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(editors)

*What does the Veil know?*

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*Benda Hofmeyr*

*The Future*

*that Death/Other*

*gives*

This essay seeks to locate the event that happens in the face of Death/Other as conceptualized by Emmanuel Levinas. This event can be understood as a decisive moment of "veiled revelation" in which the future becomes present and I become Other. This revelation is not an "unveiling"—it becomes possible not despite the veil, but *because of* the veil. For Levinas, our encounter with death can be likened to the face-to-face encounter with the other person, the very incarnation of alterity as such. Because the face remains veiled—holy, not sacred—the self, that kernel of immanence, which up until now was self-supporting and autonomous, is preserved in transcendence. It is now heteronomously reoriented, separated from its own inwardness, becoming other-to-itself without—miraculously—losing itself (AF, 49/63). This "second birth" is what Levinas

Geoff Andrew, *Ten (10): BFI Modern Classics*, London: BFI Publishing, 2005.

Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'Evidence du film: Abbas Kiarostami*, trilingual edition (French, English, Persian), Bruxelles: Yves Gevaert Editeur, 2001.



describes in *Le temps et l'autre* as "vanquishing death."

### *The Present and the Future in Levinas*

Levinas's philosophy is concerned with our present life in-the-world and the future beyond-this-world, with immanence and transcendence, with the self and the other person. His early phenomenological analyses, which proceed descriptively to bring to light the essence, have bearing on the present, on our life in-the-world, on immanence. The latter is more often than not interpreted as ontology inferior or ethically inessential to the future, to transcendence. Levinas's work cannot, however, be reduced to a binary opposition. For him, the promise of the future is a promise of resurrecting the past, with all its forces, but in such a way that it would begin anew. The happiness of a new beginning that the future can bring, a new beginning of the being one is and has been, is the paradoxical happiness of the *felix culpa*. More than the loss of immanence and self, which could be interpreted as a fortunate fall because of the good that comes from it, it is the preservation of immanence in transcendence. For Levinas, the "first" beginning in the now, the instant of immanence, is the very condition for the possibility of a second beginning, a "new birth" (TA, 81/179). Our life in-the-world is more than just a miserable series of events that will eventually lead to a happier outcome. The movement that leads an existent toward the Good is not a transcendence by which that existent raises itself up to a higher existence, but a departure from Being: an *ex-cendence*. But ex-cendence and

### *The horizontal transcendence of light*

#### *Being-in-the-world*

the Good necessarily have a foothold in being, and that is why Being is better than non-being (EE, 15 [Preface]). A being is the very condition for the possibility of escaping Being.

Levinas thus radically redefines the ancient sense of time conceived in terms of an infinite succession of instants. According to his existential interpretation of time, an instant is indeed a commencement, an inauguration, a dawning. This present is the awakening of consciousness, an *Au-geblick*. The future does not signal the recurrence of the now or its continuation, but the possibility of another instant or beginning, another chance for the now. The event that the future brings is a chance to recommence otherwise. This is the sense of time not as a determinate infinity of instants, but rather of the *infiniton*, the ever recommencing of the definitive (cf. EE, 14 [Lingis's introduction]).

Levinas's thought begins with the origination of the distinct existent: impersonal Being hypostasizes in a being. He then moves onto the progressively more intricate constitutive strata of subjectivity, its materiality and solitude, its insertion in and life in the world, its suffering and death, to conclude with the subject's encounter with the other person. It is this encounter that introduces the future into the present.

According to his early ontological analyses, our "economic" existence, our being-in-the-world, is defined by our relations to objects and



projects across a distance. It is what draws us out of ourselves, momentarily alleviating our existential burden. For Levinas, our existential exploits in the world are a way to alleviate the unbearable heaviness of being. The world offers salvation through objects, projects, and nourishments. "The morality of 'early nourishments' is the first morality," writes Levinas, "the first abnegation. It is not the last, but one must pass through it" (TA, 64/156, my emphasis). Our worldly encounter with provisional alterity is not the last, offered by the world to escape the gravity of existence. Life might be hard but it is good to be alive! Subjectivity, nevertheless, does not belong

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Deleuze 1986 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

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Plath 2000 Sylvia Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath 1950-1962*, transcribed from the original manuscripts at Smith College, edited by Karen V. Kukil, New York: Anchor Books, 2000.

