following the “Arab Spring” and the overtaking of ISIS. We all waited in the lobby of this shady hotel until midnight and were then assigned to get into several vans to start our journey. Almost 30 people were squeezed into a 10-passenger van without windows, from which the seats had been removed, piling us on top of each other. Each passenger was allowed only one small backpack. After three to four hours of driving, the vans suddenly stopped. Waiting in suspense for a few minutes, the doors were opened eventually, and the smugglers commanded us to get out quickly. We had no clue about our whereabouts and were divided into groups of 15, with each group being handed an inflatable boat to carry. We started walking behind the smugglers for about half an hour until we reached the bank of a raging river that divided Turkey and Greece. A paddle was entrusted to one person in the group and 15 of us had to get into a small boat that had the capacity to seat a maximum of four to five people. We got into the boat, clinging to each other, and praying that we would be able to cross the river and get to the other side safely.

It was pitched dark and uncertainty loomed over our vessel, as we navigated, unsure if we were paddling into the right direction. The river flowed with a rapid current, its waters cold and turbulent. Gradually, we approached the riverbank and were about to reach the other side. Suddenly, the air was filled with distressing sounds with a woman’s crying out for help. It was a Kurdish mother with her husband and two daughters, facing

a life-threatening situation as their overloaded boat had been punctured during their attempt to cross the river. Water started filling up their boat. They used their bare hands to bail the water out. It was cold, and the winds were blowing fiercely. The Kurdish mother was terrified of losing her little daughters in this ordeal. Miraculously, they managed to reach the other side together, yet the woman remained in the state of a shock, crying and sobbing uncontrollably for nearly one hour.

Her predicament brought to my mind the story of Hagar, abandoned in the desert without water. This Kurdish mother also faced abandonment, not in the desert though, but amidst the tumultuous waters of a raging river. Her ordeal comprised hostility not only on land, in Turkey and Greece, but also in the treacherous waters in between. She thought that this would be the end of her life, yet, her primary concern never being for her own life, but for the well-being of her precocious little daughter. Reflecting on this now, I can only imagine the emotions my own mother likely experienced, while I traversed these perilous borders. After a day of walking, I was apprehended by the Greek police and spent almost four months in prison. The day, I was finally able to reach out to my parents from prison, nearly a month after my arrest, my mother too was inconsolable, from fearing that she had lost her son.

Coming back to the encounter with the Kurdish mother, I remember how I began consoling her and her children. I offered to carry one of the daughters as we navigated through swamps and rough terrain. Carrying the little five-year old girl in my arms for hours, despite the numbing sensation in my limbs, her pleading face invoked a sense of

responsibility. The destitution and the helplessness of both the mother and her daughter became the sight of a demand and a poignant call to responsibility. Despite my disorientation and uncertainty about our location, the call of responsibility reoriented me towards the good, the tangible care for the needy and the helpless. Amidst disorientation, uncertainty, and insecurity, I found orientation and meaning evoked by heeding the call for responsibility for the Other. Being strangers and sojourners became an inherent part of the structure of all of us, the Kurdish mother, her family, myself, and the others accompanying us. Being a refugee, like in the story of Abraham, became thus an experience of a return to a different self. In opposition to the Greek emphasis of unity and the return of the self to oneself, our experience of being refugees became a *lech lecha*, a going/leaving without a return to the self/homeland - a formation of a new political self. This divergence is compounded by the fact that, regrettably, many refugees, myself included, are barred from returning to their homeland due to various socio-political reasons. To be a stranger and a sojourner extending beyond those directly affected by displacement or migration. As explored in this project, the self in relation to the Other, is simultaneously at home and expelled. Paradoxically, the self finds itself both at home and as a stranger simultaneously.

Better Policy: Cultivating More New Host Selves

My experience in migrant-relief work across German and American contexts also raises significant insights about Radical Hospitality: In short, part of what we aspire to in Radical Hospitality is not simply helping migrants become independent, but helping them

become political agents engaged in their own acts of hospitality; in working with migrant, in other words, we should aim not only *to be New Host Selves* but to help the migrants *themselves become New Host Selves*.

Thinking about this complex point can help guide the details of our policies. In this regard, consider my experiences with migrants and refugees in the specific contexts of the United States and Germany. Working with refugees in both countries, I observe that the United States system provides quicker integration into the host country. I observed that the American approach, while providing state assistance for a shorter period than the German system, paradoxically accelerated the integration process by offering creative ways to find employment and achieve economic independence. In spite of the fact that both systems reflect liberal democratic perspectives, the American process facilitated a quicker integration of migrants into society, allowing refugees to reclaim their subjectivity faster because they were less dependent and relying on the mercy of the bureaucrats for their livelihood. By more quickly supporting migrants into becoming independent political selves, the American system seems better at helping people on their own path to becoming New Host Selves engaged in their own acts of Radical Hospitality. The German system, characterized by well-meaning long-term support, inadvertently winds up prolonging the dependence of refugees on the state and in this way arguably prevents subjects from arriving at the kind of independence that invites people into their own acts of Radical Hospitality.

I witnessed this same problematic approach to migrant care in my own experience as a refugee amidst other refugees. After spending nearly four months in three different prisons in the city of Alexandroupolis in Greece, I was released with a permission to legally stay in Greece for one month. During this period, the Greek administration and authorities encouraged us strongly to consider a departure to another European country. Consequently, I found a smuggler who promised to get me to Italy in a large ferry sailing from one of the Greek Islands (Crete). However, upon taking a ferry from Athens to Crete, I discovered his deceptive intend. Instead of providing a ferry, he wanted to send me off in a small, old boat designed for a maximum of 30 people, together with several hundred Syrian refugees. Refusing to board this boat, I was forced to remain in Crete until the boat had left the island. I had to stay with hundreds of refugees in an olive farmhouse, where we slept on a floor without mattresses or blankets with our legs crossed due to space constraints.

After the boat had left for Italy, I returned to Athens and found another smuggler. This time, along with three Afghan refugees, I had to travel in the cabin of a truck heading for Italy. Many trucks have a small box for tools in their cabin right behind the seats. All four of us had to fit into this toolbox which actually provided room for only one person. At the checkpoint, where the truck was inspected before boarding the ferry to Italy, all four of us had to squeeze stacked on top of each other into this box. Despite the police and custom guards checking for illegal passengers, though focusing on the back of the truck, we were able to pass the control unnoticed hiding in the cabin. But while the

policeman was conversing with the driver, he shut the lid of our toolbox, and we had to hold our breath. After a short period of time, due to lack of oxygen we tried to open the lid. The driver, swearing in some Eastern European language, resisting our attempt to open it, forcefully slammed it closed and put all his weight on it. Fortunately, the police inspection of the car was completed eventually, and we were able to get out of the box and board the ferry. Our journey to the other side and reaching an Italian port took us a day. During this time, we were able to stay in the cabin of the truck as the driver went up into the ferry where he had rented a room. Repeating the same routine in the toolbox at disembarking from the ferry, we once again avoided detection and successfully crossed the border. After a 15-minute drive, the driver parked his truck and instructed us to wait for 10 minutes after he had left the truck. Before leaving, he pointed out to us the train station, advising us to get tickets for the city of Milan. After ten minutes, we left the truck one by one and got our train tickets. From Milan, I continued on to Paris in order to stay with one of my friends.

