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Alterity and the Limit: A Heterological Ontology.

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to the Graduate School, University of Warwick,
in completion of the requirements of his doctoral research.

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Contents.

Key to Frequent References.

Kant

CPR   = *Critique of Pure Reason.*

CPrR = *Critique of Practical Reason.*

CJ   = *Critique of Judgement.*

Jaspers

PI   = *Philosophy*, Vol 1.

PII   = *Philosophy*, Vol 2.

Buber

IT   = *I and Thou.*

D   = "Dialogue." (In *Between Man and Man.*)

Levinas

TI   = *Totality and Infinity.*

TT   = "Totality and Totalization." (In *Alterity and Transcendence.*)

PT   = "Philosophy and Transcendence." (In *Alterity and Transcendence.*)

PInf. = "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity." (In Peperzak, *To the Other.*)

Additional references by author name: please see Bibliography.

Introduction.

Someone comes and says something. Without really needing to think, I understand what is said, refer it without difficulty to familiar codes, would assign meaning and intention confidently if questioned about them, and possibly I even reply. This situation of 'communication,' in its banality, is one in which nothing much happens: information may be transmitted, contact maintained, an order given and received, but nowhere is the established normality of language use or its associated 'forms of life' called into question.

Someone comes and says something. This time I do not quite understand, or am not entirely sure of having understood. Something in what is said or the manner of its saying jars, doesn't quite fit, seems perhaps to break a rule or transgress a norm, be it phonetic, grammatical, semantic, societal, para-linguistic, behavioural. Something appears to have been meant or intended, but I am less confident than in the first case about what exactly it is. In this situation, something *has* happened: an event ... .sometimes the 'mistake' or the non-compliance with the rule is less obvious, harder to identify and casts the rule's confidence into doubt. This momentary 'violence' is one in which an uncertainty opens up: maybe it isn't just that this utterance breaks the rules - maybe this follows *other* rules, and if it does, might not those rules aspire to replace my own? Maybe these rules are *better* rules? Or is this a tricky attempt to talk me into something?

Geoffrey Bennington.[1]

§1. *Boundary Situation.*

In the second of Bennington's cases, one discovers that one has run up against a boundary of sorts. Someone has come and spoken, but familiarity, understanding and recognition have failed; this someone appears to come from an ambiguous 'outside,' which now defines a boundary previously unnoticed. Previously, ordinary coping was sufficient to deal with such interactions as the first of Bennington's cases, for what was required was the routine application of given norms: conventions or rules of, for example, 'language use or form of life,' which occupy a certain level of determinateness and articulateness. They are close to the surface: if questioned, one can readily specify what rule is in effect and, in principle at least, an almanac could be written to cover the situation. But now someone has come who is not easily located 'inside' the domain of normalcy established by those norms. As Bennington reveals, this is an ambiguous situation, for what appears as a mistake or transgression may easily be in conformity with a different norm, albeit 'outside' of the present domain of normalcy, and which may itself be ambiguously related to the present domain. The boundary discovered here, and which is possibly

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[1] Bennington, *Legislations*. p.1.

under contention, lies between this 'outside' and what is 'inside.'

This ambiguity need not last long. There may be readily available another convention suitable for resolving it. For example, perhaps all that is required is a brief reference to the rules of grammar. In being identified as a determinate mistake relative to these rules, the speech of this person is now positioned *vis-à-vis* normalcy. Ironically, being identified as a violation, this errant speech is now readily comprehensible. Recognition of the other's 'mistake' enables one to assign meaning to their utterance: "Ah, what you meant to say was ... ." This other may also be assigned a definite status and relative position: ignorant, clumsy, perhaps too informal. What has happened to the boundary? It persists in a sense, but is superseded, re-located. It no longer lies between 'inside' and 'outside' but rather the outside has been moved 'in' in a sense, for it is now positioned relative to the domain of normalcy. The outside does not appear to position itself any longer, no longer contends the field nor claims territory. (And this perhaps even where the other person does not cease to behave strangely.) In being identified as an 'error,' it only serves to re-establish the ground for normalcy. Humour, for another example, may also serve to resolve the ambiguity. The other's errant speech may be identified as a joke that plays on convention. This too neutralizes and re-positions the violation: "Oh! You mean ... ah, ha, ha, ha ... ." And similarly the person's relative status is established: clever, witty, intimate. And again, the errant speech relinquishes its rights, for humour often enough exploits convention only to re-confirm it.[2]

What each of these cases appear to do is seek out a 'broader' normalcy to negotiate the conflict between the 'inside' and the 'outside.' Perhaps the original scenario was one of bureaucratic intercourse, a speech-performance situation regulated by customary utterances. When this 'other' comes and speaks otherwise than is customary, one may cope by broadening the context.

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[2]Of course, humour can be much more than this. The court jester exploits his license within constraints: he may speak otherwise than the king's minister, but must give careful attention to the boundary between jester and satirist.

By invoking grammatical rules, one may be able to reestablish procedure. By invoking the playfulness of casual interaction, a 'knowing' comprehension of the conventional is confirmed: "Ah, how clever ... Room 33 on your right, please." This broader context redraws the boundary so that both positions are incorporated in and related to a domain of normalcy. The boundary one discovered with some trepidation is now transcended, appropriated, understood. In the original moment, one occupied a sphere of determinate conventions, a localized, rule-governed pattern of interaction well-understood and fully explicable. When the violation occurs, the ordinary coping by which this sphere functions is suspended. The boundary encountered here thwarts the givenness of convention: it is now unclear where or how the rules should be applied. However, this sphere of convention is itself sited within a number of other spheres of convention and other norms on which it must also rely. One's office within the bureaucracy operates by a given set of procedures, but also relies on the conventions of natural language. Or perhaps one recognizes in the background a shared understanding of the stress and strain of ordinary life, alleviated by a sense of humour. By reference to a broader context, one may be able to reinstate the conventionality of the original sphere by reassigning the 'outside' which created the conflict to the neutralized status of 'common mistake' or 'playful *frisson.*' These positions are no longer 'outside' in an important sense. It is exactly by granting the conventionality of a set of norms that these positions are given their assignment, and situated at a certain defined distance from the centre. As remarked earlier, the irony here is that, once placed as a violation of certain rules, the confusing, possibly threatening, incident becomes entirely comprehensible, exactly by being identified as an 'abnormality,' albeit a 'normal' abnormality. Positioned relative to the norm, it no longer issues a serious challenge.

Consider another case: "No, I am not joking with you. I am an officer of the Law. I have a warrant for search and seizure." This time it is not open that one should proceed further with efforts to neutralize the interaction: one has oneself been neutralized. The broader context has been invoked against one and one is forced to take up assigned positions: co-operative, unco-

operative. Now the 'outsider' does claim territory, and his/her claim supercedes even the most basic privilege of one's office. "Let me call my superior ... ": but even this act, appropriate to one's position, cannot serve to regain any ground, for perhaps it was already implicitly ordered by the presence of this 'outsider,' or at best, only forestalls the inevitable lapse of control. One has been moved 'inside': witness, suspect, 'held for questioning.' In this case, one has encountered an 'outside' that profoundly resists normalization and assimilation. The other person here appears as a transcendent being, imposing norms and rules from 'outside' one's domain. One's privilege is struck down: one's domain of normalcy and its claim to territory have met their end at the boundary of this abnormal situation of "judicial action." The boundary one originally sought to neutralize has revealed itself as a genuine limit to one's normalization. One founders here, perhaps casting about for ways, however small, to introduce familiarity and routine back into the situation, or perhaps stuttering mutely in the grip of foreign directives.

The spatial metaphor exploited here, 'inside' and 'outside,' is an attempt to capture a sense of the localness of different 'domains of normalcy,' this last term itself an attempt to capture the sense in which the conduct of meaningful interaction relies on given norms which are in some degree determinate and articulable. 'Ordinary coping' takes place around a centre of routine application of norms, which enable comprehension, anticipations, and action. The 'inside' above refers to the relative position of behaviour and speech in respect of this centre. A domain of normalcy authorizes some behaviour and speech, and typically assigns different values to others, depending on their lack of consistency with the norm or inappropriateness for that domain. The 'localness' of a given domain establishes boundaries which are often taken implicitly: a certain domain covers only certain situations and cases, and to deal with others, other domains must be invoked. Hence, the possibility of this 'inside' coming to be faced with an 'outside' – the boundaries of a given domain *vis-à-vis* another domain may be uncertainly related in a given situation: which domain governs this situation? Initially at least, the 'outside' is then simply face-value inconsistency with the central norms of a given domain, and may develop in a variety of ways.

The 'ambiguity' that can arise however briefly in these situations concerns the status of the boundary that apparently lies between this inside and outside, where exactly it falls and what authorizations or disempowerments will result when it is established.

Resolution of this ambiguity, one way of further developing the status of the 'outside,' may take the first course described above, that of a 'normalization of the outside.' In the cases of the grammatical mistake and the little joke, the initial ambiguity was immediately transformed by a move into a broader context, which identified these interactions as 'mistake' and 'joke' and served to reinstate the normalcy of bureaucratic procedure. The boundary in this case is superceded in that what divided two positions is now 'viewed from above,' so to speak, and from this vantage point, this division is resolved by relating the two positions on a common field (the grammar of a natural language or the role of humour in human life) and specifying the relations between them. What has been modelled in this case is in essence a relation between the conditioned and its condition, for the resolutions here have depended on taking a relatively determinate local set of rules (conditioned), in conflict with something 'not well-formed' by its standards, and relating them to a broader, determining and relatively indeterminate context (condition). 'Normal' thought achieves its status in being determined and bounded by certain conditions which establish its possibility or justification. But in order for this domain of normalcy to function, it must be possible to think these conditions of possibility - thought must be rule-governed in the sense of 'able to follow a rule' rather than merely 'subject to a rule.' Hence, 'normal' thought is situated within a greater space of intelligibility, to again use a spatial metaphor, not strictly determined by those conditions but somehow comprehensible. However, the thought that thinks these conditions seems not to be identical with the thought bounded by them, for, in so thinking, it crosses the boundary into this greater reflective space. Thus we are faced with two different senses of 'thinking': 'normal' or determinately 'bounded' thought and what is more broadly 'thinkable.' These two states of thought may perhaps be distinguished into what is *cognizable* and what is *intelligible*. The 'cognizable' designates the sense of meaningful

thought determined by local, set conditions, while the 'intelligible' refers to that broader sense of meaningfulness in which reflection upon the conditions of thought becomes possible (even while the conditions of its intelligibility are yet undetermined, and though in principle, it may itself be related to a still-broader context of meaning). It would seem to be a condition of possibility for thought (in any relevant sense of that term) that it bear this structure, a determining relation between the thought and the thinkable.

To illustrate, consider a computation machine, made possible by a set of principles, its operating system, which specify what is possible as a computation for it. Such a machine has a clearly defined 'normal' state, in which its operations proceed unproblematically. Perhaps in a sense it even has an experience of its limits: it can encounter the incomputable, either a computation undecidable within its operating system or an infinite computation, which will jam the machine – it has reached a limit to its normal operation. Not only particular instances of the incomputable lie outside its domain of normal operation, but also its own operating system, because of its different logical status from any particular computation. The machine can neither cope with the incomputable (unless seizure be deemed coping) nor with the status of its operating system. Yet both the inner workings of this system and the operating system itself are within the grasp of the programmer or operator. The incomputable that caused the computation machine to fail can be handled with little difficulty by this person: recognizing the undecidability or the potential infinity of a computation, the operator can choose to simply let the procedure drop. Yet this is not arbitrary even though the decision in not 'computable' from the standpoint of the operating system, and it even makes quite good sense to do so, by reference perhaps to norms of 'productive' and 'non-productive' use of one's time. The operating system is thoroughly bounded and necessarily so to do its work, but the operator must call upon a broader sense of 'computability' to do his.

To think as a rational being, and not as a computation machine, seems to require a certain

capacity to move fluidly through different 'domains of normalcy,' to judge the applicability of rules and to suspend their use occasionally in the interest of superior rules. One can give the name 'transcending' to this thinking that copes by thinking (in the broader, less determinate sense) the conditions of thought (in the localized, determinate sense). Thought transcends in crossing into the greater reflective space, in which it is possible to cope with conflicts between a given local 'normal' thought and its outside. It is by means of this transcending thinking that this 'border dispute' may be resolved. Thus, in spite of its august name, this transcending must be an everyday occurrence, it is part of ordinary coping, and indeed is as much involved in normal applications of rules as in overcoming conflict. Transcending here is a means of assimilating the 'outside' and rendering it 'inside.' But one may wonder whether this is really all there is to be said. Do not the notions of the boundary, the greater reflective space lying beyond it, and the transcending movement of thought raise further issues? So far as has yet been described, transcending is merely 'logical' or 'formal' transcending. The transcending of boundaries here presents no real philosophical problem, for the thought that transcends is situated as much in the 'outside' as it is in the 'inside' in the cases described. Perhaps the implicit supposition has even been that in principle there is no 'outside' that cannot be assimilated, that there is no genuine 'outside' but rather all is ultimately 'inside.'

At this point one must recall the second case discussed above, for in that case a somewhat different result occurred. A limit to the 'inside' was encountered in an 'outside' that resisted assimilation. In this instance, the 'outside' impressed itself with a force that neutralized and normalized in accord with its own rules. The boundary, which in principle it was possible to overcome, has revealed itself as a 'limit' to normalization, a point at which the territorial claims of the 'inside' are challenged by counter-claims from without. Unlike the previous case, in which the centrality of the norm re-positioned the outside relative to itself, in this case, the 'positioning' is itself external, oriented in itself from outside, and not open to re-positioning. Previously it was by assigning the condition to the conditioned that one rendered situations

comprehensible, but what can one make of this conditioning by a condition that escapes one's thought? Still, even in this second case, there is some form of recognition taking place: what forces one to recognize the claims put forward by the outside? Why does normalization not simply exert itself to overcome the resistance of the outside? It is possible that there is no genuine recognition happening here, that there is only submission to external force or victory over it. But if recognition was genuine here, it would involve another transcending, though one that is problematic. One's attempted move into a greater reflective space is repelled here - how is such transcending possible? This sense of recognition does not involve assimilation to the inside - what is the function of such transcending? But on the other hand, the situation described above is itself quite normal: for the officer of the Law, it is thoroughly rule-governed by a set of explicit norms, entirely understood and routine. This is a fault of the example. One may in fact be unfamiliar with the rules and norms followed in the course of executing a warrant, but in principle one could come to know them and even exercise them, of course, by becoming oneself an officer. But should this example be rejected, the question still remains: what would it mean, if meaningful at all, to encounter a genuine 'outside?' What mode of thought is adequate to think its difference?

§2. *Transcendentalism.*

We have exploited Bennington's illustration, which is put to perhaps different use in his own work, to reveal the origin and situation of a certain concern for the 'outside,' which may be captured as the 'problem of *alterity.*' Alterity in this case would be the genuineness of the outside, the resistance it offers to assimilation or the force of its imposition, and the status of the boundary which does not permit itself to be readily superceded. The problem which concerns us here is whether such alterity exists, what is the nature of its peculiar force and in what way it may be experienced. With this last question, of the peculiar experience of alterity, the problem also

becomes one of transcendence. If we have been justified so far in describing (at least very generally) thought as a transcending movement between domains of comparatively determinate norms, all of which are ultimately 'inside' and only relatively 'outside,' one's possibility of and ability for grasping alterity seem to propose a problematic sense of transcending, one of an essentially different character than so far described. What is this transcending, which for the sake of argument we may designate as genuine transcending, and where is it situated? Our concern with alterity will inevitably lead us to the question of transcendence, but the peculiar focus here will be on the encounter with limits, for this issue lies at a conjunction/disjunction point between these other two. It is the status of the limit that determines the possibility of any encounter with alterity and the mode of a genuine grasp of it in transcending. Again, we have a question of the genuineness of limitation, which we may emphasize with the distinction between boundaries and limits. A boundary is the ambiguous experience of difference, which may upon probing reveal itself as merely relative, and easily superceded. Our question of the limit, however, is an attempt to enquire into the gap of difference which divides what is familiar from genuine alterity.