Tolstoy 1981 Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, translated by Lynn Solotaroff, London: Bantam Books, 1981.



to the world. Being-in-the-world does not define our existence. Rather, subjectivity takes form by a retreat from the world. We keep a distance from objects possessed in the world.

This possession at a distance is what constitutes the intentionality of intentions. Through intentions our presence in the world is across a distance. Existence itself affords no distance. One possesses existence, but is also possessed by it. The world, on the other hand, as given to intentions, leaves the I a freedom with regard to it. It does not weigh upon us like the irrevocable commitment to exist, but is yonder (*EE*, 47/73).

Intentionality, according to Levinas, is the origin of sense. Sense is apprehension—the process by which a person makes sense of something by assimilating it to the body of ideas/s/he already possesses. In other words, what is exterior is adjusted to and refers to what is interior. The structure of intentionality is thus a going out to the other but also a constituting of that other, reducing its alterity in the illumination that renders it permeable to subjectivity. Wherever there is sensible or intellectual apprehension, there is light or luminosity. Phenomenologically, light is the condition for phenomena, i.e., for meaning. What comes from outside illuminates and comes from within. It comes from the exteriority of a thing in encounter: objective signification or "exteriority" refers to inwardness. So while worldly objects and projects succeed in drawing us out of ourselves, it only ever amounts to a partial and temporary diversion or alleviation of our existential burden. There is a partial move towards objects but always a retreat, because comprehension, which gives us access to objects in the world, emanates from within the existent. The distance that separates us from objects, which we traverse in reaching for them, inevitably leads us back to ourselves.

For Levinas, materiality does not express the contingent fall of the spirit into the prison of the body. Rather, materiality is an ontological event, the concrete event of the relationship between Ego [*Moi*] and Self [*Soi*] (*TA*, 56–57/148). Existence is equivalent to materiality; to be is to be bogged down in oneself. While existence is a pressing weight, being-in-the-world affords the opportunity to reach for objects. Their provisional otherness draws us out of ourselves (*TA*, 63/155–156). It enables the subject to separate from itself. Our everyday life is therefore a partial way of being free from the initial materiality through which a subject is accomplished [*s'accomplit*]. It affords a forgetfulness of self (*TA*, 64/156).

The Levinasian subject nevertheless does not experience the world primarily as a utilitarian realm. To be sure, our relation to the world is indeed useful therein that it fulfills our needs, and beneficial therein that it partially alleviates our stilling solitude resulting from our being mirrored in an unbearably heavy materiality. However, for Levinas, the world is not first and foremost an ensemble of Heideggerian tools ready-to-hand, but rather an ensemble of *nourishments* (*TA*, 63/155; *TI*, 110–111/82–83). For Heidegger, the use of tools, our practice in the world is part of the closed circle ultimately referring to our deepest existential destiny, to our very care [*Sorge*] for existing. (On the referral from tool use to *Dasein*, see Heidegger 1962, 116–



From our materiality and change our egoist nature never to return to ourselves as we were. It is an event so mysterious that, for Levinas, nothing is more like it than death!

### **Death**

#### **as the end of mastery**

We have seen that, for Levinas, the essential condition is not a *stasis* (literally meaning "to be or "to stand")—it is not a state of equilibrium or inactivity. Rather it is a condition of *ecstasis* ("to be at") or to stand towards something, necessarily an alterity which drives a wedge in between the self and itself through an involvement in the world. This is the duality of solitude. The existent thus appears as a *diastasis*, as a being standing apart from itself. This makes for the fundamental paradox characterizing the existential condition: since the existent does not fully coincide with itself and is not in equilibrium, it reaches towards the world in an effort to establish a sense of equilibrium. The fact that it is materially mired in itself, at the same time forces it to go beyond itself to establish a distance within itself. It thus, simultaneously, attempts to fill a lack and create a gap within

life is pleasurable. For Levinas, sensibility and sentience form the principle of the subject's individuation. It starts with the very basic capability of hunger and the enjoyment of eating (cf. *TI*, 59/30). In fact, Levinas characterizes our relationship with objects as a primordial experience of enjoyment [jouissance].

As we have seen, the self-forgetfulness and the luminosity of enjoyment do not, however, break the irremissible attachment of the ego to the self. Things (being-towards-objects) do not have the redemptive power we need to escape ourselves. The transcendence afforded by our worldly projects is wrapped in immanence (*TA*, 64–65/156–157). It might offer temporary alleviation, but it is never a transience of the encumbrance of the ego by the self. It remains a mere distraction, a partial liberation, for in the end, you meet yourself again (*TA*, 66/159). Something absolutely strange is needed to truly get free from ourselves.