After several unsuccessful attempts to enter the United Kingdom, I decided to go to Denmark, where they were receptive to Kurdish political refugees. At the border between France and Germany, German police officers entered the train, demanding documents. With none to provide, they took me out of the train, detained me overnight and then transported me to a large refugee camp. They informed me that the European Schengen law prohibited me from applying for asylum in another country, mandating that I had to stay in Germany and undergo the asylum procedures there. The next day, the

police escorted me to a refugee camp in the state of Saarland (the smallest state in Germany bordering France and Luxemburg). The camp, situated in an old Second World War US military base, became my residence for the next fourteen months. During this time, not only I, but also many thousand other refugees were prohibited from working, studying, or even leaving the state of Saarland. Some refugees had been living in the camp for years, unable to establish a normal life due to rejected asylum application. In fact, I got to know one Kurdish man who had resided in the camp for 16 years. Despite the good intentions of the German government and the attempts to help, the system had stripped the migrants of the potential to embody full subjectivity, including full paths to their own futures as New Host Selves. Bureaucratic systems took over responsibility, eventually absorbing the Other/migrant to the same. It was a mode of care that fostered absolute dependency on the government and the mercy of the bureaucrats. We were not permitted to work nor be enrolled in a proper German course, because we were not yet accepted as asylum seekers. The system created complete dependency by providing basic amenities like housing, a food bank, basic health insurance, and 134 Euros a month for extra food or transportation. This kind of care or interaction with refugees/Others was, I would argue, not conducive to the formation of a New Host Self.

I was myself gifted with the Radical Hospitality of German families who welcomed refugees into their homes and assisted them in learning German. The refugees, myself included, felt accepted and welcomed; and in the true spirit of Radical Hospitality, the German families—many of whom were once refugees themselves who had emigrated

from the Soviet Union in the seventies and eighties— also discovered new purpose and meaning in their lives by sharing time and resources with the refugees. Host becomes guest and guest becomes host. Refusing to relegate all responsibilities to the German government, these families took upon themselves the responsibility to interact with and help individual refugees and families. They became New Host Selves able to support their guests in becoming New Host Selves. This in part involved their viewing each refugee as a unique and separated subject, not reducible to negative political stereotypes. In their lives, ethics overrode politics. Eventually, I was granted asylum status and was permitted to leave the camp in order to pursue a course of studies, at first in Germany, and after I got married, together with my wife in the US.

In a move to Radical Hospitality, a genuine sense of responsibility for the Other shifts from mere pity to radically serving others towards the goal of making them not just independent, but New Host Selves able to themselves engage in their own acts of Radical Hospitality. In true acts of Radical Hospitality, we are called upon not simply to become New Host Selves—but to help others become New Host Selves. In this regard, I have had the privilege of working with a friend who assists individuals and families in developing countries, aiding them in breaking free from the cycle of poverty by developing small business ideas tailored to specific contexts of individuals or families. Inspired by Mohammad Yunus' microcredit concept, we are assisting individuals and families in financial advising and providing affordable loans that empower them to become independent, integrated, and service-oriented members of their community. Working

closely with these business partners, we identify small business ideas based on their expertise, background, and abilities, followed by coaching and financial advising, establishing loan terms and ensuring that they repay the loans, which will then be redistributed to other families or individuals, and also giving them the opportunity to start their own small businesses.

Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, witnessed for a long time the injustices in the global banking system, particularly in his country, Bangladesh. He decided to do something about it and eventually received the Nobel Prize for this “effort to create economic and social development from below.”⁵⁸⁶ His social and economic development program emphasizes a system of ethics where individuals are not lumped together with the rest of society, but their uniqueness and individuality are taken into consideration for every new socio-economic situation. Yunus realized that two-thirds of the world were not eligible for loans because they were not creditworthy. He created therefore a system lending 1 Billion USD per year, all funded locally and from local resources. Responding to the question of how he came up with the regulations for his loan system, Yunus interestingly noted that he looked at what banks did and then he decided to do the opposite.⁵⁸⁷ Yunus operated in

⁵⁸⁶ “Muhammad Yunus Nobel Diploma,” *The Nobel Prize* (blog), 2006, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2006/yunus/facts/>.

⁵⁸⁷ Muhammad Yunus, “The View from Here: Muhammad Yunus, Founder of Grameen Bank,” *Director* 62, no. 7, (2009): 12. <https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/view-here-muhammad-yunus-founder-grameen-bank/docview/218974684/se-2>.

the realm of ethics by lending to those who were the least creditworthy people, in opposition to the conventional bank systems that operated in a less robust spirit of hospitality. This holistic model moved beyond providing fish to the needy periodically to a model where individuals learn how to fish, thereby avoiding dependence on perpetual help from outside resources. His approach endeavors to create less dependency for funds on outside organizations/institutions and is thus better able to support the formation of more New Host Selves. The goal is not to make the poor/migrant dependent, and not even simply to make the migrant independent; the goal is to help the poor/migrant live into their own call to Radical Hospitality.

What political subjectivity of a New Host Self adds in these contexts is precisely the radical reversal of a tide so overwhelming that it wants to take the subject with itself, reducing the Other to the same. To stem such a tide and reverse its course requires a political subjectivity radically turned toward the Other and dedicated to helping Others towards similarly generous modes of subjectivity. To precipitate such a New Host Self, we can find inspiration both in Levinasian ethical philosophy and in the Abrahamic traditions that draw our attention to the height/primacy of the Other and a responsible treatment of the guest and the stranger. It is such ethics of absolute responsibility for the Other that inflects the political and the treatment of the migrant, the refugee, the “widow, the orphan, and the stranger,” and all of the many other “others” on the margins.

Hineni!