The problem of alterity has its roots in the problems of classical transcendentalism. The typical course of argument in transcendentalism has been to pursue issues of the determinacy of thought (the specificity of our cognition in objectifying or conceptualizing terms) into the relationship it has with what is not so determined, but determining for it. For example, we see this course followed in Kant's making the unity and determinacy of objective awareness conditional upon the formal subjectivity of the transcendental ego. Furthermore, it was also by establishing the limits of conceptuality that Kant's transcendental project was able to do its work. The distinction between the correct field of application of the categories and their transcendent use allows Kant not only to correct metaphysics, but to establish the possibility of formal science as well. Yet once the limits of conceptuality have been established, typical problems immediately crop up. Kant has shored up the status of determinate, principled cognition, but at the same time, raised

the question of the status of the thought by which one may be aware of the conditionality of such cognition, which is indeed the question of the status of Kant's own transcendental project. Kant, as we know, pursues this issue by means of an investigation into the possibility of judgement, where, in the third *Critique*, his project as a whole receives a new and radical cast.

Transcendental reflection, in Kant's project, is the means by which these subjective conditions are thought, and by which the limits of cognition may be discovered and assessed. 'Reflection' in this sense does not mean 'thought done at leisure,' but the concern with what is 'outside' the bounds of regular, 'normal' reasoning, and seeks to assess the way in which that reasoning may be principled. To do this, reflection cannot itself be unprincipled or arbitrary, yet clearly must transcend the specific conditions in question. Overall, the project of transcendentalism can be described as the effort to situate and specify the logic of reflection so far as possible. This should be easy in the ordinary case, and could hardly require a special project, as in the case of the computation machine above. Specifying the conditions of its operation presents no special problem at all, even if one has no knowledge of the workings of such a machine. The problem of course arises when one pursues this to the inevitable last step. The machine operates the way it does because of its program; the program can be understood because of the purpose the machine is intended to fulfil ; the purpose is comprehensible in terms of work that needs to be done in the Department of Computer Science; ... ; finally, one arrives at an answer that is little more of an explanation than 'it just is that way.' Is there anything beyond this blunt answer to be pursued? Are we left with brute fact or arbitrary choice as the final reflective step?

Once we have pushed reflection to its ultimate conclusion, we have reached the point at which what essentially escapes our thought can make its appearance, if at all. It is here we may have to face radical difference, from what is familiar, satisfying and intelligible. In pursuit of the conditions of thought, we may eventually be confronted with that which does not operate by even the most general sense of intelligibility. Thought may meet its brute 'other.' Reflection, if

pushed far enough, raises the problem of alterity.

§3. *The Work at Hand: Four Questions, Four Thinkers.*

Although we will turn to Kant for an account of his system, we will not be focussing narrowly or exclusively upon the transcendental method or its specific technical language. Rather in the course of the following investigations, we will be attempting to arrive at answers to four primary questions.

    1. *What is the nature of genuine limitation, as contrasted with boundaries?*

Here we shall concern ourselves with the most suitable means of capturing the limitedness and/or boundedness of thought. The argument will be in favour of a relevant sense in which thought can be said to be subject to and indeed dependent upon limiting conditions, even if merely relative ones, which subsequently give rise to the possibility of encountering alterity as an 'outside' to those limits.

    2. *What mode of thought or experience is adequate to appreciate the nature of limitation and subsequently, alterity?*

This question launches us into the problematic heart of our subject. As we have already argued, the simple recognition of a limit, if genuine, gives an indication of the transcending nature of thought, which may itself ultimately be discovered to be limited. Hence to ask about the adequacy of the thought that thinks limits is to probe into the nature of transcending, and if we wish to push the issue into the question of alterity, we must further probe the possibility of the genuineness of transcending. But the issue is further complicated by further questions that press

themselves: as foreshadowed in §1, the presence of alterity, in whatever mode it may be properly appreciated, must throw into question the status of our thought and experience. 'Normal' experience clearly cannot be a suitable mode for the appreciation of alterity; but then, how shall we think of whatever mode of experience is suitable? Is there a truly primordial experience possible, or is all experience subject to one's appropriation of the exterior? Let us tentatively term this mode of experience 'discovery,' as we pursue the enquiry into its character.

3. *What do we discover about alterity by regarding it through the problem of limitation?*

Continuing the above line of enquiry, we cannot avoid enquiring further into the character alterity presents to us. If in principle, alterity resists our normalizing, categorizing efforts to appropriate it, what is the character of that resistance? Because the presence of alterity may be expected to put in question the status of our thought or experience, we may properly think of alterity as a transformative force, an alter-ation[3] if you will, even though again tentatively. All terms may fail to avoid misleading connotations here, but we must attempt a characterization of this force of alterity.

4. *What recommendations for the practice of thinking may be derived from this investigation?*

If the experience with alterity throws the nature of thought and experience into question, we may attempt to put this positively by considering what practices of thinking constitute a suitable response to the presence of alterity. Our interest is in a thinking that is open to alterity, but if the nature of thinking is essentially bounded, straightforward prescriptions may not be appropriate or successful. These would perhaps involve us in the paradoxical effort to establish a domain of normalcy over what is extra-normal in itself. Still, we must enquire whether there is not yet

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[3]Though the term is used here with a meaning somewhat different than that given by Husserl.

something that can be regarded as an adequate response on this issue.

As may be evident from this sketch, the central issues here are not wholly distinguishable, but readily blend into each other. Consequently little effort will be spent to force them apart or use them as structural features of this document. Rather the organization of our treatment here will be focussed on studies of the four principal thinkers employed in this investigation: Immanuel Kant, Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas. In these studies, however, our four questions shall be put to our four thinkers, in search of ever-increasingly adequate answers. From Kant, we will take the model of classical transcendentalism, as mentioned. Kant also has important things to say about the discovery of thought's limits, esp. in his notion of the Sublime, and also, in his notion of respect for the moral law. From Jaspers, we take his notion of Limit-situations as an example again of another kind of discovery of limitation, and his notion of Existential Communication as a mode of thought that requires an openness to difference. Buber's work generally concerns the transcendence of mere subjectivity in the encounter with an Other. He will be found useful in a number of respects here: the contrast of the I-It and I-You attitudes parallels the contrast between bounded thought and thought that crosses boundaries; our responsibility in encounter with the 'You' models the openness appropriate to dealing with difference; and generally, Buber's notion of the 'interhuman' or 'between' provides a fruitful way of understanding the "greater reflective space" of intelligibility. Finally, Levinas provides a notion of the effective force of alterity in his notion of the Face and of the thought suitable to think alterity in his notion of the responsibility for the Other. More generally, Levinas is one of the most important contemporary thinkers to reinterpret the notions of transcendence and alterity.

In the work that follows, we shall move through three rough stages, which correspond to the three major parts of this essay. In Part I, we shall examine Kant's system to get a model of transcendentalism and the relations between the conditioned and the conditioning. Our particular

focus will be on the relations between the phenomenal and noumenal realms and the roles these play in the organization and systematicity of Kant's architectonic. In Part II, we shall pursue the issue of experiences of limitation, attempting to arrive at a more general characterization of how these are possible and what form they might take. Part III will probe into the 'other' side of the limit, to enquire how such otherness might be thought or experienced, and what this might mean for our experience. We will begin with an examination of Jaspers's notion of Existential communication. Jaspers makes communication with an other self or another Existenz a critical part of self-being, such that the self can only become itself under the condition that it relate itself to an other. A very similar, if somewhat more developed, notion appears in the work of Martin Buber. Buber's famous word pairs, I-It and I-You, attempt to capture relatedness as an essential feature of these ways of being. This twofoldness of being is further developed in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, whose *Totality and Infinity* is an extensive working out of the logic of relation. For Levinas, the relation between the same and the other is the basic metaphysical fact that must be comprehended.

The overall claim argued here is that genuine limits and genuine alterity are not relative, nor merely coincidental features of reflective thinking, nor are they merely unintelligible brute events concerning which nothing relevant may be said or done. Rather, that reflection is essentially limited, essentially divided. The relation 'Inside'-'Outside,' or Interiority-Exteriority, or Sameness-Difference, or Self-Other, as we will see, is the primary metaphysical feature of the thinkable.

Part I: Model of Problem of Transcendence.

Analysis of the relations between the phenomenal and the noumenal in Kant's system.[4]

§4. *Kant: The Supersensible*.

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not merely conjecture them and seek them as though obscured in darkness or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon: I see them before me, and I associate them directly with the consciousness of my own existence. The former begins at the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and it broadens the connection in which I stand into an unbounded magnitude of worlds beyond worlds and systems of systems and into the limitless times of their periodic motion, their beginning and their continuance. The latter begins at my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity but which is comprehensible only to the understanding -- a world with which I recognize myself as existing in a universal and necessary (and not only, as in the first case, contingent) connection, and thereby also in connection with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an animal creature, which must give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came, the matter which is for a little time provided with vital force, we know not how. The latter, on the contrary, infinitely raises my worth as that of an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals a life independent of all animality and even of the whole world of sense -- at least so far as it may be inferred from the purposive destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination which is not restricted to the conditions and limits of this life but reaches into the infinite.[5]

In the above passage, the two pinnacles of experience for Kant, the vault of the heavens and the moral law, are set in relation to each other and to the subject. In the image of the starry heavens, we have a representation of the totality of the sensible that transcends the limited contingency of particular existence. In the sublimity of the heavens, I grasp my situation in a more comprehensive way than by my ordinary consciousness. In moral experience, I am aware that my situation is not one of unintelligible contingency but rather my intelligence and the sensible world belong together and exist in harmony. By these relations, the subject is 'situated,' its point of view is established and the peculiar shape of its knowledge set. Through direct apprehension ("I do not merely conjecture them ... I see them before me ... ") of both poles, the subject occupies an intermediate position between two realms, the sensible and the supersensible. Related to the sensible realm, the subject is contingently positioned in the vastness of the natural

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[4]For our purposes here, the terms 'phenomenal/noumenal' and 'sensible/supersensible' will be used interchangeably.

[5]*CPrR.*, Conclusion.

world and integrated into its system of natural law. But as related to the supersensible, the subject necessarily occupies a world of "true infinity," and is free of these conditions. Each pole is of itself exclusive: the sensible and the supersensible delimit each other. Yet the unity of the subject's situation requires a relation between these poles, which brings about a certain shift in the essential quality of the subject, making the total intelligibility of its situation and the destination of its existence recognizable.

Kant evidently considered some form of exteriority an essential part of his system, for the noumenal is neither finally subsumed nor eliminated in the completed system. The noumenal is negatively demonstrated by theoretical reason but positively required by practical reason, such that, given the priority Kant ascribes to the ethical, any position that is practically necessary must be theoretically assumed. Yet Kant's quest for a total system of the faculties does not result in a faculty of noumenal apprehension that could resolve the imbalance between practical and theoretical reason. On the one hand, the noumenal is necessary simply as the outside of the system of knowledge, produced by the constitutive limits of knowledge. On the other hand, reflection on the limits of sensibility requires a meaningful contrast with the noumenal. If so, in what way is the noumenal 'representable' within the limits of sense? Does Kant isolate particular experiences as 'of the noumenal?' Hence, the overall question: if it is not incorporated into the completed system, what is the role of the noumenal in a finished system of reason?

Kant's system must be analyzed to develop a preliminary understanding of the relationship between a limited point of view and the unlimited noumenal. Thus, the two tasks of our analysis are:

> *One*, in Part I, to examine the role of the noumenal in the Kantian system to show how both limitation and the unlimited are necessary to complete the system of faculties. –
> *Two*, in Part II, to identify the moments in which the noumenal is 'experienced,' in

sublimity and respect for the moral law.

A significant step towards these objectives will be an examination of the notion of judgement, and its role in completing the Kantian system in the Third Critique. As can be seen in *The Critique of Judgement*, the notion of the noumenal seems to provide leeway for the mediation of judgment, through which the understanding and reason are brought into relation. Through the regulation of the principle of judgment, which directs the understanding beyond sensibility toward the rational totality of intelligible experience, the faculties and their objects are unified in a comprehensive whole. The completion of the system is made possible by the principle of reflective judgment, in which the progress of sensibility requires the supposition of a finality or purposiveness external to it, but, since finality also relates to the notion of an end, such as can only be formed by reason, it therefore establishes relations between the interior and the exterior of the limits of understanding. But in the total system, these limits are maintained along with the essential distinction between the theoretical and the practical, thus supporting an overall relatedness in the system.

The steps toward these goals in the following are: in §5, the notions of freedom, immortality and God as they appear in Kant's moral philosophy are examined to demonstrate the reciprocal implication of the practical and theoretical domains. The conflict between what is theoretically required in the practical interest and what is demonstrable within theoretical limits brings into focus the problem of the third *Critique*, and a discussion of the notion of purposiveness in §6 shows how the faculty of judgment provides a mediating link between these otherwise exclusive domains and a basis for their unity. An *Afterword* comparison with Deleuze's interpretation of Kant's architectonic illuminates further points of interest to the present project.

§5. *Practical Reason and the Limits of Cognition.*

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant seeks to demonstrate that pure reason is in and of itself practical, that is, sufficient by itself to motivate human action. For if pure reason alone can determine the will, then there are practical laws, and not mere rules of prudence or instrumentality.[6] He seems to establish this through the doctrine of the Fact of Reason, which holds that the most basic operations of human reason reveal an awareness of moral authority over human action. "The consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason ... the sole fact of pure reason, by which it proclaims itself as originating law."[7] From the fact that human beings recognize the authority of moral law, a purely formal and purely rational law, it seems to follow that pure reason is practical. But in order that the human will respond to such a determinant, it must itself be capable of pure formal determination. Hence Kant must account for the will which could respond to the moral law, and for the sort of effect that pure reason may have in originating its obligation. The first problem is examined most immediately following, in the notion of the free will, but the second will not be addressed until the Part II discussion of respect.

As Kant argues in "The Principles of Pure Practical Reason," the notion of determination purely by the form of a law and the notion of a will not subject to material determination, yet determinable, reciprocally imply each other, but since we can have no theoretical knowledge of such a will, our first knowledge of their relationship must come from the law.[8] The moral law implies and requires the free will. Though reason certainly is not the sole determinant of the human will, if there is to be any objective, obligatory moral law, it is necessary that pure practical reason contain a ground sufficient to determine the will.[9] For if there were only empirical or material determinants, there could at best be only empirical universality and conditional

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[6]*CPrR.* Analytic., §1 Remark.
[7]*CPrR.* Analytic., §7 Remark
[8]*CPrR.* Analytic., §5,6, Remark.
[9]*CPrR.* Analytic., §1 Remark.

obligation. Only conditional laws can be derived from material determinants, for they presuppose the inclination and ability to fulfil them and therefore, must take the form "if this end is desired, then perform that action." If a person lacks either desire for the end or ability to perform the action, for them the law is void. Thus, the greatest universality such a law could achieve would be in the discovery that all known persons possessed both the inclination and ability to be subject to the law. Still, it would never result in any necessary, obligatory rules of conduct, but only in prudential rules of conduct. Given material conditions alone, the greatest force such law could have would be that of advice.[10] Therefore, if there is to be universally obliging law, rather than mere subjective maxims, the will must be determinable otherwise than by material conditions. When all material conditions, including the so-called higher conditions of love of humanity and pursuit of happiness, are removed, there remain only formal conditions, or the determination of the will by the form of the law alone.[11] But the form of the law can only be thought by reason, and thus is an unconditional determinant and independent of the phenomenal law of determination, which is natural causality. Therefore, the will that is capable of determination by formal conditions must also be independent of natural causation and determinable unconditionally. The notion of an unconditioned cause may be found in the Third Antinomy, and though theoretically empty there, it can here be given positive content by the moral law, as unconditional determination by its form alone. Taken together, these are the negative and positive senses of freedom of the will. The notion of a free, unconditionally-determinable will is possible only if it is conceived as noumenal.[12] Thus the moral law implies the existence of an intelligible noumenal realm.

The idea of the free will is in effect the concept of cause applied to the noumenal realm, though only in a practical application, which is exhibited concretely in the fact of moral intentions and maxims, since it is theoretically empty. However this connection of the sensible and the

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[10] *CPrR.* Analytic., §2, 3 Remark II, 8.

[11] *CPrR.* Analytic., §4, 8 Remark II.