It is at this point that Levinas shifts the emphasis away from the question of the self-transcendence of the existent which dominates his earliest three works to an unfatherable and mysterious Other—an Other as enigmatic as death itself (*TI*, 234/211). In face of the Other/death, the subject is no longer actively self-transformative

and-transcending, but reduced to a "bottomless" or "deathlike passivity" (*AE*, III/14: 124/159).

Suffering and death announce the absolute strangeness of a future ever future. Death is always yet to come, and in its inevitable approach we are confronted with something that we cannot assimilate, not in life. Death is truly remaining in the beyond, since no one has returned from it. As such, it is an event that can be compared to the (ethical) encounter with the other person—that which will redeem us

117.) For Levinas, objects in the world have nothing to do with this ultimate reflexivity (*TA*, 63/155). Human life does not go beyond the objects that fulfill it. The uttermost finality of eating is contained in food. It is indeed an ecstatic existence—being outside of oneself by going toward an object in the world—but limited by that object. There is no existential destiny hidden behind the act—we eat for the sake of eating, not to authenticate our existence, but because we are hungry, and to satisfy our appe-

are hungry, and to satisfy our appetite our existence, but because we are hungry, and to satisfy our appetite our existence, but because we are hungry, and to satisfy our appe-



Heidegger, death is an event of freedom, the "possibility of impossibility," whereas for Levinas, the subject seems to reach the limit of the possible in suffering. For him, death signals "the impossibility of possibility" (TA, 70-71/165; TI, 235/212). Something absolutely unknowable appears, that is, something foreign to all light, rendering every assumption of possibility impossible, but where we ourselves are seized.

The approach of death announces a moment at which we are no longer able to be able [*nous ne pouvons plus pouvoir*] (TA, 74/170). Faced with death, the subject not only loses its various powers, it loses its very ability to have powers, its "I can."

Death is the impossibility of having a project. The approach of death indicates that we are in relation with something that is absolutely other, something bearing alterity, not as a provisional determination we can assimilate through enjoyment, but as something whose very existence is made of alterity. It is a relationship with the In-visible, where invisibility results not from some incapacity of human knowledge, but from the inaptitude of knowledge as such—from its in-adequation (TA, 32 [Preface]). It is not unknown, but unknowable. The other [*'Autre*], announced in death, alienates not only my abilities and possibilities but my very being (TA, 75/171)!

What is conjured here is not only the alterity of death, but also the alterity of the other person. What is common to death and social life is an encounter with radical alterity. In fact, for Levinas, the encounter with the alterity of death is like nothing so much as the encounter with the alterity of the other person, "as though the approach of death remained one of the modalities of the relationship with the Other" (TI, 234/211). The relationship

itself. The harder we try to establish some sense of existential equilibrium by our involvement in the world—we eat, we inhabit, we labour and possess in an attempt to feel less dislocated from ourselves—the more we become aware of our unbearable materiality that cannot be surmounted by our increasingly impotent projects in the world. By trying to fill the lack within we become increasingly aware of the need instead for some distance from ourselves.

The ecstasis of enjoyment does not succeed in surmounting the pain, sorrow, and suffering that constitute the tragedy of solitude. Levinas maintains that in physical pain one's engagement in existence is without equivocation. In moral pain one can preserve an attitude of dignity and compunction, but in physical suffering it is impossible to detach oneself from the instant of existence. It is the very irremissibility of being with an absolute absence of refuge (TA, 69/163; TI, 238-239/215-216). In this sense, suffering is the impossibility of nothingness. One finds oneself "backed up to being" (TI, 238/215). However, along with the impossibility of nothingness, there is in suffering the proximity of death, a region from which no one has returned. The unknown of death signifies that the subject finds itself in relationship with what does not come from itself, with what is refractory to light, with mystery. In the face of death, the subject finds itself seized, overwhelmed, and utterly passive. Death announces an event in relation to which the subject is no longer a subject. For Heidegger, being-toward-death signals authentic existence, and hence, the very virility of the subject. It is *Das Sein* of the subject. It is the uttermost possibility of existence, which precisely makes possible all other possibilities, all possible activity and freedom. For