Philip P. Hallie in *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* recounts the bravery of the people of the French Protestant village of Le Chambon in saving thousands of Jews at the peril of their lives during the Nazi invasion. In the conclusion of the book Hallie confesses the following: “I know that I want to have the power to be. I know that I want to have a door in the depths of my being, a door that is not locked against the faces of all other human beings. I know that I want to be able to say, from those depths, ‘Naturally, come in, and come in.’”⁵⁸⁸ While Hallie inadvertently admits that he “may never have the moral strength” to do what the villagers in Le Chambon did, “his desire is not simply *to do* what they did, but *to be* the sort of person who would.”⁵⁸⁹ His concern is not about what should I do, but who am I in all of this? Resembling a Levinasian phenomenological inquiry of the structure of the subject and how we can orient ourselves as a New Host Self toward Others, Hallie’s “hope is not merely a matter of transformed action, but rather concerns the cultivation of *ethical subjectivity*.”⁵⁹⁰

The villagers of Le Chambon stand diametrically over against the Eichmann compliance to the German law and bureaucracy, “doing one’s duty” as the administrator of the law, even if it means the killing of millions of Jews. Arendt, in reference to

⁵⁸⁸ Philip P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 287.

⁵⁸⁹ Aaron, Simmons, “Levinas, Politics, and the Third Party,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Levinas*, ed. Michal L. Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 280.

⁵⁹⁰ Simmons, “Levinas, Politics, and the Third Party,” 280.

Eichmanns surprises us suggesting that he was “simply doing his job.” Eichmann not “only obeyed ‘orders, he also obeyed the ‘law.’”⁵⁹¹ The Le Chambon villagers resisted such fidelity to a law that overtly dehumanized a group of people and brought upon them the most atrocious form of violence. They fulfilled the Law (law of Christ) by giving life and not taking it. The true fulfilment of the law is thus to care for the Other in tangible ways. The villagers of Le Chambon risked their lives for their Jewish neighbors, knowing that they would be brutally murdered if discovered.

Thinking about Radical Hospitality in Levinas and throughout this project helps us to recognize the villagers of Le Chambon, or Merkel and Bonhoeffer as “ethico-political exemplars” worth modeling our lives after and in encouraging other people within our community to develop such a New Host Self.⁵⁹² People like Abraham, who were willing to change from Av-ram (exalted father, *cogito*) to Av-raham (father with a wide heart).

We may in this regard end our project with a reflection on Levinas’ own emphasis on the Biblical notion of *Hineni*, literally “*Here I am.*” This arresting call appears at various places in the Hebrew Bible where a figure is called into response by God—such as in the case of Moses being called into service at the Burning Bush (Exodus 3) and the case of Abraham—or Av-raham—being called to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22: 1-19).

⁵⁹¹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006), 135.

⁵⁹² Simmons, Levinas, 282.

For Levinas, the term *hineni* in this way signals the moment of human transformation in which the subject responds to the call of the Other. *Hineni* in this way marks for Levinas the call to service—the call to respond to the Other in a spirit of Radical Hospitality that marks the entry to the New Host Self.

Bibliography

- Abensour, Miguel. "An-archy between Metapolitics and Politics," *Parallax* 24 (2002), 5-18.
- Abou El Fadl, Khaled. "Islamic Ethics, Human Rights and Migration." *Migration and Islamic Ethics*, BRILL, 2019, 13-27.
- Abu Zahra, Shaik Muhammad. *Begriff des Krieges im Islam*. vol. 6. Edited by Oberster Rat fuer islamische Angelegenheiten. Cairo: Ansiklopedisi, 1952.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Atell. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- . *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 1999.
- . *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Ahmad Ilyas. "Sovereignty in Islam (continued)." *Pakistan Horizon* 11, no. 4 (1958): 244-257.
- Akpinar, Snjezana. "Hospitality in Islam," *Religion East and West* 7/1 (October 2007), 23–27.
- Aland Kurt, Carlos Maria Martini, et al. Editors. *Nestle-Aland 27th Edition Greek New Testament (Morphological Edition) (NA27)*. 27th edition. Stuttgart: Dt. Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
- Al-Deeb Abu Sahlieh, Sami A. "The Islamic Conception of Migration." *The International Migration Review* 30, no. 1 (1996), 37-57.
- Alford, F.C. *Levinas, The Frankfurt School and Psychoanalysis*. Middleton, CT, 2003.

- Al-Ghazali, Imam. *The Duties of Brotherhood in Islam*. Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1980.
- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Qur'an: A Translation*. 7th U.S. edition. Elmhurst, N.Y.: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 2001.
- Allard, Silas Webster. "In the Shade of the Oaks of Mamre: Hospitality as a Framework for Political Engagement between Christians and Muslims," *Political Theology* 13.4 (2012), 414-424.
- Alt, Albrecht, Rudolf Kittel, Hans Bardtke, Hans Peter Rüger, Joseph Ziegler, Karl Elliger, Wilhelm Rudolph, Gérard E. Weil, Adrian Schenker, and Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: = Torah, Nevi'im u-Khetuvim*. 5th edition. Stuttgart: Dt. Bibelges, 1997.
- Anderson, George K. *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*. Providence: Brown University Press, 1965.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006.
- . *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Edited by Ronald Beiner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- . *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973.
- Atterton, Peter. "From Transcendental Freedom to the Other: Levinas and Kant." In *In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the 18th Century*. Edited by Melvyn New with Robert Bernasconi and Richard Cohen. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2001.
- Awerkamp, D. *Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics and Politics*. New York, 1977.
- Balibar, Etienne. 2007. "Secularism Has Become Another Religion." *Kafila* (October), 1–12, <http://kafila.org/2007/10/02/'secularism-has-become-another-religion'---etienne-balibar/>, accessed July 12, 2021.
- . "Strangers as Enemies: Further Reflections on the Aporias of Transnational Citizenship," Working Paper Series, 06/4, Institute on Globalization and the