[12] *CPrR.* Analytic., Deduction.

supersensible opens the way for the discovery of other connections, though only in the realm of the practical.[13] Indeed, the moral law must postulate two further concepts: the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. For reason, in its pursuit of totality, leads not only to the unconditioned determining ground of the will, but also to the unconditioned totality of the object of pure practical reason, the highest good, over and above subordinate goods.[14] The highest good is the *supreme* and *perfect* good, that is, virtue, the worthiness to be happy, combined with a happiness apportioned to that worthiness. Since, in their combination in the concept of the highest good, the two terms must be related as ground and consequence, either the pursuit of happiness results in virtue or the pursuit of virtue results in happiness. If this relation were analytic, the pursuit of virtue and the pursuit of happiness would be identical, and since the pursuit of happiness is materially determined, while the pursuit of virtue is formally determined, the two are clearly distinct, and their relation must be synthetic, and if purely practical, synthetic *a priori*.[15]

However, in considering under what conditions this synthesis would be practically possible, an antinomy arises. There are two possibilities for the synthetic combination of virtue and happiness in the highest good, and both seem impossible. If the desire for happiness were the motive to maxims of virtue, virtue would be impossible, since happiness, as materially conditioned, cannot be a moral determinant of the will at all. If, on the other hand, obedience to virtue were the cause of happiness, the combination would be impossible, since the moral intent of the will has no natural causal force with which to effect happiness.[16] But this antinomy takes into account only existence in the world of sense. The combination of virtue and happiness may be contingent in the system of nature, but given the noumenal existence of the will, moral intentions could be the necessary cause of happiness as an effect in the sensible world. Thus, it

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[13]*CPrR.* Analytic., Right.

[14]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter I.

[15]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter II.

[16]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter II., I Antinomy.

could be possible that obedience to virtue be the cause of happiness, while since the conditioned may have no effect on the unconditioned, that the desire for happiness be the motive to maxims of virtue is impossible in any case.[17]

Yet even given this possibility, the necessity of the connection between noumenal moral intentions and happiness in the system of nature remains dependent on further conditions. First, the achievement of the highest good is conditional on the complete fitness of the intentions to the moral law. Perfect happiness depends on perfect worthiness for happiness, or virtue. Such a state would be holiness, and this would be unattainable for a creature of the world of sense. But since the moral law commands the promotion of the highest good, such complete fitness of intentions must be possible, or else the moral law is incoherent. This fitness would be attainable, if we could assume an endless progress towards perfection, which, since it is practically necessary, we must assume. This in turn would require the infinitely enduring existence of the personality of a given rational being, or the immortality of the soul.[18]

Second, even if virtue is possible in eternity, that it should promote happiness in accord with merit is still dependent on the existence of some connection between the two in the world of sense. For happiness depends on the harmony of nature with human ends, that is, that the conditions permitting the realization of desires exist. But the fulfilment of the moral law requires only the harmony of the will with itself, quite independent of any natural conditions. But this connection is necessary for the promotion of the highest good, and must be postulated as necessary. Therefore, we must also suppose the existence of a supreme cause of nature as the ground of the agreement of nature not only with moral action, but with moral intentions, and as such, the supreme cause must possess a causality corresponding to moral intention, that is, intelligence and personality. That cause would be called God.[19] Thus, if the highest good is to

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[17]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter II., II Solution.

[18]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter II., IV Immortality.

[19]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter II., V Existence of God.

be attainable and the moral law meaningful, it is practically necessary to assume the immortality of the soul and the existence of God as an order of nature harmonizing virtue and happiness.

As related above, the supersensible appears in the *Critique of Practical Reason* in two ways: the notion of an unconditioned causation required by the moral law and the notions of a supersensible existence and order required by the highest good, the object of the pure will. Since reason is progressive in its tendency to seek the totality of conditions, inevitably leading it into the unconditional, care must be taken to prevent the illusions that arise from the application of ideas of totality to phenomena as if they were noumena. Therefore the theoretical and the practical use of the cognitive faculties must be separated and with them, the sensible and the supersensible.[20] However, practical reason requires *a priori* principles which are bound up with certain theoretical positions that cannot be supported by theoretical reason. The interest of practical reason, the principle under which the exercise of the faculty may be advanced, must take precedence over the theoretical, since given its particular limitations, theoretical reason would hobble the furtherance of knowledge, if allowed to dominate the entirety of the cognitive faculties.[21] Thus what theoretical positions are practically necessary must be assumed, and with them, the idea of the supersensible.

Thus at the end of the first two *Critiques*, reason and understanding are left in an ambiguous relation. The limits of theoretical knowledge preclude any judging of the supersensible, while the purity of will demanded by practical reason precludes its determination by sensible conditions. Yet while they are mutually limiting, the domain of each seems incomplete without the other. Theoretical reason alone is unable to decide the issues of the "Antinomies." Practical reason generates theoretically unknowable, yet thinkable ideas, which the understanding cannot eliminate and so must admit the possibility of a supersensible substrate underlying the sensible.

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[20]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter I.

[21]*CPrR.* Dialectic., Chapter II., III Primacy.

Practical reason, by strictly separating sensible determination from the pure formal determination required by moral law, requires the pure will to act independently of the series of natural causes. However, to be meaningful, the moral law must suppose the pure will to be effective in the sensible realm. Thus, the mutual limitation of the two faculties seems conceivable only by supposing a connection between them, thereby raising the problem of the connection of the sensible and the supersensible. This is the problem of the third *Critique*.

§6. *Judgement and Purposiveness.*

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant attempts to reconcile the division of philosophy into a theoretical and a practical part, corresponding to the *a priori* cognition of objects under *natural concepts* and under *concepts of freedom*, as carried out by means of the understanding on the one hand and the reason on the other.[22] Since the understanding represents its object through natural concepts as phenomenal, in intuition but not in itself, and the reason represents its object through concepts of freedom as noumenal, in itself but not in intuition, philosophy must be comprised of two separate realms of objects.[23] But as demonstrated in the "Third Antinomy" of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, the *a priori* law which the understanding prescribes to phenomena and the *a priori* principles by which reason directs the pure will do not limit each other's legislation over the territory of experience. Freedom of the will, described as the power of spontaneously beginning a series of appearances, or an unconditioned condition, must be considered possible in order that the series of natural causes be sufficiently determined *a priori*. For if natural causality were the only form of causality, every condition would itself necessarily be conditioned, leading to an infinite regress of conditions, and thus leaving the causality of every natural event incomplete, and even the origin of the world inconceivable.[24] This possibility can be justified if

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[22]*CJ.* Introduction., I.

[23]*CJ.* Introduction., II.

[24]*CPR.* A445/B473; A446/B474; A448-50/B476-78.

objects and their causality are considered in both their aspects, as appearance and intelligible reality, since intelligibly-acting subjects need not be considered subject to conditions of appearance, such as determination in time and antecedent conditionality, yet their actions may have effect in the world of appearance.[25] Thus far at least, determination of the will by freedom is compatible with determination by natural causality. However, though the understanding must presuppose the possibility of an unconditioned condition in the series of appearances, and reason requires the possibility of pure determination of the will, neither can provide theoretical knowledge of the supersensible. Theoretical knowledge cannot be furthered by the presuppositions of reason, for these can only be merely practical, and practical knowledge supplies no intuition to the cognitive faculties. But though the transition from concepts of nature to concepts of freedom is not possible by theoretical means, pure practical reason, through freedom, is assumed to have effect in the natural world. Freedom is meant to actualize in the world of sense purposes conceived by the reason. Therefore, the supersensible presupposed by theoretical cognition and that presupposed by the exercise of freedom must be unified in a ground which makes possible the transition between understanding and reason.[26]

The judgement fulfils its mediating role by supplying the concept of purposiveness. As the faculty of thinking the particular under the universal, judgement takes two forms, depending on whether the particular or the universal is given. If the universal is given, in the form of a principle, law or rule, the judgment, in this case *determinant*, employs that universal as its own law in subsuming the particular. In the case of the *reflective* judgement, the universal must be sought for the given particular.[27] Unlike the determinant judgment, which simply follows rules prescribed by the understanding, the reflective judgment requires some principle of its own, for the universal laws prescribed to nature by the understanding leave much undetermined at the level of particular empirical laws. For example, the universal law of nature, that every change

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[25]*CPR.* A538-41/B566-69.

[26]*CJ.* Introduction., II.

[27]*CJ.* Introduction., IV.

has a cause, supplies succession in time as the formal condition of the subsumption of determinations under it, yet empirical objects are determined in many other ways than by temporal succession. Particular examples of causation, though under the universal condition of time determination, are also determined by an infinite variety of particular empirical laws, which from the point of view of the understanding are contingent.[28] For the judgment to treat these particular empirical laws *as* law, rather than as *ad hoc* determinations, they must be thought as necessary according to a principle of the unity of the manifold supplied by the judgment, though for its own guidance alone. That principle, by which the variety of the objects of nature can be combined into a thoroughly connected experience, is the *purposiveness of nature*. In reflective judgment, nature must be represented as if there were a cognizable order at its basis, such as if the variety of its particular rules were unified by a ground supplied by an understanding.[29] Hence the transcendental principle of reflective judgment prescribes to cognition a systematic unity by which the particular and contingent in nature can be thought as purposive for the cognitive faculties, or ordered in accord with the needs of human understanding.[30]

The judgment must think the ultimate determinability of the concepts of nature in the notion of purposiveness, and through the notion of final purpose, universal natural law prescribed by the understanding can be seen to harmonize with the law of freedom prescribed by reason. For what the judgment ultimately thinks through the purposiveness of nature is the actuality of natural objects in accord with an intelligible order, yet also in accord with the law of nature. Freedom as causality can refer only to the ground which determines the causality of natural things to an effect in accord with natural law, but in harmony with the laws of reason. That effect would be the final purpose, which is presupposed in nature as its ultimate determinability in judgment. Thus the *a priori* principle of judgment makes possible the transition from the conformity to law of concepts of nature to the final purpose of concepts of freedom. The understanding must

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[28]*CJ.* Introduction., V.

[29]*CJ.* Introduction., IV.

[30]*CJ.* Introduction., V.

presuppose the supersensible, but leave it *undetermined*; the judgment, in the cognizable order of purposiveness, makes it *determinable by means of the intellectual faculty*; and reason, as practical law, *determines* it.[31]

To sum up, the unity of the sensible and the supersensible, and therefore the completion of the system, depends on the possibility of a principle of reflective judgement. The understanding legislates the conditions of objective theoretical knowledge, natural law, while reason legislates the conditions of universal practical determination of the will, the moral law. On the one hand, universal natural law leaves much undetermined at the level of particular empirical laws. On the other hand, moral law, through practical reason, must determine events in the phenomenal world unconditionally, yet cannot conflict with the requirement that phenomenal events be conditionally determined. If particular empirical laws are to be thought *as law*, they must be thought under a principle of unity, such as is supplied to nature by the understanding; that is, nature must be represented as if an intelligible order lay at its basis. If the free will has an effect on phenomenal events, its ground must be distinguished from, yet compatible with, efficient causality; that is, events must be thought as intelligibly and sensibly determined.

For the judgement to unify these separate faculties, the ultimate determinability of objects, to which both practical and theoretical reason must contribute, must be thought. In reflective judgement, the contingency of sensible intuition in subjective awareness must be raised to an intelligible necessity. This is possible only if the judgement acts according to a regulative principle requiring it to assume that a *purposiveness* in nature can be found, by which the variety and diversity of nature are ordered to promote the needs of the understanding. The ultimate determinability of an event, therefore, can be thought in the notion of its *final purpose*, through which the series of its sensible conditions can be completed by the addition of a spontaneous condition, the free will. What the judgement thinks through the notion of purposiveness is the

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[31]*CJ*. Introduction., IX.

actuality of the sensible world in accord with an intelligible order.

§7. *Afterword.* Deleuze and the Doctrine of Faculties.

In *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze presents an interpretation of Kant's architectonic in terms of the notions of the interests of reason and a system of ends. By developing a series of important Kantian notions, Deleuze is able to systematically relate the various moments of the *Critique* and show how they were meant to answer the broadest questions in Kant's philosophy. Here we will reproduce Deleuze's progression through the critical philosophy.

Deleuze begins his exposition by pointing out that the object of the transcendental method seems to be the discovery of the ends or interests of reason and of the means to realize those interests.[32] Reason is conceived by Kant to have ends in and of itself, and of which only it can judge. But the ends reason has in and of itself are really only the fulfilment of its own exercise, or the advancement of the rational faculties. The faculties such as Kant sees them are engaged in the synthesis of representations that have relations to objects, whether these be relations of agreement with the object (knowledge), relations of causation of the object (desire), and to the subject, where the representation of an object determines the subject to a state of pleasure or pain (feeling).[33] If reason has any interests in these, the faculties must be capable of higher forms, where their exercise legislates autonomously in the representation rather than being determined by the object or by some external source. In its higher form, a faculty synthesizes *a priori* the representation of properties that could not be discovered empirically in an object.[34] So the question of what the interests of reason are can be answered with the question of whether or not our faculties take a higher form (and in that form, over *what* they legislate), and the question as to

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[32]Deleuze, p.3.

[33]Deleuze, p.3.

[34]Deleuze, p.4.

the means of realizing these interests is the question of what makes a higher form of each faculty possible.

Now, there are as many kinds of rational interest, and as different in nature, as there are faculties, and there will be as many faculties as there are possible kinds of representations.[35] But for a faculty to take a higher form, so far as it legislates, it requires a *source* of representations. For example, the understanding legislates over the synthesis[36] of that which is presented in intuition, or the phenomenon (sensible empirical diversity). Phenomena become represented as objects in being synthesized together with a concept supplied by the understanding. Hence, acting in the speculative interest of reason (knowledge), the understanding is a source of objective representations, and in its higher form (synthesizing *a priori*), the source of the concept of the object in general. But the notion of faculty as source of representations gives us a second sense of faculty, not entirely co-extensive with the first sense, in which a faculty may be defined by the relations a given type of representation has to objects and to a subject. Hence we have three active faculties (synthesizing sources of representations): imagination, understanding and reason, and one passive source of *presentations* (of phenomena).[37]

The realization of an interest of reason, that, for instance, the faculty of knowledge can take a higher form, requires the discovery of a corresponding faculty in the sense of being a source of the representations necessary to ensure the higher form.[38] So in the case of the faculty of knowledge (first sense) where we seek in a representation a relation of agreement with its object, we must discover a source of the form of that type of representation. But as mentioned, the two senses of faculty are not co-extensive. The higher form of a faculty (first sense) requires a legislative power over representations, but it is not clear that the representations supplied by any

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[35]Deleuze, p.3.

[36]Where synthesis is the act of presenting a diversity in a unity.

[37]Deleuze, pp.7-8.

[38]Deleuze, p.9.

of the faculties (second sense) are adequate. Knowledge is not strictly sensibility, imagination, understanding or reason, but in some degree involves them all, and in specific relations. In fact, Deleuze argues that what ensures the higher form of the faculties (first sense) is a determinate arrangement of the faculties (second sense), wherein one faculty (second sense) legislates over and assigns to the others a subordinate but *original*[39] role.[40] So in the case of knowledge, the understanding legislates by means of the pure concepts of the understanding which it supplies to the imagination which synthesizes the phenomenon presented by sensibility in accord with these concepts. Reason uses these pure concepts to form Ideas which represent the totality of conditions under which concepts find application to the whole of experience, and so regulates the use of the concepts in forming an ultimate notion of empirical science. In its pure synthesis, the understanding, as a source, supplies the concept of the object in general (the unity of the pure concepts of the understanding), which provides the rule for the functioning of the subordinated faculties.[41] Thus the speculative interest of reason, knowledge as an agreement of representations with an object, is realized in the legislative dominance of the understanding over the other faculties, which brings about an *accord* among them, wherein imagination, reason, sensibility work in harmony with the understanding.

This accord among the faculties is what Kant calls a *sensus communis*, or common sense. The possibility of there being a common sense or harmony among the faculties makes the realization of the interests of reason possible.[42] Each faculty (second sense) must in its own original function also be capable of harmonizing with each of the other faculties in their functions, so as to produce a coherent representation. Indeed, any conflict among the faculties would be disastrous for the possibility of knowledge. Now, the arrangement of the faculties in the speculative interest (knowledge) forms what Deleuze refers to as a *determinate* accord, that is, an

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[39]I.e., a function endemic to that faculty.