According to Levinas, "only a being whose solitude has reached a crisis-point through suffering, and in relation with death, takes its place on a ground where the relationship with the other becomes possible" (TA, 76/171). Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich was such a being, whom, an hour before his death, through the other, his son, could finally face the other (death). An hour before Ivan Ilyich's death his son crept into his room: "The dying man was still screaming desperately and falling his arms. One hand fell on the boy's head. The boy grasped it, pressed it to his lips, and began to

**The future of death**  
**Transcending**  
**the horizontal**  
**transcendence**  
**of the world**

The relationship with the other is thus a mystery that cannot be summed or grasped, but that alienates. But if death is the alienation of my existence, is it still my death? How can a being enter into relation with the other without allowing its very self to be crushed by the other? How can an existent as mortal persevere in its mastery?

Death is a mystery precisely because it is never present: "If you are, it is not; if it is, you are not" (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in: TA, 71/167). According to Levinas, this ancient adage testifies to the eternal futurity of death. Our relationship with death is a unique relationship with the future. The fact that it deserts every present is not due to our evasion of death, but to the fact that death is *ungraspable*, that it marks the end of the subject's virility and heroism. The now is the fact that I am master, master of the possible, master of grasping the possible. Death is never now

(TA, 71/167). To die is to return to the state of irresponsibility; "the simple way out of all the little brick dead ends we scratch our nails against [...] where the burden, the terrifying hellish weight of self-responsibility [...] is lifted" (Plath 2000, 149-150). It marks a reversal of the subject's activity into passivity—Macbeth's passivity when there is no longer hope, when he is finally confronted with Macduff, the man not of woman born, the one, according to the witches' prediction, who will bring him to his end: "I'll not fight with thee" (TA, 73/168). However, prior to death there is always a last chance; this is what heroes seize, not death. *Spiro/spero* ("[I]f I breathe, I hope," TA, 73/169). And this is what Macbeth does seize: "... yet I will try the last." In reality, death is never seized or assumed, it comes. Nothingness is

impossible. Hamlet's words, "to be or the other person, elsewhere) is not a harmonious relationship of communion, but a relationship with a Mystery. And if the Other is truly like death, as Levinas insists here, it seems probable that the encounter with the Other will lead to the de-subjection or dissolution of the subject—the "end of mastery" (TA, 74/170), stripped of all semblance of initiative or agency.

Death and snatching a supreme mastery from out of the servitude of existence (TA, 73/169). The relationship with the other is thus a mystery that cannot be summed or grasped, but that alienates. But if death is the alienation of my existence, is it still my death? How can a being enter into relation with the other without allowing its very self to be crushed by the other? How can an existent as mortal persevere in its mastery?



cry. At that very moment Ivan Ilyich fell through and saw a light... it became clear to him that what had been oppressing him and would not leave him suddenly was vanishing at once—from two sides, ten sides, all sides...? And death? Where is it? He searched for the accustomed fear of death and could not find it. Where was death? What death? There was no fear because there was no death. Instead of death there was light" (Tolstoy 1981, 132–133). At that moment, after a long drawn out suffering and a desperate struggle against death, Ivan Ilyich's solitude has reached a crispation through which a relationship with the other became possible: for him, at that moment, the very moment of veiled revelation, death was over, there was no more death.

Does this mean that it is indeed possible to enter into a relation with the other without being annihilated by the other? After all, for Ivan Ilyich there might not have been any more death, but after he came to this realization, he still drew a last breath, and died in the middle of it, and died (*ibid.*, 134). This is the very problem of the preservation of the ego in *transcendence*. If the escape from solitude is meant to be something other than the absorption of the ego in the term towards which it is projected, and if, on the other hand, the subject cannot assume death as it assumes an object, how can this reconciliation between the ego and death come about (TA, 78/174)? If in the face of death one is no longer able to be able, how can one still remain a self before the event it announces? The pathos of suffering does not exist solely in the impossibility of fleeing existence, but also in the terror of leaving this relationship of light whose transcendence death announces. This is why Ivan Ilyich "struggled as a man condemned to death struggles in the hands of an executioner, knowing there is no escape. And he felt that with every minute, despite his efforts to resist, he was coming closer and closer to what terrified him" (Tolstoy 1981, 131). He realized that he was lost, that there was no return, that the end had come, the very end, and he began shouting: "I don't want it! I don't!" (*ibid.*). Three days of incessant screaming followed. He screamed with an "O" sound as in Edvard Munch's famous 1893 work, *The Scream*—described as a John-the-Baptist-like cry to an unprepared world, to unmindful minds, a solitary noise, which is both protest and prophecy (cf. Ronald Blythe's Introduction in Tolstoy 1981, 1–34).