- Human Condition, 2006, <http://77globalization.mcmaster.ca>, accessed July 12, 2021.
- . *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. Translated by James Swenson. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- . “Europe as Borderland: Models of Transnational Citizenship.” The Alexander von Humboldt Lecture in Human Geography, University of Nijmegen, November 10, 2004.
- Bankovsky, Miriam. “Derrida Brings Levinas to Kant: The Welcome, Ethics, and Cosmopolitan Law.” *Philosophy Today* 49 (2005), 156-170.
- Batnitzsky, Leora. “Encountering the Modern Subject in Levinas.” *Yale French Studies* 104 (2004): 6–21.
- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. III/1, *The Doctrine of Creation*. Translated by Harold Knight. Edited by Geoffrey Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Globalization: Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- . *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997.
- . “Modernity and Ambivalence,” in: *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. Edited by Mike Featherstone. London: Sage, 1991.
- Beavers, Anthony F. “Kant and the Problem of Ethical Metaphysics.” In *In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the 18th Century*. Edited by Melvyn New with Robert Bernasconi and Richard Cohen. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2001.
- Beck, Ulrich. “The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (2007), 286-290.
- Bell, Linda A. “Sartre, Dialectic, and the Problem of Overcoming Bad Faith.” *Man and World* 10 (1977), 292-302.
- Benhabib, Seyla. *The Rights of Others*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- Benjamin, Walter. "Critique of Violence." Selected Writings, Vol. 1. Edited by M. Bullock and M.W. Jennings. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Benveniste, Émile. *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*. Translated by Elizabeth Palmer. Chicago: Hau Books, 2016.
- Bergman, R. Meir Tzvi. *Sha 'arei Orah*. vol.1. *Parashat VaYishlach*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1998.
- Bergo, B. *Levinas between Ethics and Politics: For the Beauty that Adorns the Earth*. Dordrecht, 1999.
- Bernasconi, Robert. "Failure of Communication as a Surplus: Dialogue and Lack of Dialogue between Buber and Levinas." In *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*. Edited by R. Bernasconi and D. Wood. New York: Routledge, 1998, 100-135.
- _____. "Levinas and Derrida: The Question of the Closure of Metaphysics." In *Face to Face with Levinas*, edited by Richard Cohen. New York: State University of New York, 1986.
- _____. "The Third Party. Levinas on the Intersection of the Ethical and the Political," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 30 (1999), 76-87.
- _____. "What Is the Question to Which 'Substitution' Is the Answer?" In *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, edited by Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Bernasconi, Robert and Richard Cohen, eds. *In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the 18th Century*, Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2001.
- Bielik-Robson, Agata and Daniel H. Weiss. Edited by *Tsimtsum and Modernity: Lurianic Heritage in Modern Philosophy and Theology*, 1st edition. Boston: DE GRUYTER, 2020.
- Bloechl, Jeffrey. "Theological Terms in the Philosophy of Levinas." In *Oxford Handbook*. Edited by Michael L. Morgan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Boingeanu, Corneliu. "Personhood in Its Protological and Eschatological Patterns: An Eastern Orthodox View of the Ontology of Personality." *Evangelical Quarterly* 78 (2006): 3-19.

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. Translated by R. H. Fuller. London: SCM, 1.
- . *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Translated by Reginald Fuller et al. Edited by Eberhard Bethge. London: SCM, 1971.
- Brandt, Reinhard. “Vom Weltbuergerrecht.” In *Immanuel Kant: Zum Ewigen Frieden* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 133-148.
- Brettell, Caroline B. and James F. Hollifield. “Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines,” in: Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield eds. *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*. London, New York: Routledge, 2000, 1–27.
- Brettell, Caroline B. and James F. Hollifield, eds. *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Brown, Garrett W. “The Laws of Hospitality, Asylum Seekers and Cosmopolitan Right: A Kantian Response to Jacques Derrida.” *European Journal of Political Philosophy* 9 (2010), 308-327.
- Burggraeve, Roger. *Emmanuel Levinas. Une Bibliographie Primaire et Secondaire (1929–1985)*, Leuven: Peeters, 1986.
- . *From Development to Solidarity: An Ethical Reading of Human Desire in its Socio-Political Relevance According to Emmanuel Levinas*. Trans. C. Vanhove-Romanik. Leuven, 1985.
- . “The Ethical Basis for a Humane Society According to Emmanuel Levinas”, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 57 (1981), 5-57.
- . “The Virtue of the Negative: The Gospel Narrative of the Rich Young Person and the Paradoxical Relationship Between Prohibitions and Love.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Theological Research* 24, no. 2 (2022): 1–29.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London and New York: Verso, 2006.
- Campese, Gioacchino and Pietro Ciallella, eds. *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003.

- Campese, Gioacchino and Pietro Ciallella, eds. "The Irruption of Migrants: Theology of Migration in the 21st Century," *Theological Studies* 73 (2012), 3–32.
- Canaparo, Claudio. "Migration and Radical Constructivist Epistemology," *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* 3 (2012), 181–200.
- Caputo, John D. "Words of Welcome: Hospitality in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas." In *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*. Edited by Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch, 1st ed., 232–41. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.
- Carr, Wilfred. "Philosophy, Methodology and Action Research," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 40 (2006), 421–434.
- Carroll, David. "Remains of Algeria: Justice, Hospitality, Politics." *Modern Language Notes* 121 (2006), 808–827.
- Caygill, H. *Levinas and the Political*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Chalier, Catherine. *What Ought I to Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Cheah, Pheng. "The Untimely Secret of Democracy," in: *Derrida and the Time of the Political*. Edited by Pheng Cheah and Suzanne Guerlac. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2009.
- _____. "Introduction: Part II; The Cosmopolitical Today," in: *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, 20–41.
- Cohen, Richard A. *Elevation: The Height of the Good in Rosenzweig and Levinas*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Connolly, William E. *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- _____. "Confessing to Identity/Belonging to Difference." Reprinted in *William E. Connolly: Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*. Samuel A. Chambers and Terrell Carver, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

- _____. “Beyond the Moral Imperative.” Reprinted in *William E. Connolly: Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*. Samuel A. Chambers and Terrell Carver, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.
- _____. “Rethinking the Ethos of Pluralization,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 24 (1998), 93–102.
- _____. *Why I am not a Secularist*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- _____. “An Ethos of Engagement.” Reprinted in *William E. Connolly: Democracy Pluralism Political Theory*. Samuel A. Chambers and Terrell Carver, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.
- _____. *Pluralism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.
- _____. “Pluralism and Faith.” In *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*. Edited by Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006, 278–297.
- _____. *The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2013.
- “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.” Resolution 2198 (XXI) adopted by the UN General Assembly, 1951. Accessed Oct. 1, 2021.
- Critchley, S. *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. Oxford, 1992.
- _____. “Emmanuel Levinas: A Disparate Inventory.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Edited by Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. XV-XXX.
- _____. *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*. New York, 1999.
- _____. “Five Problems in Levinas’s View of Politics and a Sketch of a Solution to Them,” *Political Theory* 32 (2004), 172-185.
- _____. “Introduction.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Edited by Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- . “Nonviolent Violence.” In *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology*. London: Verso, 2012.
- . *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology*. London ; New York: Verso, 2014.
- Crowell, Steven. “Why Is Ethics First Philosophy? Levinas in Phenomenological Context.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (2015): 564–88.
- Czaika, M. and H. de Haas, “The Globalization of Migration: Has the World Become More Migratory?” *International Migration Review*, 48 (2014), 283–323.
- Dalton, Drew M. *Longing for the Other: Levinas and Metaphysical Desire*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2012.
- Davis, Colin. “Hauntology, Specters and Phantoms,” *French Studies* 59 (2005/3), 373-379.
- Darbinsky, John E. *Sensibility and Singularity: The problem of Phenomenology in Levinas*. New York: Suny Press, 2001.
- Derrida, Jacques. “A Europe of Hope.” Translated by Pleshette DeArmitt, Justine Malle, and Kas Saghafi, *Epoché* 10 (2006), 407–412.
- . “Hostipitality,” in: *The Derrida-Habermas Reader*. Lasse Thomassen, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006, 208-230.
- . *Paper Machine*. Translated by Rachel Bowlby. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- . *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- . “The Principle of Hospitality.” *Parallax* (2005), 6–9.
- . “Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida,” in: *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Edited by Giovanna Borradori. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