[40]Deleuze, p.10.

[41]Deleuze, pp.15-20.

[42]Deleuze, p.21.

accord that is determined by the legislation of one of the faculties, as in the present case, the understanding. The faculty of desire, which also forms a determinate accord, fulfils the *practical* interest (the interest reason has in the possibility that pure practical reason may be itself a source of ends) in its higher form. In the faculty of desire, which is defined as the capacity to be the cause of an object by the representation of it (and in the higher form, by the representation of a pure form), reason legislates over the understanding, the imagination and sensibility. Reason supplies the pure form of obligation (the moral law) and the corollary Idea of free will as that capable of obedience to pure obligation. Understanding, in accord with these Ideas, plays two roles, that of judging the adequacy of our maxims to be practical law by comparing them with the universal law of sensible nature, and that of symbolizing the free will (which cannot be theoretically known) by the concept of cause. Essentially, the understanding supplies the notion of "existence under law," by analogy to which we apprehend the possibility of determining the will by the *a priori* representation of its object.[43] Of course, the notions of "law" in 'natural law' and in 'moral law' differ radically. Nevertheless, the moral law must be realized in the realm of nature, and be consistent with natural law. The role of imagination, then, is to symbolize sensible nature as fit for the realization of the moral Good, or the proportionality between sensible happiness and supersensible virtue (the intent to the obey moral law).[44] Working in harmony, the faculties under the legislation of reason form a *moral* common sense.

To ensure the interests of reason, such a determinate accord among the faculties cannot be contingent, but must itself be *a priori*. Universal knowledge and universal morality have their condition of communicability in this subjective accord of the faculties, and this universality can never be given in experience. But what is to be said of this *a priori* common sense? Can it be accepted as a brute fact, or does not the entire project of the Critique depend on discovering a principle of the accord? Deleuze suggests that a determinate accord among the faculties

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[43]Deleuze, pp.31-35.
[44]Deleuze, p.41.

presupposes the possibility of a *free and indeterminate* accord among them, such that each faculty operating *independently* harmonizes with the others in representing an object. [45] Kant's revolution was to ensure the correspondence of subjectivity and objectivity by giving one faculty legislative power over the others, but these faculties, like the various interests of reason, are different in nature.[46] In order for them to form a harmonious union under the legislation of one, it must be possible that they harmonize entirely freely in the first place. In this free accord, no one faculty legislates to the others, determining their role in representation, yet all faculties fulfil their endemic functions in a representation such that their employment corresponds with the others. Thus the determinate accord of the faculties in their legislative employment depends on the possibility of a free accord.

It follows from the above that in addition to the interests reason has in the objects of the understanding and practical reason, it also has an interest in the free accord of the faculties, though certainly not in the above sense of interest. This free accord cannot receive its possibility from a legislative faculty, to whose power certain objects are subject, for this would merely postpone the problem. If there is a faculty (first sense) associated with this free accord, it must not be constitutive of objects, but rather *heautonomous*, or legislating only over itself, and as such, express only the subjective conditions for the exercise of the faculties. Having seen understanding (second sense of faculty) legislating in the higher form of knowledge (first sense of faculty) in the first *Critique* and reason legislating in the higher form of desire in the second *Critique*, the anticipated move in the third *Critique* will be to pose the question of the relation between a higher form of *feeling* (remaining faculty in the first sense) and the imagination (remaining faculty in the second sense). However, at this point, the account is considerably complicated by Kant's introduction of the notion of *finality* or *purposiveness* and by his focus on the notion of reflective judgement, as it appears in two forms, *aesthetic* and *teleological*. But as

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[45]Deleuze, pp.7, 10.
[46]Deleuze, pp.13-14.

Deleuze shows, the introduction of the notion of finality here is entirely to the point and provides the basis for the account Kant needs of the ground of common sense in a free accord.

Kant finds a free and indeterminate accord among the faculties to be operative in the two forms of reflective judgement, in the aesthetic judging of the beautiful and the sublime[47] and in the teleological judging of means-ends relationships in nature.[48] In these two forms of reflection, the representation of an object, or rather some aspect of an object, determines a state of pleasure or pain in the subject. In their higher forms, Kant distinguishes these feelings from sensible attraction and repulsion and from intellectual inclination or disinclination, for both are concerned with the *existence* of their object, an object of sensation in the first case and an object of the will in the second.[49] If there is to be a higher form of feeling, it must be a pleasure (or pain) taken in the *a priori* representation of an object, not contingent upon the object's material presence or its anticipated realization.[50] Thus in judging an object to be beautiful, pleasure arises not from the existence of the object or any desire for it, but from the representation of the pure form of the object. This form however is not the general form of an intuition set by a concept of the understanding, but the particular form of the object's *composition* or *design*, as reflected by the imagination.[51] In the representation of the beautiful, the imagination reflects the form of a particular object by spontaneously originating "arbitrary forms of possible intuitions," independently of any concept of the understanding which would determine the representation by the form of an intuition. But this representation also relates to the understanding as the faculty of concepts in general, though only as these are undetermined and non-specific. In representing

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[47]This topic will be treated in somewhat greater detail in Part II.

[48]Judgement in general, for Kant, is the art of harmonizing the various interests of reason through the arrangement of the faculties in producing representations and can be considered an original faculty for this reason, though it is really never any one of the faculties or a faculty in itself, but always an arrangement of the faculties. The two forms of judgement in general, determinate and reflective, divide over whether this arrangement of the faculties is a determinate or a free accord. The object of the Third Critique then is show how determinate judgement is grounded in reflective judgement and to discover the principle of reflective judgement.

[49]Deleuze, p.46.

[50]Deleuze, p.46.

[51]Deleuze, pp.46-47.

beautiful forms, the freely reflecting imagination enters into accord with an indeterminate understanding, producing a higher form of pleasure.[52] Similarly, a higher form of pain arises from judging the sublime, wherein overwhelming natural phenomena strain the limits of the imagination by forcing it towards the representation of an Idea of totality, nature as a formless (indeterminate) whole. Reason and the imagination enter into a free accord when the imagination, taken beyond the limits of its capacity, comes to represent the inexpressibility of an Idea in nature. This free accord of the faculties forms an *aesthetic* common sense.

Aesthetic common sense differs from the previous two in being reflective, free, non-legislative and disinterested in its object *per se*. Such a common sense must be subjectively universal: that is, its communicability must be based on the necessary pleasure experienced by all subjects in judging the beautiful.[53] Since this cannot be guaranteed by the legislative authority of any given faculty, Deleuze argues that Kant needs another form of account of this sense, specifically, a *genesis* of the aesthetic sense.[54] This is most easily seen with respect to the sublime, in which an initial dissent among the faculties resolves into an accord. In judging the sublime, the imagination is strained in the attempt to represent a rational Idea of the totality of nature, which it inevitably fails to do, resulting in pain and discord. But confrontation with its own limits makes possible an accord with reason in the representation of the inaccessibility of the Idea. This accord reveals a deeper harmony of the faculties as "an indeterminate supersensible unity of the faculties," that all the faculties have a supersensible destiny.[55] This is also the conclusion of the genesis of the beautiful. The materials of nature (colour, sound, etc.) from which beautiful forms are produced relate to determinate concepts of the understanding but overwhelm these concepts by also symbolizing Ideas of reason. 'White' relates directly to the concept of colour, but also symbolically to the Idea of 'purity.' From this abundance of content, the concepts are expanded

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[52]Deleuze, p.49.

[53]Deleuze, p.48.

[54]Deleuze, pp.24, 50.

[55]Deleuze, p.51.

and become indeterminate, which removes from the imagination the limits imposed by determinate concepts and renders it free. This response to the presence of an Idea again indicates the supersensible unity of the faculties, or what Kant refers to as the "deepest part of the soul."[56]

Since no faculty legislates in aesthetic common sense, there is no interest of reason defined by the higher forms of feeling, though reason is interested in there being an aesthetic common sense. Because they are disinterested, the higher forms of feeling are never pleasure (or pain) taken in the object itself, but rather are taken in the harmonious exercise of the faculties.[57] Imagination, though it does not legislate here, relates to the faculty (first sense) of feeling in that its free reflection upon objects harmonizes with the other faculties and determines the subject to a state of feeling. The genesis of this harmony, it is claimed, reveals in some ambiguous way the supersensible destination of the faculties. But what is really reflected in the imagination is not something of the beautiful or sublime object, but rather something of the accord of the faculties and of their suitedness to each other, i.e. their *finality*. Finality describes an attunement between human reason and nature, a sense of them being constituted *as if* designed for each other; in the case of aesthetic experience, this is subjective finality, or *finality without an end*, as it has to do with a pure and subjective sense of designedness where we can ascribe no definite end pursued in the design. What is judged in the beautiful and the sublime is the object *so far as* it reflects the greatest total determination of the mind, where all the faculties spontaneously agree in the exercise of their own endemic functions in representing an object. But the harmony of nature and reason, however reflected and symbolized in aesthetic experience, can never be in itself a natural phenomenon, for the capacity of forming ends belongs to practical reason, and is beyond natural determination. In this sense, the free accord of the faculties indicates a supersensible destination: if the mind is to have this total determination, its unity must have a supersensible ground -- a *final end*, and the interests of reason must form a *system of ends*. The faculty of ends

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[56]Deleuze, pp.54-55.
[57]Deleuze, p.49.

is practical reason, and hence, the supersensible destination of the faculties is an end in accord with practical reason, or a *moral* end.

The interest of reason in the advance of the faculties leads to the notion of a greatest total determination of the mind as an end of reason, and this is possible if the interests of reason form a system of ends. But given that these interests are different in nature, legislating over different kinds of representations and involving different kinds of accords among the faculties, their advancement perhaps requires a systematic hierarchical plurality, over which one interest dominates to ensure the total interest of reason.[58] There are two interests proper (i.e. having objects), the speculative and the practical, and the interest of judgement in the subjective arrangement of the faculties. The speculative interest could not support any notion of a final end and would limit the interests of reason, and the interest of judgement in the accord of the faculties already is meant to serve as the basis of the interests of reason in general. Since it is served by the faculty of ends, desire, the practical interest already seems a likely candidate for the lead role in the advance of the interests of reason as a system of ends.[59] Thus the free accord, or the deepest part of the soul prepares for the highest, the dominance of practical reason or the finality of the moral.[60]

However, the ends formed by practical reason and the subjective finality reflected in aesthetic judgement are still very different in character. Reflection simply gives us the form of finality, in representing pure purposiveness, without being able to judge whether or not this tends to any definite end. Practical reason represents objects as ends and acts freely as their cause through its representations. But there is another form of reflection, teleological judgement, which does attempt to represent objects as if they were shaped to an end, though of course, it cannot posit this end as naturally existing, but must regulatively judge nature *as if* it w ere constituted in

[58]Deleuze, p.7.
[59]Deleuze, pp.43-45.
[60]Deleuze, p.56.

accord with an understanding *not our own.* This is objective finality. In other words, through the concept of *natural end,* teleological judgement aims toward an overall completion of the system of knowledge of nature; it seems to have as an ideal object the attunement of reason and nature.

This situation appears to be very similar to the antimony of practical reason. The notion of moral good, we have seen, requires an apportioning of happiness to virtue, but, happiness seems to be sensibly determined and virtue, practically determined. In order to ensure their apportioning, sense and reason would have to legislate over the same domain, but they have different domains. However they seem to apply over the same *territory,* that of experience. Moral satisfaction is not taken in the supersensible fact of the moral law, but in its realization in experience, in seeing moral purposes enacted in nature. For this to occur, it is necessary that natural causality and free causality, or the capacity to act in accord with ends, should act in harmony and not conflict. But this requires a mediating principle and at this point Kant introduces the notions of judgement and finality.

The discovery of an indeterminate notion of pure finality in aesthetic experience prepares us to form the concept of an end, defined as the representation of an effect as the motive of its cause.[61] There is of course no end sought in the beautiful object, but it supplies the form of finality which is presupposed in the concept of end. In the faculty of knowledge, the Ideas of reason had the regulative function of extending the unity and systematicity of the concepts of the understanding to an ideal limit. This unity of concepts however remains indeterminate without a similar unity of phenomena, which would approach the limit of the maximum unity in the greatest diversity. The diversity of phenomena, which accords only problematically with the most general unity of concepts, must be seen to fully agree with them in a final unity. This final unity is conceivable under the notion of a natural end, such that the concept of the object is the cause of its realization. The unity and diversity of nature required for the total determinability of knowledge

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[61]Deleuze, p.66.

are reconcilable in the natural end.[62]

Obviously however the application of the concept of natural end to nature is itself problematic, for the speculative interest is founded on the legislation of causality to the natural sphere as a motive force and the haphazard application of the notion of end would surely undermine this. The concept of natural end has two more or less relative applications. It can be applied externally to two objects, where the first is the cause of the second, to describe means-ends relations in nature more relatively. Thus with respect to pine forests as an end, sandy soil can be described relatively as a means, recognizing that pine forests are not an end in themselves. Or it can be applied internally to a single object, to describe its organization as founded on the idea of it as a whole. The first application must be subordinated to the second, for it is purely hypothetical and not observable objectively: hence the application of means-ends relations is confined to cases where the end is the organization of an organized being, or organism. But the internal application itself seems to refer to a kind of external application, since means-ends relations between two organisms in nature are conceivable. Carried to the full extent, the application of the concept of natural ends leads to the idea of nature as an organic whole.[63]

However, the concept of natural end is applied relatively and hypothetically -- it concerns only the possibility for such means-ends relations. For nature to form an organic whole, a *last end*, the unity of existence and an end, would be necessary. In other words, the concept of natural end can answer the question why things might take a given form, but the question why anything of that form exists must be answered by a last end. But the concept of a last end seems also to imply a 'last' last end, an existence not only unified with an end, but being that end in itself: this is the moral being of humanity, the end-in-itself of practical reason.[64] So the concept of natural end is ultimately relative to the practical destination of the faculties, mediating between nature

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[62]Deleuze, pp.61-62.
[63]Deleuze, pp.69-71.
[64]Deleuze, p.71.

and reason by providing the form under which nature can be thought in unity with moral purposes. This can only be a regulative employment in judgement however, for otherwise nature would be thought as constituted by practical reason. Rather the realization of the last end of nature, the unity of sensible and the supersensible, must be seen as possible in the practical activity of human reason. Practical reason requires the value of the rational agent as an end-in-itself, and the realization of the freedom that this agent possesses to actualize ends in the sensible world.[65] The last end of nature is the progressive constitution of nature in harmony with the moral realm as a system of ends, in what Kant calls History.

§8. *Concluding Remark.*

To recount, this survey of Kant's system of faculties has taken as its touchstone the question of the role of the noumenal in a system which limits relations of knowledge to the phenomenal. That question, it may be recalled, asks why the noumenal is not incorporated or eliminated in the completed system. The noumenal is exterior to relations of knowledge by definition yet Kant does all in his power to retain it and give it a place in his system, rather than introducing some indirect means of opening its domain to knowledge or showing how it is unnecessary to presuppose it. Though both are exclusive domains, the noumenal nevertheless is in such relation to the phenomenal that it requires theoretical positions not justifiable on phenomenal grounds. Thus the role of the noumenal should be interpreted as integral to the organization of Kant's system.

Following Gilles Deleuze in taking Kant's systematizing ambitions seriously, the special focus of this examination of the system of faculties has been the interrelation of these two exclusive domains required by the demands of unity and completeness of the system. Indeed the very

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[65]Deleuze, p.72.

nature of systematicity seems to require both external and internal relations among its components, rendering its ultimate completion by the elimination of the exterior impossible. By relating the noumenal and the phenomenal realms, aesthetic judgement provides an example of the movement within the system that requires relations among the essentially different interests of reason. This reveals the priority of the practical over the theoretical, and by this ordering of the interests of reason, makes it possible for those interests to form a system of ends, which ensure their mutual fulfilment. The different interests of reason represented by each faculty serve to unify their systematic relations and promote the use of each. The determinate accord of the faculties in the first and second *Critiques*, in which the promotion of the interest of reason depends on the legislative dominance of one of the faculties, gives way in the final *Critique* to a deeper free accord where none is dominant but the capacity for this free accord is itself the possibility of any determinate accord. The free harmony of the faculties in aesthetic judgment, Deleuze remarks, is the deepest aspect of the soul, though the highest aspect remains the practical interest, which subordinates the theoretical to the practical. The moral law, and man in his supersensible being, provides the final end of the system, a moral teleology by which systematic relations may be summed up.