This is the very reversal of the subject's activity into passivity, "the crying and sobbing toward which suffering is inverted. Where suffering attains its purity, where there is no longer anything between us and it, the supreme responsibility of this extreme assumption turns into supreme irresponsibility, into infamy. Sobbing is this, and precisely through this it announces death. To die is to return to the state of irresponsibility, to the infantile shaking of sobbing" (TA, 72/167). This is what Levinas refers to when he writes: "The relationship with the Other, the face-to-face with the Other, the encounter with a face that at once gives and conceals the Other [the veiled face], is the situation in which an event happens to a subject who does not assume it, who is utterly unable in this regard, but where nonetheless in a certain way it is in front of the subject" (TA, 78–79/175).

Like Hamlet we prefer the known existence to unknown existence, the adventure into which we have entered by hypostasis harbours our sole refuge against what is intolerable in that adventure. We want both to



be and to die, to escape irremissible responsibility and suffering through nothingness. In allowing death to be welcomed, as Ivan Ilyich is finally able to do, the ego retains—in the midst of an existence where an event happens to it—the freedom acquired by hypostasis. This is what Levinas calls the attempt to vanquish death, where the event happens and the subject, without welcoming it, as one welcomes a thing or object, faces up to that event. For Levinas, vanquishing death is then not a problem of eternal life, but rather to maintain, with the alterity of the event, a relationship that must still be personal.

The subject is able to face up to that event precisely by virtue of the veil: "...through the [veiled] face filters the obscure light coming from beyond the face, from what is *not yet*, from a future never future enough, more remote than the possible" (TA, 254–255/232–233). The functioning of the veil has a bearing on Levinas' distinction between the *holy*, which retains the separated *I's* "as-for-me," and the *sacred*, which annihilates the *I* who approaches it (TI, 77/49). The veiled face speaks, thereby establishing distance not contact. For if exteriority was not sufficiently "veiled" transcendence would collapse in immanence, or inversely, the same would be annihilated by the Other and there would be nothing that distinguishes the good infinite from the bad infinite. Without the veil the Good would have manifested itself to us in its full splendour thereby annihilating us on contact. But because the Good is good, that is, "purified of the violence of the sacred," *holy* and not sacred, "not numerous," the *I* that approaches the Other is miraculously preserved in transcendence (TI, 77/49).

This exposure to a shrouded disclosure is the encounter with exteriority. The veiled face marks the limit of the knowable—unassimilable, incomprehensible, invisible—while being the primary phenomenon of signification. Its translucence is premised on its very opacity. Exteriority is signifyingness itself—meaning expressed and bestowed, a new birth amidst death (TI, 262/239).

What Tolstoy's narrative illustrates and what Levinas reiterates in *Tolstaité et infini* is that when the ego-ist will is confronted with death, but a death ever future, it has time for the Other, and thus to recover meaning despite death. Death menaces power by suppressing distance (TI, 281/257). In life, we still have time: in death, the distance created by time is reduced to nothing. In the face of imminent death, in his hour of supreme suffering, Ivan Ilyich ceased to be free, and yet he managed to remain at a distance from his pain by his very consciousness. This situation where consciousness is deprived of all freedom of movement, and yet maintains a minimal distance from the present—this ultimate passivity, which nonetheless desperately turns into action and into hope, Levinas calls *patience*. In patience a disengagement within engagement is effected. Death, that has a hold on me, is not yet upon me; it continues to threaten from the impending future. In this extreme consciousness, where death no longer touches me, extreme passivity becomes extreme mastery (TI, 238–239/216–217).