- . “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ at the Limits of Reason Alone,” in: *Acts of Religion*. Edited by Gil Anidjar. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- . “A Discussion with Jacques Derrida,” *Theory and Event* 5 (2001), 1-25.
- . *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- . “Hospitality.” Translated by Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock. *Angelaki* 5 (2000), 3-18.
- . *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Edited by Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- . “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida”, in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*. R. Kearney and M. Dooley, ed. London, 1999.
- . *Politics of Friendship*. Translated by George Collins. New York and London: Verso, 1997.
- . *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuff. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.
- . “Before the Law,” in: *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. New York and London: Routledge, 1992, 181–220.
- . *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- . “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority.’” In: *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. Edited by Drucilla Cornell et al, 3-67. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- De Ville, Jacques. “Perpetual Peace: Derrida Reading Kant.” *International Journal of Semiotic Law* 32 (2019), 335-357.
- Doukhan, Abi. “From Exile to Hospitality: A Key to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas.” *Philosophy Today (Celina)* 54, no. 3 (2010): 235–46.

- Dozeman, Thomas B. "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story." *JBL* 117, no. 1 (1998): 23–43.
- Dudiak, Jeffrey. "Structures of Violence, Structures of Peace: Levinasian Reflections on Just War and Pacifism." In *Knowing Other-Wise: Philosophy at the Threshold of Spirituality*. Edited by James H. Olthuis. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997, 159-171.
- Duschinsky, Robbie. "Abjection and Self-Identity: Towards a Revised Account of Purity and Impurity." *The Sociological Review* 61 (2013), 709-727.
- Esposito, John L. and John O. Voll. *Islam and Democracy*. New York and Oxford: OxfordUniversity Press, 1996.
- Eubanks, Cecil L. and David J. Gauthier. "The Politics of the Homeless Spirit: Heidegger and Levinas on Dwelling and Hospitality." *History of Political Thought*. Vol.32 (1) (2011), 125-146.
- Faist, T. and N. Glick-Schiller, eds. "Migration, Development and Transnationalization: A Critical Stance. Papers in Special Section," *Social Analysis* 53 (2009), 106–122.
- Fagenblat, Michael. *A Covenant of Creatures: Levinas's Philosophy of Judaism*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Faruqui, Safa. "Hajar (as) and the Miracle of Zamzam." *Muslim Hands* (blog). April 19, 2021. Accessed November 11, 2023.
<https://muslimhands.org.uk/latest/2021/04/story-of-hajar-and-zamzam-well-in-the-quran-and-hadith>.
- Favell, Adrien. "Rebooting Migration Theory: Interdisciplinarity, Globality and Postdisciplinarity in Migration Studies," in: Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds. *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*. New York: Routledge, 2008, 259-278.
- Feldman, Daniel Z. "My House Is Your House." In *Divine Footsteps: Chesed and the Jewish Soul*, 17-25. New York, N.Y.: Yeshiva University Press, 2008.
- Ferreira, Carlos Enrique Ruiz. "Investigations of Kantian Cosmopolitanism: Evolution of the Species, Sovereignty and Hospitality." *Dados* (Rio de Janeiro). Vol. 63 (2)

(2020), 1-30. "Flüchtlingskonferenz des ZMD in Darmstadt war ein voller Erfolg." <http://islam.de/27164.php>. Accessed 2 March 2021.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Foundations of Natural Right: According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*. Edited by Frederick Neuhouser. Translated by Michael Baur. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000.

Fox, Jonathan. *A World Survey of Religion and the State*. Cambridge: University Press, 2008.

Franks, Paul. *All or Nothing*. Boston: Harvard, 2005.

———. "The Discovery of the Other: Cavell, Fichte and Skepticism." In *Reading Cavell*. Edited by Alice Crary and Stanford Shieh. London: Routledge, 2006, 166–203.

Freeman, Susan. *Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities*. Denver, Co: A.R. E. publishing, 1990.

Freud, Sigmund, "The Uncanny," in: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogart Press, 1995), 218-252.

Gallien, Claire. "The Subversive Power of the Migrant." *Book&Ideas.Net*, 1. Accessed February 2021.

Gates, Darin Crawford. "The Fact of Reason and the Face of the Other: Autonomy, Constraint, and Rational Agency in Kant and Levinas." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40, no. 4 (December 2002): 493–522.

Gauthier, David J. "Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality," *History of Political Thought* 28 (2007), 158-180.

Gelles, David. "The Husband-and-Wife Team Behind the Leading Vaccine to Solve Covid-19," <https://web.archive.org/web/20201110200754/https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/business/biontech-covid-vaccine.html>, accessed May 3, 2021.

Ghannouchi, Rachid. "Participation in Non-Islamic Government." In *Liberal Islam: A Source Book*. Charles Kurzman, ed. Oxford: Oxford University, 1998.

Girard, René. *The Scapegoat*. Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

- . *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*. Translated by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- . *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- Glick-Schiller, Nina. “Beyond Methodological Ethnicity: Local and Transnational Pathways of Immigrant Incorporation.” *Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations*, 2. Malmö: Malmö University, 2008.
- Goldberg, D. Theo. “Racial Europeanization.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (2006), 331-364.
- Goldin, I., G. Cameron and M. Balarajan. *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped Our World and Will Define Our Future*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2011.
- Goodman, Lenn E. “Ghazali’s Argument from Creation.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2, no. 1 (1971): 67–85.
- Goshen-Gottstein, Alon. “Judaism: The Battle for Survival, the Struggle for Compassion.” In *The Religious Other: Hostility, Hospitality, and the Hope of Human Flourishing*. Edited by Alon Goshen-Gottstein. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014, 21-52.
- Griffel, Frank. “Al-Ghazali.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N Zalta, n.d. <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/al-ghazali/>>.
- Groody, Daniel G. “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees,” *Theological Studies* 70 (2009), 638–667.
- Gunton, Colin E. *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- . *Christ and Creation*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1992.
- Habermas, Juergen. *Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Translated by Ciaran Cronin. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.
- Hafez, Farid. *Islamisch-politsche Denker*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2014.