Thus, the noumenal seems to perform two roles for Kant. First, as an intelligible ground of the phenomenal, it makes the completion of the understanding possible, through the notion of reflective judgement. The possibility of raising subjective particular awareness to objective universal knowledge requires the application of a rule strictly external to the understanding, that is, the purposiveness of nature. But second, because it must remain separate from the phenomenal to perform its first role, it makes possible the ordering of the system of faculties in terms of a moral destination. The movement through the entire system serves to organize it in terms of practical considerations, and in doing so, establishes the authority of the moral law. To return to the themes evoked at the beginning, Kant may be read along these lines to develop an account of a limited point of view, which is yet related to the exterior of its limits. In order for

the understanding to fulfil its function, a relation to an exterior purposiveness must be assumed, which serves to establish its limits while maintaining the essential difference defined by those limits, and in moving across this limit between the sensible and the supersensible, the subject can relate intelligibly to the destination of its existence.

In a way, this analysis reveals the progress within Kant's work from Enlightenment rationality to Romanticism. For in allowing for essentially different interests of reason, the interrelations of which systematize the faculties and orient them towards a projected unity and completeness, Kant does not totalize reason. This allows Kant to answer with a single reply the two charges of the Romantic critique of rationality, those of the conditionality of any rational order and of the necessity that such an order legitimatize itself by reference to some goal that escapes its own conditionality. For the unity and completeness of the system, its very systematicity, is possible by reference to the final totality of its determining conditions, the unconditioned, which while in itself unsystematizable, can regulate the system in terms of an ultimate goal. The unconditioned both conditions the rational order instantiated by the faculties and provides an exterior reference with respect to which it is possible to affirm their unity and completeness. Rather than incorporating the supersensible into the sensible or resolving their opposition in a higher faculty, their separation is used to complete the system.

Part II: Recognition of Limits.

§9. Boundary-Limit.

In the *Introduction*, we invoked an illustration from Geoffrey Bennington's book *Legislations* to highlight the experience of boundaries. Immediately however, it became pertinent to draw a distinction between 'boundaries' and 'limits.' A boundary was a merely relative interstice, bridgeable at will by an entity of sufficiently complex structure. The main feature of that structure was the organization of interaction between the entity and its world, or between it and other entities, by means of rule-governed practices. Further, these rule–governed practices could be seen to be organized into varying degrees of specificity or generality, depending on the scope of applicability of the rules that comprised them. We described these as 'domains of normalcy.' Because of the nature of its structure, one could expect such an entity to daily run up against boundaries between different domains, and regularly to be obliged to traverse boundaries by means of basic coping, moving to another level of generality in the course of negotiating the conflicts that might be met with. Disputes over the applicability of rules or practices often could be resolved, and understanding of or correction of the rules could be communicated, in this way.

The 'limit' which caught our attention was not evidently so relative. In this case, traversing from one domain to another was not fluidly done as an everyday matter at all, but rather one was met with a counterforce of resistance. At the limit, one was turned back, forced to retract efforts to claim some territory from the other side and normalize it. Perhaps being turned back at the border forced one to recognize one's own limited nature, that one was centred ultimately around domains of normalcy and that one approached the frontier with some peril. But if this was so, what was that experience of limitation? What made intelligible the notion of an 'outside' that bounded us 'in,' assuming that here we discovered any intelligibility at all? One cannot step 'outside' in this case, as one could at least relatively with boundaries, to gain a view point, so to

speak, from which to observe one's own boundedness. But surely, a grasp of one's limitations is implicitly a sense that in principle one can present a manifest for one's 'inside': if I distinguish myself from this other, I seem to imply a certain grasp on myself, a dominion over my domain. How should this be possible, indeed, how would it be possible to identify the centre of my normalcy itself, without some grasp on the limit? For my grasp on my domain may well require that I grasp with some refinement the differences between 'me' and 'not-me.' If one is unable to intelligibly chart one's own limits, which seems to suggest an ambiguous grasp on the outside, how can one talk intelligibly about the domain one occupies, or about where its centre should lie? The temptation to think we really must have escaped our limits may be strong here, but this should be resisted, for this could only mean that there can be no genuine limit. Rather, what we detect is perhaps a curious dynamism, a flexibility in the observation of our limits.

In any case, the topic of the present part is this: if we can locate a genuine experience of limitation, how are we to think it through? How can it turn out to be intelligible? Where in our experience should we situate this experience? What sense can we make of this dynamism that allows some grasp on the limit? If directly grasping the limit should raise more problems than it solves, are there indirect means of grasping limits? Both Immanuel Kant and Karl Jaspers offer us analyses of limit-experiences in their work. From Kant, we shall take the experience of the sublime and of respect for the moral law, and from Jaspers, his notion of limit-situations. However, before we can sensibly make use of Jaspers's notion of limit-situations, we will have to provide a more general introduction to his views. This will be done in §§ 12 and 13.

A. Kant: The Sublime and Respect for the Moral Law.

§10. *The Sublime.*

As we saw in Part I, for Kant, the judgement plays a unifying role with respect to the overall

system of the faculties. The judgement, however, does not merely unify reason and the understanding: at the same time, it separates and orders them. The act of judgement inserts the notion of purposive determinability between the undetermined of theoretical reason and determination by practical reason, making the transition between them possible. But this transition has its own inherent direction, from the understanding through judgement to reason, establishing an order among the faculties. It is in the act of judging the sublime that this ordering of the faculties can be most clearly seen. The characteristic feature of the sublime is a *movement* of the mind in judgment, from the faculty of sensible imagination to an idea of the supersensible and a faculty by which it may be comprehended. This movement, depending on whether it is referred through the imagination to the faculty of *cognition* or to the *desire*, divides the analytic into the *Mathematically Sublime* or the *Dynamically Sublime*.[66] These two forms accordingly treat of the representation of prodigious size or prodigious might, in nature or art.[67] In both cases, the analytic of the Sublime takes the general form of an attempt to compass the *boundless* which founders on the limits of the sensible faculties, but nevertheless occasions the discovery of greater faculties in which *boundlessness* is represented and its totality is made present to thought.[68] Thus the function of the sublime is to carry the mind beyond the sensible and the limits of sensibility to the presence of the supersensible in nature and human being. After discussing in succession the two forms of the sublime, the role of the sublime will be considered more generally.

The act of judging sublime magnitudes reveals the presence in the mind of an idea of the totality of Nature, and therefore a faculty adequate to its presentation. The estimation of magnitude relies on what Kant refers to as a fundamental measure, that is, a magnitude that can be grasped in a single intuition and employed by the imagination to represent larger magnitudes. As such, a fundamental measure is presupposed in the use of a set scale of units for mathematical

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[66]*CJ.* §24.

[67]*CJ.* §23.

[68]*CJ.* §23.

measurement, for although a magnitude may be stated exactly as a definite number of units, each unit itself must be given as a number of smaller units, and so on, *ad infinitum*, so that no definite notion of the magnitude can be arrived at purely by the use of numbers. Rather the appreciation of numerical units, as of all magnitude, depends on comparison with a tangible measure, something itself immediately appreciable. The size of a large building, for example, may be stated in terms of the average human height. However, when presented with prodigious magnitudes, the limitations of this aesthetical means of estimation are quickly revealed. Describing the scale of the galaxy in tangible units, for instance, would be futile, since the number of such units necessary would be prodigious, and appropriately large units would quickly exceed our grasp. For as Kant suggests, while the intuiting of a given measure for use in comparison presents no difficulty, at a certain point, there is a question whether a magnitude suitable for comparison to the prodigious can be meaningfully imagined.[69] Thus, the sublime, which Kant defines in the first instance as absolutely great, or great beyond comparison, exceeds the limits of sensuous presentation by our imaginative faculty.[70] Yet the imagination's efforts to comprehend the sublime must be directed to some standard, by which their failure is discovered and which therefore must be non-sensuous. That which is great beyond comparison is the infinite, of which a rational idea may be formed without contradiction, even though it cannot be presented in sensible intuition. Reason tends toward the presentation of a magnitude in a single intuition, for the idea is not limited to the means of sensuous presentation, but encompasses the totality of the thing, and therefore the supersensible, as the intelligible substrate of the world of sense.[71] Thus, in the effort to comprehend the sublime, a movement is generated toward the limits of sensibility, beyond them to the rational idea of totality, of Nature in itself, and on to Reason, as the faculty of the presentation of concepts that surpasses every standard of sense.

Similarly, as might, sublimity provokes a futile resistance to the dominion of Nature over all

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[69] *CJ*. §26.
[70] *CJ*. §25.
[71] *CJ*. §26.

natural beings, and produces a consequent recognition of a higher faculty of resistance, and thus the existence of more-than-natural being. The power that exists in Nature holds absolute dominion over the body and life of natural beings, threatening them with myriad irresistible destructions, in the form of famine, natural disaster, and disease. In fearful self-preservation, these beings may strive to avoid such fates, and even succeed for the most part, only to succumb to death from aging. But the ultimate hopelessness of preserving the natural body by these efforts can awaken an independence from determination by nature, in a faculty of judging that which nature may affect as worthless. Rather than constantly submit to the fear of death or injury imposed by nature and act only to avoid them, human beings may choose to endanger themselves for a purpose. In willfully disdaining self-preservation, a faculty for determining the will by non-natural means is revealed, and thus existence as a supersensible being, over and above natural being.[72]

Given that the satisfaction Kant associates with the sublime is described as akin to pain, it may seem purposeless in respect of judgment, since it seems only to place demands on a faculty exactly unsuited for them, displays no purposiveness of nature, and thus encourages no further enquiry, but merely arises out of the conflict of two faculties.[73] However, as Kant argues, in producing a sense of purposiveness independent of nature, it is "purposive *in reference to the whole determination* of the mind."[74] Through its movement from the sensible to the supersensible and in its curious sense of satisfaction, the experience of the sublime makes possible an ordering of the faculties in terms of a higher, moral destination. Because of the connection Kant makes between judgement and the capacity of feeling, the movement of mind in judgement is found to be based on a feeling. Reason, in demanding the presentation of the totality of conditions in a single intuition, prescribes an ideal of ultimate comprehension. The imaginative faculty cannot attain this ideal, and the feeling of the sublime arises out of this

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[72]*CJ.* §28.

[73]*CJ.* §23.

[74]*CJ.* §27.

painful incapacity. But the incapacity to attain a prescribed ideal, according to Kant, is experienced as respect, and thus the superiority of reason is made intuitively evident.[75] Of course, it is not surprising that this respect for the superiority of reason parallels the respect for the moral law gained by its comparison with the law of the inclinations, as will be seen momentarily, for reason in its practical use is also the faculty of the moral determination of the will. Since that which opposes the interests of the senses indirectly promotes the interests of the supersensible, the feeling of the sublime is also purposive in reference to the moral feeling. Thus, the sublime feeling provokes a shift in focus from the merely relative boundlessness of the sensible to the true boundlessness of the supersensible and generates a sense of purposiveness independent of nature. The incapacity of the sensible faculties to cope with either the vastness or the power of nature brings to light faculties beyond the merely sensible, and hence the notion of their potential application for a higher destination.

§11. *Respect for the Moral Law.*

Just as the sublime seems to draw our attention to the supersensible from within the realm of the sensible, respect for the moral law is something like an emotive effect determined only by the intelligible presence of the law, thereby serving to announce its authority and superiority. Respect however is neither a higher form of feeling, such as the sublime, nor any other sort of feeling, but a curiously indeterminate and unique sort of thing, the sole intellectual feeling. To clarify the role and status of respect, we turn to Andrews Reath's examination of moral and pathological motives in Kant's practical philosophy.

Kant excludes all material determination of the will, by affects or inclinations, from possessing clear moral worth. As we see in the *Groundwork*, the only cases of actions with clear cut moral

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[75]*CJ.* §27.

worth are those that cannot possibly be performed from any desire to do them, or from any desire for ends in which they may result. Rather, the factor establishing an action's moral worth must be that it is done solely for the sake of duty: that is, the good will is that will determined by the form of the moral law alone. Since the intent of the *Critique of Practical Reason* is to show that pure reason can be practical, that it is sufficient to determine the will, and therefore, that there are true practical laws rather than merely prudential rules, this raises the question of how Kant sees the moral law determining the will formally, and what relation this bears to motivations that fail to be sufficiently pure to be considered moral.

At this point in the second *Critique*, Kant presents his discussion of respect for the moral law in the third chapter of the Analytic, "The Incentives of Pure Practical Reason." If the moral law must be the sole factor determining the will, in addition to the objective determining ground of the will, it also must be the motive or incentive of the moral will. The interference of any pathological feelings at this point would render the ethical status of the will doubtful. Thus, the moral law must be at the same time the objective and the sole subjective determining ground (incentive) of the will. To explain how this can be so, Kant points out that the moral law acts as an incentive at least negatively in preventing interference with the law by the inclinations. The moral law limits all inclinations, which taken as a whole, can be called self-regard, either in the form of the pursuit of individual happiness (self-love) or the sense of individual importance (self-conceit). The limitation of these ambitions is experienced as a humbling, for the pursuit of happiness must be constrained by the law to the cultivation of virtue and the estimation of worth to worthiness proportional to virtue. But at the same time as it constrains all material determination, the pure form of the moral law acts as the objective determining ground of the will, inviting comparison with the inclinations. The comparison of sensuous incentives with the formal requirement of the moral will inspires respect for the moral law, and this acts as a positive incentive to the law. Respect for the moral law Kant calls a moral feeling, for although subject to the conditions of sensuous feeling, it is of intellectual origin and practically effected. Hence,

through the experience of humbling before the law and respect for the law, the moral law becomes an incentive.[76]

However, the status of respect and its role in moral motivation seems unclear, at least at first glance. While distinguishing respect from other feelings (pathological, materially determined) by calling it "the only one which we can know completely *a priori*" and describing it as "produced by an intellectual cause,"[77] Kant is also careful to affirm its nature as an affect, as a moral feeling. Its role in the discussion of the moral law as an incentive is as a feeling "which promotes the influence of the law on the will."[78] Kant cannot be saying that respect is a feeling that provides the incentive to recognize and act in accord with the moral law. His discussion seems to have respect arising as a *consequence* of the recognition of the moral law, and at any rate, repeats that the interference of any feeling in determining the will would undermine the moral worth of the will. Andrews Reath here distinguishes between the *intellectual* and the *affective* aspects of the feeling of respect in this discussion.[79] In recognizing the moral law as such, one perceives its authority, which by comparison checks and humiliates our self-regarding inclinations. This is the intellectual aspect of respect. The power of the moral law to establish an order among our motives inspires the affective aspect, or the feeling of respect proper. The motivating factor is simply the recognition of the moral law, from which respect arises. But this would seem to leave respect as a mere side-effect of the recognition of the moral law, and also leave the role of the moral law as incentive unexplained. How has the introduction of the notion of respect furthered the discussion? For this we will turn to Reath's reconstruction of Kant's notion of moral motivation.

To provide effective motivation, the moral law must overcome or supersede the inclination's

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[76]*CPrR.* Analytic., Chapter III., Incentives.

[77]*CPrR.* Analytic., Chapter III., Incentives. P.74.

[78]*CPrR.* Analytic., Chapter III., Incentives. P.75.

[79]Andrews Reath, "Kant's Theory of Moral Sensibility." *Kant-Studien.* 80 (1989): 289.

influence on the will, which suggests that the moral law is in competition with the inclinations. Reath takes this to mean we must discover a model of motivation that can be common to both pure formal and material determination of the will.[80] Could it be, for example, that the moral law succeeds by exerting a greater force over the will than the inclinations? As Reath points out, this would undermine Kant's notion of choice, as well as his notion of the practicality of pure reason.[81] If the moral law is understood to determine the will by inspiring an immediate recognition of obligation, which enters into competition with the inclinations and wins out by superior force, moral conduct must appear to be simply the sum of the vectors of whatever psychological forces impinge upon the will. But this is to make the moral motive effective by translating it into a quasi-natural drive, in which case morality would perhaps be better explained as a natural phenomenon, and the notion of the practicality of pure reason would become irrelevant. And even at this, moral conduct would be simply the case of an action in which the drive towards the moral has won out over the alternatives, and this can hardly be the notion of choice Kant wants. Even if it should be reason determining the choice, as opposed to some material inclination, the motivation behind the conduct would still be a matter of the outcome of the psychological forces acting on the will, leaving little room for the notion that a rationally derived obligation *guides* moral conduct.