Levinas thus postulates the possibility of an event in death, an event in no way anticipated or initiated by the subject. This event is a mystery because it cannot be grasped; it cannot enter into a present. The authentic future befalls us and lays hold of us (TA, 77/173). The Other as the future therefore remains exterior to us. Encountering the outside turns us inside out, like the fold—the inside of self as a



folding of the outside of the Other, the limit of what we can assume, grasp, or know—the limit or border as both contact and distance, as a relation without relation. The Other's entire being is constituted by its exteriority, or rather its alterity, for exteriority is a property of space and leads the subject back to itself through light. The relationship with the Other will never be a feat of grasping a possibility, and yet it makes possible an event in the midst of complete annihilation (TA, 75–76/171). On the brink of this mystery, which is death, in the face of imminent destruction, another possibility opens: a second beginning, "a new birth" (TA, 81/179). But how is it possible to begin anew in the face of complete obliteration? What is the difference between two instants that have between them the whole interval, the whole abyss, that separates the present and death, this margin at once both insignificant and infinite, where there is always room enough for hope? For Ivan Illich, the chasm between the present and the future was bridged by his son, i.e., through fecundity.

### Fecundity

### The future of the event explained

The future that death gives, the future of the event, is not yet time. In order for this future, which a human being cannot assume, to become an element of time, it must enter into a relationship with the present. This presence of the future in the present is not the feat of the subject alone, however. Time is accomplished in face of another, in the relation between humans (TA, 79/176). To understand this, one must realize that for Levinas beyond death and recovers also from its return to itself (TA, 253/231). It would be a situation in which the I bears itself be-  
 Here with Levinas is searching for a (TA, 90/191).  
 nas calls... the "victory over death" the transcendent event, what Levinas life can be constituted in the heart of rizon [*veil/border*] where a personal absence that is time. This is the horizon of the future, an absence of pure nothingness, but absence of the other; not the absence of the other with the Other is (TA, 81–82/180).  
 of time. Time is the relation with the If any mastery is to be found in passivity it would be the very embodiment of *power to be able* [*puvoir de pouvoir*]? virility of grasping the possible, the mastery in the human other than the lies in its passivity? Is there another be given a definition that somehow and initiative? How can the subject ship other than the subject's power-  
 What, then, is this personal relation- be personal.  
 event, a relationship that must still

the future is not buried in the bowels of a pre-existent eternity, where we would—with the passing of the present instant—come to lay hold of it. No, "[m]ore than the renewal of our moods and qualities, time is essentially a *new birth* (TA, 81/179, my emphasis).

Unlike Hannah Arendt's celebrated notion of a "second birth" (Arendt 1998, 176–177), however, the strangeness of the future of death does not leave the subject any initiative—the ego is absolutely passive and without initiative in the face of death. And yet this event consists in vanquishing death, which is not a question of eternal life but nevertheless a transcendence of mortality. Vanquishing death, as we have seen, consists in maintaining, with the alterity of the event, a relationship that must still







tural interval. Death is the irrational interval *par excellence*, not an obscure moment but precisely that moment of simultaneous transparency and opacity, the moment of veiled revelation, in which two inseparable acts of (de-)subjectivation occur simultaneously. De-subjectivation itself becomes an act of subjectivation: mortality makes me what I am and makes me different than what I up until now conceived myself to be. This split or doubling is captured in Epicurus' adage: "When I am, death is not; and when death is, I am not." And yet, as Levinas points out, I precisely am—for the first time—in death. Or rather, in the encounter with the Other, which is my death and the act of vanquishing death at the same time. This essential heterogeneity, what divides me from within and thereby makes me what I am, is the logic of the interval, the irrational interval of death. This is *the* form of difference that sustains identity (subjectivity, interiority), and identity in Levinas, as we know, is premised on difference. I am through the Other, and the Other is nothing more than death. Death is the Other *par excellence*. And while the ego is preserved in transcendence, the incommensurable division announced by death produces divergent series—the discontinuity of generations, which can never be resolved into a synthetic whole. The ego is preserved but changed irrevocably. This is the very power of falsification (or fecundity) where difference is precisely no longer subsumed by identity and a being is alienated from what it was in and through this encounter with the Infinite. Fecundity institutes infinite being, that is, ever recommencing as other while remaining self. In Levinas, as in Deleuze, it is time's undoing of "truth." It is precisely this undoing of "truth" that resurrects the past pardoned and institutes the fu-

ture by engendering the child. This exceptional event of trans-substantiation is where difference as a force of annihilation becomes difference as a force of becoming.

Ultimately, what we find in Levinas is a yes-saying to time and death. It is being for death not in anticipation and anxiety but in patience. "To be *for* a time that would be without me, *for* a time after my time" is to affirm—without resentment—"the passage to the time of the other" (CCP, 92). It is to acknowledge, as Nietzsche does, that "some are born posthumously" (cf. Kantor 1996, 42-43).