- Hallie, Philip P. *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
- Hand, Seán. *Emmanuel Lévinas*. London; New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Hand, Seán, ed. *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
- Hansel, Joëlle. "Beyond Phenomenology: Levinas's Early Jewish Writings." *Levinas Studies* 5 (2010): 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.5840/levinas201054>.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Hasan, Ali. "Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) on Creation and the Divine Attributes." In *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*, edited by Jeanine Diller and Asa Kasher. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2013.
- Hashemi, Morteza. "What Does It Mean To Be a Progressive Intellectual after the Refugee Crisis in Europe? A Dialogue with Tariq Ramadan." In *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*. Edited by Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Hatina, Meir. *Martyrdom in Modern Islam: Piety, Power, and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Mind. Trans. J.B. Baillie. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967.
- _____. "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 209–216.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2007.
- _____. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Hesselgrave, Ronald P. *The Supper: New Creation, Hospitality, and Hope in Christ*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf&Stock, 2019.

- Hirsch, Emil G., Julius H. Greenstone, and Solomon Schechter. "Hospitality." In *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed September 5, 2022. <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7905-hospitality>.
- Huggler, Jorgen. "Cosmopolitanism and Peace in Kant's Essay on 'Perpetual Peace.'" In: *Stud Phios Educ*. Vol. 29, (2010), 129-140.
- Hussain, Amir. "Toward a Muslim Theology of Migration." In *Theology of Migration in Abrahamic Religions*. Edited by Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan. New York: Palgrave, 2015.
- Ikenberry, G.K. "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs*, 94 (2018), 7-23.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM), *World Migration Report 2020*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2019. <https://www.iom.int>, accessed December 15, 2021.
- Irving, Dale T. "Theology, Migration and the Homecoming." In: Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan. Eds., *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Marx's Purloined Letter," *New Left Review* 209 (1995), 75-109.
- Joffe, George. "Democracy, Islam and the Culture of Modernism." In *Democratisation* 4, No. 3 (1997), 133-151.
- Josua, Hanna Nouri. *Ibrahim, der Gottesfreund. Idee und Problem einer Abrahamischen Ökumene* (Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.
- Jureidini, Ray and Said Fares Hassan, eds. *Migration and Islamic Ethics. Issues of Residence, Naturalisation and Citizenship*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Christopher Bennett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- _____. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. Trans. J. T. Goldthwait. London: University of California Press, 1960.
- _____. "To Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch (1795)." In *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publications, 1983.

- . *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Mary McGregor, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Katz, Claire Elise. *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine: The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 2003.
- Kearney, Richard. *Anatheism: Returning to God After God*. New York: Colombia University Press, 2011.
- Kelly, Michael R. "Phenomenology and Time-Consciousness." In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://iep.utm.edu/phe-time>. Accessed November 2023.
- Khallouk, Mohammed. "Confronting the Current Refugee Crisis: The Importance of Islamic Citizens' Initiative in Germany." In *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, Edited by Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Knowles, Adam. "Hospitality's Downfall: Kant, Cosmopolitanism, and Refugees." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 31 (2017), 347-357.
- Koser, K. *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Nations without Nationalism*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- . *Strangers to Ourselves*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press., 1991.
- . *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Kubossek, Shauna. "Kenotic Hospitality and the Eucharist: An Alternative Economy." *Anglican Theological Review* 104, no. 1 (2022): 70-82.
- Lefebvre, Henri. "Reflections of the Politics of Space," *Antipode*, Vol. 8 (2) (1976), 30-37.

- Leonard, Karen I., Alex Stepick, Manuel A. Vasquez, and Jennifer Holdaway, eds. *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America*. New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2006.
- Lescourret, Marie-Anne. *Emmanuel Levinas*, Paris: Flammarion 1994.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Alterity and Transcendence*. Translated by Michael B. Smith. London: The Athlone Press, 1999.
- _____. "As Old as the World?" In: *Nine Talmudic Readings*. Translated by Annette Aronowicz. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- _____. "Beyond Intentionality." In *Philosophy in France Today*, edited by Alan Montefiore, 100–115. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- _____. *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*. Translated by Gary D. Mole. London: The Athlone Press, 1982.
- _____. *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Edited by Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987.
- _____. "Contemporary Criticism of the Idea of Value." In *Value and Values in Evolution*. Edited by A. Maziarz. New York: Gordon and Beach, 1979, 179-188.
- _____. *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism (1963–76)*. Translated by Seán Hand. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- _____. *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*. Edited by Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- _____. *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*. Translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
- _____. *Ethics and Infinity: Conversation with Philippe Nemo*. Translated by Richard Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985.
- _____. "Ethics and Politics." In *The Levinas Reader*. Seán Hand, ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

- _____. *Existence and Existents*. Translated by A. Lingis. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978.
- _____. “From One to the Other.” In *Entre Nous*. New York: Columbia University, 1998.
- _____. *God, Death and Time*. Translated by Bettina Bergo. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- _____. “Heidegger, Gagarin, and Us.” In *Difficult Freedom: Essays in Judaism*. Translated by Sean Hand. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- _____. “Ideology and Idealism.” In: *The Levinas Reader*. Edited by Seán Hand. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
- _____. *In the Time of the Nations*. Tr. Michael B. Smith. London: The Athlone Press, 1994.
- _____. *Is it Righteous to Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*. Jill Robbins, ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- _____. “Is Ontology Fundamental?” In *Levinas’ Basic Philosophical Writings*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996.
- _____. “Judaism and Christianity.” In *In the Time of the Nations*, translated by Michael B. Smith, 161–66. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- _____. “Language and Proximity.” In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998.
- _____. *La Theorie de l’intuition dans la Phénoménologie de Husserl*, Paris: J. Vrin, 1930. (*The Theory of Intuition in Husserl’s Phenomenology*. Translated by André Orianne. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1975.
- _____. “Meaning and Sense.” In: *Levinas’ Basic Philosophical Writings*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996.
- _____. *New Talmudic Readings*. Tr. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1999.
- _____. *Nine Talmudic Readings (1968–1977)*. Translated by Annette Aronowicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

- _____. *Of God Who Comes to Mind*. Translated by Bettina Bergo. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- _____. "On Jewish Philosophy." In *In the Time of the Nations*. Translated by Michael B. Smith. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- _____. *On Thinking-of-the-Other* (1991). Translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav. London: The Athlone Press, 1998.
- _____. *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*. Translated by A. Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2000.
- _____. "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998.
- _____. "Philosophy, Justice and Love." In *Entre Nous*. New York: Columbia University, 1998.
- _____. "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism." Translated by Seán Hand. *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 1 (1990): 62–71.
- _____. "The Ego and Totality." In *Collected Philosophical Papers: Emmanuel Levinas*. Trans. A. Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998, 25-46.
- _____. "The Trace of the Other." Translated by Alphonso Lingis. In *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*. Edited by Mark C. Taylor. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- _____. "Freedom and Command." In: *Collected Philosophical Papers: Emmanuel Levinas*. Trans. A. Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998, 15-24.
- _____. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Trans. A. Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press 2001.
- _____. "Enigma and Phenomenon." In *Levinas' Basic Philosophical Writings*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996.
- _____. "Politics After!" In *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*. Translated G. D. Mole. Blooming: Indiana University Press, 1994.