Since the notion of rational choice must be included in this model of motivation, the influence of respect on the will must be in providing a certain kind of reason for choice.[82] Neither respect nor the inclinations can determine the will by affective force: if one or other of them did, there would be no choosing between them, and if both did, there would be no choice involved at all. Rather, both must influence the will by providing sufficient reason for action, such as could be cited as a justification of that conduct which others could understand.[83] For example, when I raise the

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[80]Reath, 296.

[81]Reath, 290-291.

[82]Reath, 290.

[83]Reath, 296.

thermostat, I am prepared to explain or justify my action by citing the facts that I found the room cold and my desire was to be warm. Likewise, in contemplating an abortion, a woman would cite the relevant facts and principles that she believed sufficient to provide justification for such an action. The reasons cited need not be actually sufficient, but the person citing them must place that value on them. One's will is determined to a conduct by the value of justification placed on one's reasons, whether they are inclinations or moral principles. The moral law acts as a check on inclinations just by showing that they in fact do not have the value that is claimed for them and by showing that moral reasons are of higher value.[84] If the reason cited in the abortion example happened to be the inconvenience of raising a child, the value of this reason could perhaps be assessed by comparing it with other instances in which the neglect of duty is rationalized by inconvenience and by pointing out the comparative value of certain duties to other persons. Respect, then, could promote the influence of the moral law by effecting a general devaluing of the status of the inclinations as sufficient reasons for conduct.[85]

Reath suggests that this common ground between moral and non-moral motivation should be referred to the doctrine of the Fact of Reason, mentioned at various points through the *Critique of Practical Reason*.[86] Kant seems to argue that not only *can* the moral law (pure reason) be practically effective, it *is* in fact actually practical.[87] The readiness in everyday activity to submit one's actions to public scrutiny and to supply reasons for their justification indicates our recognition of the moral law.[88] Even the cheapest rationalization of one's acts, which might seem contrary to the notion of moral justification, betrays the consciousness of the authority of the moral law. In seeking a wider context of justification which has at least putative universality, pending the revelation of its limits, one implicitly recognizes the notion of an unconditional

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[84]Reath, 296.

[85]Reath, 300.

[86]Reath, 285; 297.

[87]*CPrR*. Analytic., §8 Remark II, I. Deduction. P.42.

[88]Reath, 297.

obligation. If there was no implicit recognition of the authority of an obligation independent of a hypothetical condition, there would be no reason to pursue justification beyond the scope of that hypothetical condition. If one is hungry and therefore steals food, one may appeal to the notion that *anyone* in similar circumstances would do the same. But why would this make a moral difference, were it not for some unconditional right or wrong, such as the social injustice of poverty, implicit in the act? The simple fact of justification demonstrates the consciousness of unconditional obligation that Kant refers to as the "sole fact of reason."[89]

Consciousness of the moral law is called a *fact* of reason "since one cannot ferret it out from antecedent data of reason, such as the consciousness of freedom ... , and since it forces itself upon us as a synthetic proposition *a priori* based on no pure or empirical intuition."[90] This apparent brute fact of the superiority of the moral law is made explicit in the feeling of respect. Just as with the sublime, a feeling interposes itself between two faculties, in this case sensibility and reason, and establishes a relation between them that separates and orders them. In respect, the authority of the moral law over the inclinations is made clear. As a response to the humbling of our lesser motivations and the limiting of our inclinations, it reveals the suitability of persons for rational self-direction, the higher destiny of which Kant speaks. As such, my actions are revealed as belonging to a higher, intelligible order of purposes, which are in harmony with the sensible world, and, for Kant, apparently 'tell the true story' of that world.

B. Jaspers: Limit-Situations.

§12. *Philosophizing and Elucidation.*

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[89]*CPrR.* Analytic., §7 Remark.
[90]*CPrR.* Analytic., §7 Remark. P. 31.

Jaspers's aim in *Philosophy* is to account for the cognizable, much as was Kant's in the Critical Philosophy, but also to account for the ability of reason (construed in a somewhat broad sense) to transcend the limits of the cognizable. Indeed, *philosophizing*, in the especially active sense Jaspers intends, is a transcending thinking, without which there would be nothing properly called 'philosophy.' One major task in *Philosophy* is the elucidation of *"Existenz,"* the mode of being of human being, which is contrasted with existence. Existence is a determinable, cognizable mode of being, shared by objects in the material world, as well as basic social forms, and also humanity. Yet the being of humanity is characterized by an indeterminability that escapes the confines of existence: human beings are not simply what might be objectively established regarding them. Human beings respond to their state of being, or rather are responsible for their state of being. Existenz sums up this aspect of human being, which perhaps may be characterized as the chance of transcending, or more simply the chance of freedom. But in elucidation, Jaspers does not mean to offer a unique method different from cognition, nor a kind of mystical intuition. Rather, what may be obtained is *assurance* of ourselves, of our own self-being. "(O)bjects are not all we can think and speak of. There are means to become *clear to ourselves* in thought without acquiring insights into anything. To become clear -- this is the form in which the non-objective possible Existenz exists."[91] Assurance and clarity characterize the awareness in which we grasp ourselves as non-objective possibility and transcend the limits of existence. At the same time, however, as Jaspers is quick to assert, Existenz cannot dismiss existence as a degraded state of being, beneath proper humanity. These two modes of being function as necessary poles of true human being: the self needs existence to become real, determinate and solid; yet without Existenz and transcending, the self would not be human at all. The problem for Jaspers, and for being human, is how and what the self must do, in order to accomplish this unity of existence and Existenz.

Briefly put, what must be accomplished is a "breakthrough" to Existenz. From preoccupation

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[91]PI p.66.

with existence, the self can be awakened to Existenz through the revelation of the non-objective in transcending. In Jaspers's work, there can be identified three basic stages of transcending through which this may be done. First, there is a rudimentary transcending by which one achieves *consciousness as such*, or the mode of consciousness of universal knowledge. This Jaspers terms *logical transcendence*.[92] In rising from the particular and concrete to the universal, one also opens up the contemplation of possibility. Not being confined strictly to the fully determinate, consciousness as such may envision various possible states of, for example, the world: *what if* there were less water on Earth? *what if* the planet were smaller? Yet even though the contemplation of possibility is opened up here, these remain possibilities within objective existence. To truly breakthrough to Existenz, one must transcend the limits of existence. "As Existenz results from the real act of breaking through mundane existence, existential elucidation is the *thinking ascertainment* of that act. The breakthrough goes from possible Existenz to its realization, without being able to leave the borderline of possibility. To have its reality -- although it is not objectively demonstrable -- in action itself is the peculiar quality of Existenz."[93] Instead of merely cognizing objective possibility in logical transcendence, our thought may really transcend, when it seeks to clarify one's possibilities for being, for freely acting so as to bring about the unity of existence and Existenz in an act of one's self.[94] Possible Existenz, this awareness of non-objective possibilities of freedom, is the second stage, and this is the focus of the part of philosophizing called "the elucidation of Existenz." The elucidation of Existenz is a means to approach the non-objective and indeterminate so far as possible in thought that is forced by its nature to take and determine objects. Existential elucidation cannot establish anything about possible Existenz. The most one can expect from it is that it will "make us conscious of being by the modes of being that occur to our thought. In the performance of this task it never touches the one being: it only clears the way for its ascertainment. ... Whatever I may be thinking can only make room for the "I" as possible

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[92]PI, 77

[93]PII, 9

[94]PII, 10

Existenz – which is outside my every thought at the same time. To possible Existenz, thoughts mean relative knowabilities, possibilities, appeals, but no more."[95] Possible Existenz is the limit of philosophical elucidation of self-being. But philosophy alone cannot render self-being actual. Existential elucidation can make an appeal on behalf of Existenz, but never compel or even give cogent reasons for actualizing Existenz. Rather, this is another stage in transcending: the leap into action, freedom enacting itself concretely as Existenz. Real Existenz is historic action and interaction with other Existenzen, which can only be brought about by becoming oneself as the unity of existence and Existenz.

Evidently, existential elucidation, as the means by which we may sensibly discuss the non-cognizable, is an important aspect of transcending thought. Yet we immediately confront a problem. Much as Existenz cannot become real without existence, existential elucidation equally cannot dispense with objectivity and generality, even recognizing that these have no application in its medium. Communication between two Existenzen, for example, depends upon the objective contents and general meanings of a language, yet so far as any statement elucidates Existenz, it must convey a meaning that is not objectively assessable and is uniquely personal. When a self speaks its truth to another, that truth remains true for it alone: it is non-transferable. The thought that must bear this surplus of meaning transcends, points the self to possible Existenz. Yet the thought is not unintelligible to the other self, as long as she takes it not to refer to an objective fact, but makes of it her own personal meaning, refers it to her own possibilities, and so also transcends. Jaspers refers to the relation of objectivity and possibility in a thought by means of a metaphor: a thinking in which 'two wings must beat.' To soar, objectivity and generality must beat alongside the unique and personal possibility of Existenz. Neither blunt factuality nor vapid allusion will suffice to elucidate.

In his "Introduction" to *Philosophy*, Jaspers summarizes his elucidating analysis of Existenz,

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[95]PI p.64

using his central notions which act as 'existential signa,' (quasi-concepts that symbolize non-objective contents).[96] This summary covers three separate approaches.

1. The thought that clarifies possible Existenz can do so by leading "to the limit where the individual can be appealed to and can transcend."[97] In seeking the assurance of self-being, one approaches the limit of all objectivity and empirical existence and seeks to reveal the ways in which self-being exists in possibility always exceeding anything merely determinate. Three of Jaspers's central terms are brought together in this 'appeal to the individual.' "The possibility which Existenz can ascertain at the boundaries is *freedom* in *communication* and in *historicity*."[98] Empirical approaches to human action can reveal nothing beyond causal processes and chance. In the appeal, one seeks the limit beyond which decision, which is neither determined nor random, can be meaningful. Beyond the interchangeability of objective facts about existence, which are indifferent with respect to the individuality of Existenz, the mode of communication which is properly addressed from one individual to another must be clarified. Rather than the sequence of events in time, comprehensible for their regularity or general applicability, one must seek the fidelity of historic consciousness in the singular individual. These three topics, while they may be treated separately, form a unity. "It is only when I put thinking into words that freedom, communication, and historic consciousness are separate elements of a whole. The whole is always my own self -- not the self at large, but my unconditional self. Historic consciousness is the view of the chance, so to speak; freedom is the original executor; and communication is the struggle for self-being among the free and the historically conscious."[99] By approaching the boundaries of objective approaches to the self -- causality, transfer of information, mere sequence of events -- one can appeal

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[96]PI, p.92
[97]PI p.92.
[98]PI p.92.
[99]PI, p.93.

to the whole self and to the possibilities inherent in self-being.

2. Another approach is to "seek *unconditionality* at the limits of conscious existence."[100] Conditionality seems to be inescapable in conscious existence, for all one's perceptions and judgements fall under the constraint of some form. Yet Jaspers calls to mind several phenomena of limitation that reveal an unconditionality which self-being must confront. Though one can never escape the constraints of *being-in-situation* in existence, one encounters absolute limits, such as death, which are not conditioned by the situation. Jaspers calls these encounters *limit situations*. In existence, one's actions are conditioned and therefore explainable by purpose, yet at the limits of existence one can have a certainty in *unconditional action* that is never fully accountable in terms of mundane purposes. Similarly, a shift is possible between the empirical consciousness of objects and an *absolute consciousness*, in which one is conscious of being with an unconditional certainty. For Jaspers, these three phenomena, *limit situations*, *unconditional action*, and *absolute consciousness*, elucidate Existenz by qualifying all empirical existence in relation to them. Ordinary situations, purposes and awareness become secondary and dependent on the unconditionality of Existenz.

3. The final approach is to "grasp the existential relevance of all reality in subjectivity and objectivity."[101] One unavoidable feature of the situation of ordinary existence is the *subject-object dichotomy*. The situation of existence splits into two poles, essentially thought and being, subjectivity and objectivity, and to elucidate Existenz, one must grasp the significance of the appearing of being in these forms, of subjective and objective being, plus the 'limit concept' of *being in itself*. "Because it is confined to a world which it meets only in the split of subjective and objective being, Existenz will enter into

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[100]PI p.93.
[101]PI p.93.

subjectivity and objectivity to come to itself in the tension and union of both."[102]

These three approaches cover the entire range of topics in the second volume of *Philosophy*. For our purposes, it will be sufficient to focus our examination on a few. In Part III, we will examine existential communication as a means of ascertaining non-objective self-being. Although Jaspers's notion of communication is bound up with the notions of freedom and historicity, we will focus on the way in which Jaspers makes communication with other Existenzen an essential moment in the ascertainment of self-being for Existenz, touching on the latter two notions only to the extent necessary for our discussion. Before this, we shall examine the notion of limit-situations, as a further instance of the recognition of limits, akin to the sublime and respect for the moral law for Kant. Most immediately however, we will introduce Jaspers's notion of self-being as an awakening to possible Existenz.

§13. *Self-Being, Objectification and Possibility.*

The elucidation of self-being moves from unconcerned immediacy, through self-reflection in various forms, to a recovered immediacy, aided by reflection in its awakened concern for its self. When naive self-awareness awakens to itself and begins to question itself, it breaks with an immediacy that while not unaware, does not ask about itself and is not troubled by the meaning of its existence.[103] A "jolt" in my situation, however, can cause me to feel that something is "up to me," and lead me to reflect on what I am. Reflection however imposes a distance between me and that original self-presence, such that now I cannot simply return to unreflected immediacy, for whatever was original in it is now superseded by the 'I' of my reflection. [104] In reflection, the immediacy of my self-being is lost, yet without awakening to myself, I was not myself in naive

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[102]PI p.93.

[103]PII, p.25

[104]PII, p.26

immediacy either. But perhaps there is a way through reflection to return to myself, to recover the presence of my self-being.

At first, I answer the question 'what am I?' with a series of objectifications.

1) In reflection, I seem to adopt a 'point of view' from which I may assess and get a grasp on myself. Perhaps this is what I really am. *Consciousness at large* (aka consciousness as such) is the name Jaspers gives to this - an intellect in which what is cognizable and universally valid is grasped. Jaspers has elsewhere made comparisons between this 'I as cogito' and Kantian transcendental subjectivity. He has also described this consciousness at large as 'point-like,' meaning that it is purely formal and without personal content. Consciousness at large is a purely formal feature of the 'I,' interchangeable with all others and not sufficient to be myself.[105]

2) If I find consciousness at large to be without specific content, I may turn to some material *aspect of the I*, in which I can find some determination to flesh out 'what I am.' The first of these is the *physical I*, the fact that I am a substantially embodied living creature. Second, my *social I* is comprised of the roles through which I interact with others as members in a society, and so understand myself as such. Third, I may also identify myself with the products of my creative activity, thus understanding myself 'under the aegis' of my *active I*. What I do or can do, what powers and capabilities I have form another way of understanding myself determinately. Finally, I am conscious in retrospect of what I have done and what has happened to me. As a *reminiscent I*, I identify myself with the contents of my memory and the accumulated historical effects that have shaped what I am.[106]

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[105]PII, p.26-7
[106]PII, p.27-32

3) If I ask what runs through these material aspects and makes them all mine, I might reply *character*. For my 'I' has a certain constancy, a discoverable 'way that I am,' by which I can be identified as having certain reactions, tendencies and dispositions that endure over time.[107]

Each of these forms of objectification contains some essential mode of being I, but none, or even all of them together, really suffice to encompass my self-being. The universality of consciousness at large, the substantiality of the various aspects, and the stability of character are all features of existence which I could not do without.[108] But the act of reflection, in which I take myself as my own object, prevents this grasp of myself from ever being complete. I sense a 'shortcoming' in all forms of objectification. In consciousness at large, I am only an "I at large," not the individual, personal being I sense myself to be.[109] I remain apart from any of the objectified aspects in which I seek the identity of the self: I am more than my physical I, more than my social I, more than my active I, etc.[110] More than the stability of habits provided by character, I am aware that what I am is 'up to me.'[111]

This sense of shortcoming leads to a self-retrieval from all objectifications. Even though I may not be able to escape objectification in thinking or talking of myself, the inadequacy of self-objectification leads me to relativize each objectivity as I express it.[112] In this way, I gain an indirect comprehension of myself: it allows me to become sure of myself as non-objective possibility.[113] However complete an image I can make of myself in objectification, I sense that there is more I can be, yet to come in future.[114] None of my objectifications can encompass the

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[107]PII, p.32
[108]PII, p.33
[109]PII, p.27
[110]PII, p.32
[111]PII, p.32
[112]PII, p.33
[113]PII, p.33
[114]PII, p.34

fact that as I move into future moments, I will determine myself, or will be determined, concretely in new ways. Whatever I may have become, so far as I am in time, I am not yet complete, for the temporal horizon holds open possibilities for my future becoming. Unable to view myself from eternity, in time I remain as possibility. So, instead of trying to reflect myself in outward forms, I may turn inward to seek my intrinsic being.

In self-reflection, I elucidate myself as possibility. Rejecting what is merely objective, I see that my being is 'up to me,' that I am concerned for myself and affected by my decisions concerning myself. But I have already exercised myself as possibility in self-retrieval, a 'handling of myself'[115] in which I withdraw from all objectification. My self-retrieval to a non-objective possibility opens the door to the elucidation of my true self-being. In self-handling, I am no longer an item of knowledge to myself, but rather take up an effective relation toward myself. "When I say 'I myself,' after the failure of all my objectifying efforts, I no longer merely mean something: I do something."[116] In relating to myself effectively, *making* myself, I overcome the split imposed in objectification of myself: I am *for* myself, not merely an object to myself. Self-handling is not self-creation, however. Handling myself is necessary for me to become myself, but is not enough to bring about a lasting identity. Rather active self-handling gives only the possibility of self-being: I can be myself only if I can be in control of myself.[117] In handling myself, I seek to become myself rather than know myself, although I am not blind in self-handling either. This "work on myself" is accompanied and guided by a self-contemplation that Jaspers describes as "a limitless questioning," in which I "look for myself by way of mundane being and of my existence in it."[118] This guide is self-reflection as a means of grasping myself in my possibilities, in which the content remains worldly existence but the aim is to be my own source as informed self-handling. I question without limit worldly things, probing them for their

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[115]PII, p.34

[116]PII, p.34

[117]PII, p.35

[118]PII, p.36

possible relation to my self. But my judgement on these things is my own activity of making a historic concretion of myself in them.

The boundlessness of self-reflection presents a danger however. As a medium of limitless questioning, an endless review of possibilities, I can become lost in self-reflection.[119] If instead of seeking to become myself, I begin to seek the truth about myself or knowledge of who I 'really' am, every possibility will become a mask with perhaps nothing more than further masks behind it. There will be no limit to the doubt that can arise around any given image of myself in reflection and there is no way out of this cycle of suspicion of myself, for reflection does not aim at satisfying a mere curiosity about myself, but at aiding me in becoming myself. Self-reflection cannot or will not put an end to itself: rather it must be stopped by a decision or resolution of the will, originating from and expressing my self-being.[120] Self-reflection is a communication of the self with the self, in which my immediacy, now awakened, may be restored. I am not myself in self-reflection, but instead my potential.[121] In it, I examine what I have been and what I can be, and if I apply myself with seriousness, I may become sure of myself in deciding what I will be. But this is not mere 'willfulness.' Self-reflection makes it possible to become ourselves extending our understanding as widely as possible between the two limits of blind will on the one hand and disengaged contemplation of possibility on the other.[122] It seeks clarity and illumination, but cannot grasp the self as such, for it can only lead up to the threshold of a decision that has its source elsewhere, in an original experience in which the self is assured of itself.[123] This experience can only be prepared for and awaited, and does not determine my decision in itself.[124] If it comes, it is like I come to myself as a gift and feel myself free, that I

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[119]PII, p.36-7
[120]PII, p.38-9
[121]PII, p.38
[122]PII, p.39
[123]PII, p.39
[124]PII, p.40

what I am is up to me by my decision.[125] But again, this is not self-creation, for the gift of my free self-being comes from transcendence. I cannot know this source as objective determination: I can only become assured of it, having prepared myself in reflection. Assured of myself, my immediacy with myself is restored in a new form, as my originality in which I am a source of myself.

§14. *Limit-situations.*

For Jaspers, existence is always situation-bound. A situation is a "reality for an existing subject who has a stake in it."[126] One may think, not inaccurately, of a spatial perspective, such as the view of a room one might have while confined to it. But we must expand this perspectivity beyond spatiality, and beyond psychological and physical reality of a subject.[127] The situation is a meaningful reality that integrates the above aspects into a more or less intact whole, relative to the needs of the existing being. "It is the concrete reality which means advantage or detriment, opportunity or obstacle, to my existence."[128] Aspects of situations can be general or historically unique: concerns for sustenance are quite general, while turning points in a career may arise in quite unique and non-recurring situations. While one cannot escape being in situation, situations are subject to the probing of knowledge and to manipulation. It is possible to *survey* a situation: as in circumspection, to scan the surroundings and assess what possibilities and hazards they present. As one's sight in situation is perspectival, one's knowledge of it may never be complete, though it is possible to remove oneself to the point of view of consciousness as such or of a particular science for a more universal grasp of the situation.[129] Once surveyed, the situation

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[125]PII, p.41
[126]PII, p.177
[127]PII, p.177
[128]PII, p.177
[129]PII, p.178

itself may offer points of purchase, from which our action can effect a transformation of the situation.[130] Fertile land, if cleared, may be altered so that one's situation changes from one of nomadic gathering to agriculture. And indeed, situations change in and of themselves.[131] Should one do nothing, opportunities will be lost, resources will disappear.

Limit-situations are situations in which we confront a "something else," which imposes a limit for knowing, purposeful existence.[132] Death, for example, confronts us with the very end of that existence. In contrast to situations, limit-situations are unchanging, except in the incidentals.[133] Suffering, for example, appears physically in one case and psychologically in another: but the essential, that on suffering my worldly existence founders, does not change. Limit-situations again are not open to survey or manipulation.[134] In my struggle to nourish myself, I may be able to survey my situation and manipulate it to ensure my survival. But if it is struggle itself I confront, the brute situation that life is struggle, there is nothing to be known and no way to change this by action. One cannot see through a limit-situation to another situation, as one might see through present hunger to the future situation where it is soon to be assuaged. They are not explainable as coming from some particular source, which is perhaps open to control. Limit-situations "are like a wall we run into, a wall on which we founder."[135] One sees that they are there, but cannot grasp or get a handle on them.

The 'limit' of limit-situations lies between the immanent and determinate - worldly existence and consciousness as such - and the transcendent - Existenz. Consciousness as such removes the self from involvement and seeks objective validity. Limit-situations cannot appear to this consciousness because they necessarily involve the self's concern for its reality. But in its

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[130] PII, p.178

[131] PII, p.178

[132] PII, p.178-9

[133] PII, p.178

[134] PII, p.178

[135] PII, p.178

unelucidated involvement, existence will be blind to limit-situations, or simply crushed by them. Yet they do point to transcendence and present the possibility of becoming real as Existenz.[136] Even though beyond comprehension and manipulation, it is possible to clarify limit-situations.[137] Limit-situations can make one aware of being, of the necessity of fulfilling possible Existenz in historic being.[138] "To experience limit-situations is the same as Existenz."[139] But it is by a series of leaps, or stages in a leap, that Existenz can be realized in the experience of limit-situations.

Briefly, there are three distinct moments through which possible Existenz realizes itself in facing limit-situations. When existence is shaken in a limit-situation, one can attempt to transcend it by a retreat into contemplation. By adopting the standpoint of universal knowledge, one seems to overcome the fragmentariness and insecurity of worldly existence in the validity and stability of objective cognition. In contemplation, one achieves a detachment from worldly concerns that seems unassailable. This is the first form of the leap: to move from worldly existence to consciousness as such. However, this contains the seed of its own decay, for one cannot long maintain this detachment. As a means of comprehending and an aid to practical involvement, consciousness as such is "the eye of an existence," a facilitator of the worldly concerns it seems to escape.[140] The self finds itself still in existence, still in situation. Rather than pursuing objective knowledge, which was secure because it escaped any particular situation, one now directs one's attention to the situation itself, but discovers that in limit-situations, comprehension and planning no longer provide an escape by transforming the situation, and so one runs up against the limits to worldly existence. The concern for oneself, while bound to the possibilities of worldly existence that are threatened in limit-situations, cannot be fulfilled in the detachment of contemplation. Perceiving that one's authentic concern for the self lies at the bounds of

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[136]PII, p.179
[137]PII, p.178
[138]PII, p.179
[139]PII, p.179
[140]PII, p.180

worldly existence, one is moved to seek clarity, to philosophize and elucidate the limit-situation to reveal possibilities that "hit the essence of being."[141] This is the second form of the leap: from consideration of the necessity of involvement in worldly existence to the elucidation of possible Existenz in the clarification of limit-situations. Having moved from contemplation to philosophizing, from cognition to elucidation, one has not yet made the leap to realization, only prepared for the leap. Mere philosophizing lacks the "finite and real body of phenomenal Existenz." Possible Existenz requires personal, historic reality to become itself, and so must make the final and decisive leap into real Existenz, which grasps limit-situations in an infinite concern for existence.[142] Each form of the leap reinforces the sense that one's life as a self is different from simple existence. Rather, existence in the world has a fundamental duality about it: in leaping to Existenz, "I am no longer merely in the world, and yet I am Existenz only if I appear to myself in the world."[143]

The first limit-situation to which Jaspers gives concrete description seems also to be a model for limit-situations themselves. He describes the *situationality* of existence, that one is always in a particular situation.[144] In existence, I am faced with a historically definite set of concrete data: I belong in a certain time, in a certain social circumstances, existing with a definite gender, with certain possibilities open to me, etc.[145] It may be open to me to alter my situation in some respect, against the resistance it presents to me. Some aspects are perhaps beyond my power to change. But what is completely outside my power, and which makes situationality a limit-situation, is my inability to 'choose for myself a new starting point' so to speak. I might wish myself to be born in another century, or another class or culture, so as to have access to other possibilities, but the limit-situation of being historically definite disallows me from finding any

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[141]PII, p.180

[142]PII, p.179-82

[143]PII, p.182-3

[144]PII, p.183

[145]PII, p.183

reality in these. To become real as Existenz, I must become historically definite: finding myself bound to a historically definite situation, I can only sink myself into the facticity and the possibilities it presents and make them my own, live as real Existenz in existence. This limit-situation condemns Existenz to historic existence, while the more particular limit-situations - death, suffering, struggle, and guilt - present aspects of the specific historicity of the individual.[146]

We can understand situationality as a limit-situation by means of the three leaps that lead Existenz to realization. Our situation in existence is definite, not general.[147] The first leap would attempt to cope intellectually with this definiteness and insecurities that may arise from it (for not all of the definite data will be benign). Consciousness as such might employ a kind of deduction in which the general is restricted progressively to arrive at the particular. By this means, the situation may be analyzed into various general defining factors and may even be made more accessible to manipulation and control. However it will be quickly realized such a method does not suit a self concerned for its reality in existence. The situation in existence is not characterized by a concatenation of concepts, which ultimately leave only an empty space concretely occupied by no one at their intersection, but rather by that "universally insoluble remainder" that persistently escapes the knowledge that determines by concepts.[148] This sort of definition would obscure the ultimacy of being in situation that makes it a limit-situation for existence. Existentially understood, definition can only be seen as the *destiny* of possible Existenz.[149] Destiny here refers not to a historical end towards which one is inexorably swept by forces of history outside of one's control. Rather the limit-situation of being historically definite calls Existenz to decide its destiny.[150] Because Existenz can only become real in historically definite existence, it cannot avoid the facticity of its situation in intellectualizing, but must rather

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[146]PII, p.184
[147]PII, p.184
[148]PII, p.185
[149]PII, p.185
[150]PII, p.185

seize it as its ground: "its sense of being can come to rest only by penetrating the objectivities so as to reach the depth of its own ground."[151]

From this, the self may turn toward the second leap. Intellectual detachment from the situation proved inadequate, so now I seek how best to be involved in my situation. My concrete situation is defined by the resistance offered by present circumstance to our freedom to choose and act.[152] As a situation in existence, this resistance is surveyable. Resistance is at least partially controllable, open to calculation and my actions sometimes are able to dominate and overcome aspects of my situation.[153] My freedom seems to be confined only by this concrete resistance.[154] If I persist in this course, take all avenues open to my free choice and my will to overcome what opposes me, I approach the limit of what is accessible to control, where I may find the brute unintelligible resistance of situationality. At this point, I must recognize the limits of finite concern within existence and see that the reality I pursue as a self lies elsewhere. Definition now must be clarified as a limit-situation, to reveal the depths of possible Existenz.[155] Where my power to surmount resistance expires, I find I may yet be able to move, not beyond the situation and its resistance, but into the depths of Existenz. Beyond the freedom to manipulate the data of existence lies a transcending sense of freedom, the choice of accepting or rejecting the brute facticity of my situation as my own.[156] Unlike choice in existence, this choice is not rationalizable and cannot be justified, but must be unconditional. As possible Existenz, the clarification of this limit-situation reveals my essential possibility of embracing the definite and accidental, the bluntness of situationality, as mine.[157] To make the third leap to real Existenz, I must cease to philosophize and leap into existence in all its contingency.

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[151]PII, p.185
[152]PII, p.186
[153]PII, p.188
[154]PII, p.187
[155]PII, p.187
[156]PII, p.188
[157]PII, p.188

What can the choice of 'accepting or rejecting the facticity of my situation' mean? Jaspers cannot be saying of course that somehow we choose our own origin or source, as if in rejecting my situation there really was another alternative awaiting my choice. On the contrary, situationality means exactly that I am not my own origin.[158] But with no real option available, how can this be a real choice at all? Rejection seems to mean nothing, and acceptance only resignation to the unalterable. Perhaps Jaspers has another possibility in mind. In facing squarely the radical contingency of my existence, that at bottom, the circumstances of my life arise not from necessity, but from pure chance, I have the existential choice of becoming real as a self subject to this condition, or allowing myself to slip into unreality. Reality here is not to be understood as the existence or nonexistence of an object. Rather the reality of the self is non-objective absolute being, a unity of Existenz with historic existence, which may be a product of this choice, rather than first known and then chosen. The choice is between *amor fati*, the "love of fate" in which I affirm the chance circumstances of my situation as *my chance*, and recoiling from contingency into universals and abstraction, in which I can never become real as a self.[159] The limit-situation of historically definite existence should lead me to grasp and choose the absolute reality that a self can become.

Jaspers continues his analysis by examining four particular limit-situations - struggle, suffering, death and guilt - but apart from the local colour the details of these cases would bring, there is perhaps little that is essential to the present sketch. The final limit-situation he presents, the dubiousness and historicity of all existence, aims at a more general point again. While the first limit-situation focussed on the situationality of Existenz in existence, the necessity of the self to be manifested in existence, this last limit-situation extends this to the historicity of all existence in the world. This is represented in what Jaspers refers to as the antinomical character of existence.[160] Unlike an ordinary antithesis in knowledge or choice, for which there may be a way

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[158]PII, p.189
[159]PII, p.191-2
[160]PII, p.218

of deciding between the alternatives, an antinomy is an incompatibility without solution. Existence in the world is riddled with them: freedom and dependence seem ineluctably paired, as are communication and solitude. But the ultimate form of the antinomy is that "existence appears to me inescapably as part of being and yet nowhere as sufficient unto itself".[161] For absolute being, this limit-situation confronts one with the necessity of transcending. The antinomies hold apart equally good alternatives: if existence was absolute itself, or if it were merely illusion cast over some other absolute, the conflict would be resolved, though in either case, there would be no Existenz. Confronted with the antinomy as a limit-situation, we may grasp the necessity and insufficiency of existence, and transcend it by seeking ourselves in the non-objective unity of Existenz and existence.