- _____. "Signature." In *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*. Trans. Seán Hand. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- _____. "The Ego and Totality." In *Collected Philosophical Papers: Emmanuel Levinas*. Translated by A. Lingis. Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998, 25-46.
- _____. "The Nations and the Presence of Israel." In *In the Time of the Nations*. Translated M. B. Smith. Blooming: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- _____. "The State of Caesar and the State of David." In *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*. Translated G. D. Mole. Blooming: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- _____. *Time and the Other and Additional Essays*. Translated by Richard Cohen. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1987.
- _____. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969.
- _____. "Transcendence and Evil." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998.
- _____. "Transcendence and Height." In *Levinas' Basic Philosophical Writings*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996.
- _____. "Substitution." In *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, edited by Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Levinas Emmanuel and Raoul Mortley. "Emmanuel Levinas." In *French Philosophers in Conversation: Levinas, Schneider, Serres, Irigaray, Le Doeuff, Derrida*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Levinas, Emmanuel and Richard Kearney. "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas." In *Face to Face with Levinas*. Richard A. Cohen, ed. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.
- Levinas Emmanuel and Florian Rötzer. "Emmanuel Levinas." In *Conversations with French Philosophers*. Trans. Gary E. Aylesworth. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995.

- Lombardini, John. "Civic Laughter: Aristotle and the Political Virtue of Humor." *Political Theory* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 203–30.
- McFague, Sallie. *Blessed Are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Makris, Spiros. "Emmanuel Levinas on Hospitality: Ethical and Political Aspects." *International Journal of Theology, Philosophy and Science* 2 (2018), 79-96.
- Malka, Salomon. *Emmanuel Levinas: La vie et la trace*. Paris: J.C. Lattes, 2002.
- Masud, Muhammad Khalid. "The Obligation of Hijra in Islamic Law." In *Muslim Travellers*. Edited by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1990.
- Menn, Esther M. "Sanctification of the (Divine) Name: Targum Neofiti's 'Translation' of Genesis 38.25-26." In *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian*, edited by Graig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, 1st ed., 154:206–40. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury, 1998.
- Mensch, James R. *Levinas's Existential Analytic: A Commentary on Totality and Infinity*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015.
- McGregor, Sue L.T. and Jennifer A. Murnane. "Paradigm, Methodology and Method: Intellectual Integrity in Consumer Scholarship." *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 34 (2010), 419–427.
- Michel, Thomas. "Hagar: Mother of Faith in the Compassionate God." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 16, no. 2 (April 2005): 99–104.
- Minister, Stephen. "In Praise of Wanderers and Insomniacs: Economy, Excess, and Self-Overcoming in Nietzsche and Lévinas." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 37, no. 3 (January 2006): 269–85.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.2006.11006591>.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. London: SCM, 1974.
- Morgan, Michael L. *Discovering Levinas*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

- _____. "Levinas on God and the Trace of the Other." In: *The Oxford Handbook of Levinas*. Eds. Michael L. Morgan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- _____, ed. *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *The Democratic Paradox*. London, New York: Verso, 2009.
- Moyn, Samuel. *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics*. London: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Müller, Jan-Werner. *What is Populism?* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Muttaqi Hindi, Ali. *Kanz al-Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Af'āl*. Edited by Bakri Hayani and Tahqiq Sheikh Safwat al-Saqqa. Vol. 9. Beirut: Dar al-Risalah, 1989.
- McNulty, Tracy. *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Naas, Michael. *Derrida From Now On*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
- _____. *Taking on the Tradition: Jacques Derrida and Legacies of Deconstruction*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Nagy Dorottya and Martha Frederiks, eds. *Religion, Migration, and Identity. Methodological and Theological Explorations*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- Nail, Thomas. *The Figure of the Migrant*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- _____. *Theory of the Border*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Negri, Antonio. *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*. Translated by Maurizia Boscagli. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999.
- Ogletree, Thomas W. *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Okoye, James C. "Sarah and Hagar: Genesis 16 and 21." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, no. 2 (December 2007): 163–75.

- Oliver, Kelly. *Earth and World: Philosophy After the Apollo Missions*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Olthuis, James H. "Face-to-Face: Ethical Asymmetry or the Symmetry of Mutuality?" In *The Hermeneutics of Charity: Interpretation, Selfhood, and Postmodern Faith*, edited by James K. A. Smith and Henry Isaac Venema, 135–56. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004.
- Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*. Translated by John W. Harvey. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Padilla, Elaine and Peter C. Phan, eds. *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Papastergiadis, Nikos. "The Invasion Complex: The Abject Other and Spaces of Violence," *Geografiska Annaler* 88 (2006), 429–442.
- Peperzak, Adriaan. *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1993.
- _____. *Beyond: The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997.
- _____. "Levinas' Method," *Research in Phenomenology* 28 (1998), 110-125.
- _____. "Illeity According to Levinas," *Philosophy Today*, 42 (1998), 41-46.
- Pessin, Sarah. "Bonomythy and the Goodward Life: Sacred-Ethical Invitations to Pause, Prayer, and Politics in Plotinus and Levinas." *Modern Theology* 39, no. 2 (April 2023): 255–71.
- _____. "Conversation about Levinas's Ethics." Personal Communication, September 8, 2023, Zoom Meeting.
- _____. "From Mystery to Laughter to Trembling Generosity: Agono-Pluralistic Ethics in Connolly v. Levinas (and the Possibilities of Atheist-Theist Respect)." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 24 (2016): 615-638.
- Peters, Freia. "Migranten wollen weniger Flüchtlinge in Deutschland," *Die Welt am Sonntag*, November 29, 2015.

<https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article149391575/Migranten-wollen-weniger-Fluechtlinge-in-Deutschland.html>. Accessed 2 March 2021.

Plato. *Republic*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1937.

Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Purcell, M. "Homelessness as a Theological Motif: Emanuel Levinas and the Significance of the Home," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 16 (1995), 88-104.

Putnam, Hilary. "Levinas and Judaism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Raffoul, Francois. 1998. "On Hospitality, between Ethics and Politics." *Research in Phenomenology* 28 (1998): 274–283.

Razack, Sherene. "Modern Women as Imperialists: Geopolitics, Culture Clash, and Gender after 9/11." In *Casting out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.

"Read the full statement by the US, Israel and UAE on normalizing Israel-UAE relations," CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/13/middleeast/mideast-trump-full-statement-uae-israel-intl/index.html> . Accessed 1 March 2021.

Reath, Andrews. "Kant's Conception of Autonomy of the Will." In *Kant on Moral Autonomy*, edited by Oliver Sensen, 32-52. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Reemts, Christiana. *Abraham in der christlichen Tradition*. Muenster, 2005.

Reynolds, Thomas E. "Toward a Wider Hospitality: Rethinking Love of Neighbour in Religions of the Book," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75,2 (2010), 175-187.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Oneself as Another*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Robbins, Jill, and Emmanuel Levinas. *Is It Righteous to Be?: Interview with Emmanuel Levinas*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2001.

- Rocke, Kris, and Joel Van Dyke. *Geography of Grace: Doing Theology from Below*. Tacoma, WA.: Street Psalms Press, 2012.
- Rohe, Matthias. *Der Islam in Deutschland: Eine Bestandsaufnahme*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2016.
- Rosenthal, Franz. "The Stranger in Medieval Islam." *Arabica* 44 (1997): 35–75.
- Rosenthal, Gilbert S. "Two Sides of One Coin: Hillul Hashem and Kiddush Hashem." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 55,3 (2020), 415–36.
- Rosenzweig, Franz. *The Star of Redemption*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.
- Sack, Jonathan. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. New York, N.Y: Continuum, 2002.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.
- Schmiedel, Ulrich and Graeme Smith, eds. *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Schott, Robin May. "Kant and Arendt on Hospitality." *Jahrbuch fuer Recht und Ethik* 17 (2009): 183-194.
- Schroeder, William Ralph. *Sartre and his Predecessors: The Self and the Other*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Sensen, Oliver, ed. *Kant on Moral Autonomy*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Shepherd, Andrew. *The Gift of the Other. Levinas, Derrida, and a Theology of Hospitality*. Cambridge: James Clark, 2014.
- Schoenfeld, Devorah. "You Will Seek From There: The Cycle of Exile and Return in Classical Jewish Theology." In *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*. Edited by Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

- Siddiqui, Mona. *Hospitality and Islam: Welcoming in God's Name*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Simmons, J. Aaron, "Levinas, Politics, and the Third Party." In *The Oxford Handbook of Levinas*. Michal L. Morgan, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 279-302.
- Simmons, W.P. "The Third: Levinas's Theoretical Move from An-Archical Ethics to the Realm of Justice and Politics," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25 (1999), 83-104.
- Smith, James K. A. *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory*. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- Stern, Robert. "Levinas, Darwall, and Løgstrup on Second-Personal Ethics: Command or Responsibility?" In *Oxford Handbook of Levinas*. Ed. Michael L. Morgan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Sultana Mark. "On Being Host and Guest: Questions Posed by Migrants." *Melita Theologica: Journal of the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta* 67 (2017), 54.
- Ṭabarī, Abu Ja'far Muhammad B. Jarir. *The Commentary on the Qur'ān*. Edited by Wilferd Madelung. Translated by John Cooper. Oxford [Oxfordshire]; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Tallon, A. "Intentionality, Intersubjectivity, and the Between: Buber and Levinas on Affectivity and the Dialogical Principle," *Thought* 53 (1978): 292-309.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Economy of Grace*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.
- . *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001.
- The Nobel Prize. "Muhammad Yunus Nobel Diploma," 2006. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2006/yunus/facts/>.
 "This Syrian Refugee wants to run for the German parliament." Accessed March 14, 2021. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/02/syrian-migrant-germanparliament-refugee-election-politician/>
- Triandafyllidou, A. "Globalisation and Migration." In *Handbook on Migration and Globalization*. A. Triandafyllidou, ed. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2018.
- Vardoulakis, Demitris. "Autoimmunities: Derrida, Democracy and Political Theology." In *Research in Phenomenology* 48 (2018): 29-56.

- Veling, Terry A. *Practical Theology: "On Earth as It Is in Heaven."* Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005.
- Volf, Miroslav. *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- . *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Vorländer Hans, Maik Herold, and Steven Schäller. *Pegida: Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016.
- Washburn, Sherwood L. "Tools and Human Evolution." *Scientific American*, vol. 203, no. 3, Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 1960, 62–75.
- Watt, Montgomery. "Hidjra", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 2nd edition, vol. 3 (1971), 366-67.
- Webb, Stephen H. "The Rhetoric of Ethics as Excess: A Christian Theological Response to Emmanuel Levinas." *Modern Theology* 15, no. 1 (January 1999): 1–16.
- Weiss, Bernard G. *The Spirit of Islamic Law*. Paperbacked. Athens London: University of Georgia Press, 2006.
- Wenman, Mark Anthony. "Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism: An Interview with William E. Connolly," *Contemporary Political Theory* 7 (2008), 200-219.
- "Wie Viele Muslime leben in Deutschland?" <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/WorkingPapers/wp71-zahl-muslime-deutschland.html?nn=283560>. Accessed 13 March 2021.
- Williams, Delores S. *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Wimmer, Andreas and Nina Glick-Schiller. "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-state Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2 (2002), 301-334.

- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1958.
- Wyschogrod, Edith. "Language and Alterity in the Thought of Levinas." In *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, edited by Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Yazbeck Hassad, Yvonne, Jane L. Smith, and John L. Esposito, eds. *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Experiences in the United States*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Yegenoglu, Meyda. *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality in Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Yong, Amos. *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbour*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008.
- Yunus, Muhammad "The View from Here: Muhammad Yunus, Founder of Grameen Bank," *Director* 62, no. 7, (2009): 12. <https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/view-here-muhammad-yunus-founder-grameen-bank/docview/218974684/se-2>.
- . Nobel Diploma. *The Nobel Prize* (blog), 2006. Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2006/yunus/facts/>.
- Zavediuk, Nicholas. "Kantian Hospitality." *Peace Review* 26 (2014), 170-177.
- Zizioulas, John D. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.
- . *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Edited by Paul McPartlan. London: T. & T. Clark, 2006.
- "جایگاه میهمان در سیره نبوی" [The Status of Guests in the Prophet's Biography]. WikiFeqh. Accessed February 24, 2024. URL: https://fa.wikifeqh.ir/جایگاه_میهمان_در_سیره_نبوی.