§15. *Orientation and Antinomy.*

As we have seen in the preceding sections, for Kant, the experience of the sublime sensibly reflects the noumenal in nature as a final end, an ultimate standard that sets the sensible and the noumenal in their proper relation. Similarly, respect is revealed as a negative mode of feeling by which the necessary relation of these domains is also made intuitive. In respect for the moral law, our sensible inclinations are humbled, and their status as motives of conduct is set in relation to the truly worthy motive of duty. For Jaspers, the sense of 'shortcoming' in any of the objectified modes of understanding the 'I' similarly points to another mode of being besides existence in which the 'I' can be sought, the non-objective possibility of Existenz. Limit-situations serve to reinforce this by thwarting the basic coping within existence, which may inspire a transcending response, and forcing the recognition of an 'existential antinomy,' that existence, although crucial to my self-being, is not itself sufficient to it.

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[161] PII, p.221

In what sense are these experiences of, or intelligible interactions with, limits? In these cases, we seem to arrive at something that we could not have from within the faculties of cognition in Kant's case, and for Jaspers, from basic coping within existence. For example, nothing tells me that the demands of duty are superior to the demands of my sensual nature from within the faculty that allows me to posit objects as 'desirable states of affairs.' It has no doubt seemed to many the exact reverse, that without some basis in sensuous desire, goals are incomprehensible. Certainly, the respect inspired by sensuous desire is more immediate and less questionable than that for the moral law, as in the case where I lie to 'save my own skin.' Something else besides sheer urgency is obtained from respect for the moral law, an ordering of the faculties by priority or authority: I am 'oriented,' I have been pointed in a certain direction. As a sensuous being, I have been served notice that my sensuous desires are not all, and not the best, there is. The sense of shortcoming for Jaspers plays a similar role: we are referred further on, beyond existence, to the possibility of something other than anything strictly found within it. In shortcoming, I recognize myself as not just an objective totality of characteristics, not even an indefinitely large one, but rather as incomplete without the assurance of my possible Existenz. Again, I have been oriented, directed outside of the field of any objective knowledge I could have arrived at within existence. Hence we might properly term these as experiences of limitation. We have invoked the notion of 'orientation' to characterize these experiences. Kant describes them as 'feelings' but is quick to point out that they are unlike sensuous feelings. Respect, for example, he claims to be a feeling originated purely intellectually. Higher states of feeling or not, these seem not something which we could arrive at by cognition, yet they act to place limits on cognition.

The 'existential antinomy' discoverable in limit-situations functions is a slightly different way. If I press my concerns within existence, I may extend the range of my coping and become generally more capable. But in limit-situations, I seem to run aground. In confronting death or suffering, for example, I see that my coping cannot deal with some situations. I may take precautions, even to an absurd degree, but the best I can do is postpone death. I may wish to avoid suffering, and

do all I can to ensure comfort and avoid injury, yet in the end perhaps I am subject to suffering from the anxiety driving me into avoidance. I discover the limits to existence, but also the unavoidability of existence: it is *my* suffering, and *my* death, that will define my self-being in its historic concretion. To be a self, I must become actual within existence, yet this must be the actualization of my possible Existenz and not merely an indifferent occurrence. What happens in the case of limit-situations is that by pushing my coping within existence to do all it can, I eventually arrive at what cannot be done within existence, what requires something else. To truly 'live' in existence, I must transcend, but without simply leaving existence. Arriving at an antimony in this way, I discover the incompleteness of existence on its own, from within. These notions, borrowed from Kant but, given his indebtedness to Kant, entirely applicable to Jaspers, may serve as examples of the possible encounter with limits.

Part III: The 'Other' Side of the Limit.

§16. *Paradox and Dialogue.*

In this part, we need to broach the question of 'to what' and 'how' the transcendence of limitation proceeds. When one does encounter a limit in whatever form, and discovers an alter-experience awaiting on the other side, in what form if any does that alterity distinguish itself, and how can one appropriately, meaningful respond to its difference? There is a curious suitability to the pairing of terms in our sub-heading for this section. 'Paradox' and 'dialogue,' examined in their etymology, have very similar connotations. From *para* and *dokein*, we have "to think alongside / opposite from"; from *dia* and *legein*, "to speak across." Interesting then, that in addressing three thinkers who take dialogue as an essential part of their own thought, we should also discover that their crucial expressions of this idea are in paradoxes. In Jaspers, we see a notion of self-being that, in becoming whole and truly individual, requires a relation to an other self. Buber proposes to understand the essential ways of being of human existence in terms of relations that antecede the terms of the relation. And Levinas's central insight into relation to the other is the notion of a "thought that thinks more than it can embrace." The analysis, then, if adequate to its subject matter, will be fraught with paradoxical expressions that cannot be taken literally, for to do so would be to make the subject more determinate than it can be. Hence, we must take care on the one hand to grasp the discussion in the spirit intended, but on the other, not to succumb to 'repeating the mysteries in the guise of wisdom:' allowing the paradoxes to stand 'un-elucidated' would be unfair to these thinker's ideas.

As we will see, our terminological difficulties will continue here. But beneath the variance in expression, the ideas remain the same. Jaspers's communication and self-being, Buber's I, It, You and Encounter, and Levinas's Infinity, separation and relation, all aim at revealing the same thing: the logic of a transcending relation between Interiority and Exteriority. For the remainder

of this section, let us introduce the topics in question for each of our thinkers, to be followed in

the coming sections by more in-depth analyses.

For Jaspers, communication, understood as an origin of selfhood, is an essential way in which the

individual can be approached as a whole and appealed to singularly.

> 'I am only in communication with another' ... [refers] to the origin of self-being, which comes by itself and yet, in essence, is not of and by itself alone.[162]
>
> In this [existential communication], which is absolutely historic and unrecognizable from outside, lies the assurance of selfhood. It is the one way by which a self is for a self, in mutual creation. The tie to it is a historic decision on the part of a self: to void its self-being as an isolated I and to enter into communicative self-being.[163]

But as we see from the above quotes, communication is also a process of mutual creation of

selves. Needless to say, this raises major questions. If my self is 'created' in communication,

'who' enters into communication? The second of these quotes complicates the issue by

introducing the 'isolated I' as the actor making the historic decision to enter communication -- is

this a proto-self, or not a self at all? How are we to understand the relation of communicative

self-being to whatever precedes it? Also, the mutuality of this self-creation seems to introduce a

duality into the very notion of the self. I become myself only in communication with another

self. What is necessary about this mutuality, or co-creation? Why can it not be self-creation, and

if it cannot, why insist on the singular individual as Jaspers does? Finally, we might well ask

about the nature and content of this communication. As an origin of selfhood, one would expect

this to be no mere polite conversation. What must communication be, to be an origin of the self?

In the discussion to follow, we will take up these topics in turn.

The central topic of *I and Thou* is what Buber refers to as the 'twofoldness of being.' "The world

is twofold for man in accordance with his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold in

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[162]PII p.47.
[163]PII p.54.

accordance with the two basic words he can speak."[164]   The word pairs I-It and I-You distinguish two modes of being of human being, which are established when either word pair is "spoken with one's being."[165] As 'establishing a mode of existence,' the basic word pairs denote the primacy of the relation over the terms of the relation. This means in the first instance that "twofoldness" indicates that the world and human being form a relational whole, which is established not as collections of entities but rather upon relations of a certain character. The I, You, It and their corresponding worlds exist only in virtue of relation through one of the word pairs. "Being I and saying I are the same. Saying I and saying one of the two basic words are the same. Whoever speaks one of the basic words enters into the word and stands in it."[166] As a result, the 'I' has as much a dual character as does the world: for the 'I' that speaks 'You' differs from the 'I' that speaks 'It.' But the crucial notion is that these are 'word pairs,' inextricably related such that they are prior to any world or any I. How are we to understand this priority of the relation? What does this 'twofoldness' of relation mean for the being of humanity? The first part of *I and Thou* is devoted to a characterization of the two realms of the I-It and the I-You. We will first examine the qualities of the two realms, before proceeding to a more general analysis of the significance of twofoldness.

Levinas finds a suitable model for transcendence, for the "thinking that thinks more than it can embrace," in Descartes's Third Meditation 'idea of infinity.'[167] In the course of a proof of God's existence, Descartes's solitary ego discovers within himself an idea which requires an origin outside of himself: infinity or perfection, which as a finite being, he cannot produce out of himself and cannot be the same as himself. Descartes's meditator takes this notion as the first sign of a true exterior to his consciousness. Levinas, of course, has no intention of proving God's existence or that of the Other.[168] Rather, the 'idea of infinity" is important as the instance in

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[164]IT, 53

[165]IT, 53-4

[166]IT, 54

[167]TI, 48-9; PT, 4

[168]TI, 49

which "the *ideatum* surpasses its idea." In this, infinity breaches the enclosed totality of the Same. All other ideas the meditator could possess in complete immanence; it is possible that he be the origin of their contents. By contrast, the content of the idea of infinity is exactly the distance between the idea and the *ideatum*.[169] Hence no thought is adequate to make infinity my possession. If it has meaning at all, it is transcendence, the essentially Other. The relation of the Same with the Other is the fundamental relation, prior to any conceivable demonstration.

Besides indicating the irruption of transcendence, the idea of infinity captures something further of the relation of the Same with the Other for Levinas. Descartes's demonstration of God's existence involves neither the relativizing of God to the meditator or vice versa. Rather, in setting itself at a distance from any adequate grasp, the idea of infinity preserves the "separation in relation" of the same and the other. For the relation of the same with the other to be genuine, both must preserve their integrity, their separateness, non-dependence, non-relativeness, from each other.[170] Any less than the total exteriority of the Other would result in a collapse of one pole of the relation into the other, and the reestablishment of a unifying totality. Yet the two must enter into a relation: to overcome the contradiction and paradox implied, Levinas proposes to describe concretely, rather than merely formally, the 'intentionality' of this transcendence as it must be distinct from any intentionality adequate to our grasp of objects.[171]

In the major work here in question, *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas describes the logic of this peculiar relation in a series of phenomenological analyses. Separation *and* relation: in this formulation Levinas captures the two essential moments of an adequate grasp of the relation to the Other, in which, as he also often puts it, the two terms *absolve* themselves from the relation. We learn in *Totality and Infinity* that the relation captured in the idea of Infinity is genuine transcendence, the metaphysical relation, the final and irreducible ground, concretely found in the

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[169]See PT, 35

[170]TI, 37-9

[171]TI, 49-50

"social relation."

> ... the social relation, the idea of infinity, the presence in a container of a content exceeding its capacity, was described in this book as the logical plot of being. ... Social relations ... are the original deployment of the relationship that is no longer open to the gaze that would encompass its terms, but is accomplished from me to the other in the face to face.[172]

Clustered around the central theme of the idea of Infinity in *Totality and Infinity*, a wide array of topics are deployed. Levinas's critique of Western philosophy, indicated in the term, *totality*, is a major issue addressed in the book, and Levinas pursues the conflict between totality and infinity in his attempts to describe a 'first philosophy' of ethical relations to the other. However, our focus here will be somewhat narrower. It is the logic of this relation which we will explicate in the effort to find an adequate model of transcendence, and in this we will make use of the division of topics between the terms *separation* and *relation*, to capture the essential moments of the relation.

A. Jaspers: Existential Communication.

§17. *Pre-communicative and Communicative Self-being.*

As we have noted, communication seems to precede self-being as an origin, but this raises a paradox: what is it then that precedes and enters into communication? Jaspers addresses the question of what precedes communicative self-being in this passage from the second volume of *Philosophy*.

> We have to ask, rather, in what sense we must comprehend what comes before the being of Existenz and comes to light in communication.
>   The possibility precedes Existenz in the form of the consuming sense of want that means I am ready to have a friend and able to find him without any deceptive anticipation. The preceding reality of existence is our factual, accidental meeting in time. The preceding substance,

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[172]TI, 289-90

however is my unreasoning love for the individual. In an objective view, self-being springs from the void; in existential consciousness it springs from these historic forms of transcendence; preparatory deficiency, co-incidence to make realization possible, love to start self-being.[173]

Jaspers's answer gives us 'three precedents' to communicative self-being: a preceding possibility, a preceding reality and a preceding substance. We can use these to structure our discussion of the main points of Jaspers's account of communication.

a) *Preparatory deficiency.*

The longing and readiness for a friend precedes Existenz in communication as a possibility of self-being. Prior to communication, one must become open to receive another self in the appropriate relation, and this requires that one come to a recognition of Existenz, in which one becomes aware of oneself as possibility, rather than as merely the actuality of empirical existence. With respect to communication, Jaspers calls this process of preparation 'shortcoming in communication.' "The sense of shortcoming in communication is thus an origin of the breakthrough to Existenz ... my point of departure for the philosophical reflection in which I try to understand that to be myself I need the other for whom no one else can substitute."[174]

Jaspers begins his discussion of communication with a three-fold description of 'communication in existence'[175] which clearly maps onto the three-fold of empirical existence (*dasein*), consciousness at large and spirit in his discussion of truth in *Reason and Existenz* and *Von der Wahrheit*.[176] Community is formed around meaningful relations based in interest and instinctual bond, rationality (the general validity of objective contents) and ideal wholes, in which an individual participates with others in an Idea, philosophical or religious. What seems to be

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[173]PII p.64.

[174]PII p.51

[175]PII pp.47-51.

[176]In these works, Jaspers gives an ontology of Existenz and Transcendence involving a series of categories such as those listed above. Some aspects of this ontology are already present in *Philosophy*, particularly the use of the categories of Existenz, empirical existence and consciousness at large. However, the details of this ontology are not crucial to our discussion here.

lacking in all of these ways of communicating or forming community with others is a grasp of the singularity or individuality of the 'I myself' or self-being. All of the modes, whether the bio-sociological relations of familial community, the cognitive relations of a community of knowers, or the spiritual relations of a community of believers, represent nothing more than roles which I can adopt (or indeed, can hardly escape), but which are indifferent with respect to whether it is me or another that does so. In the role of 'father,' there is no more singular reference to 'I myself' than there is to any other biologically-capable, contemporaneous male. Even taking my self as an aggregate of my various roles, there is in this totality no more than a general reference to someone capable of fulfilling all the roles. Selfhood, for Jaspers, requires singularity or the individual, rather than the merely particular (which is relative to a generality), but the modes and content of communication in existence make nothing more than the particular possible. Further, Jaspers is perhaps also reflecting that these various roles which I may 'become' in communication have their source external to me - in the structure of living community, general validity or the Idea. Hence, in virtue only of adopting these roles, I am not autonomously myself in self-creation: I merely slip into a pre-made suit of clothing, so to speak. As media of self-being, these roles are given by the community and I am subject to them, rather than being anything I can claim as 'my own.' Thus, in experiencing the lack of a clear way in which I as a self-creative individual could be in existence, I come to the sense of shortcoming in communication.

In shortcoming, I run up against this limit in existence and in any communication within existence. Here, I begin a struggle driven by an obscure sense that my being is at stake. I cast about for alternatives, seek to isolate myself and be truly myself in isolation, but the impulse toward communication does not let me rest there. "Whenever we lose communication, whenever we fail in it, we seem to lose some of our real being. Being is being together, not only in existence but as Existenz."[177] Moved to search for this 'real being,' I must somehow transcend the limits of existence and communication within existence, and so I seek for what of myself

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[177]PII p.53.

exceeds this -- my possibilities, or possible Existenz. What I experience here is different from self-isolation: an existential loneliness which Jaspers calls 'solitude.'[178] We get a good sense of the significance of solitude early in *Philosophy Vol. II* in a discussion of 'dissatisfaction in existence.' Dissatisfaction is a step out of mere existence and a step into the "*solitude of possibility* where all mundane existence disappears."[179] This solitude is neither ordinary social isolation, nor resignation, nor other-worldliness, but rather "*my need to have my own origin.*"[180] Dissatisfaction in existence, which "expresses the being of possible Existenz,"[181] is my recognition that if I am to be 'I myself' at all, I must discover how I can be in some medium other than existence. My readiness at this point opens me to Existenz as my dimension of possibility, and I must seek the means to become myself in it.

If solitude perhaps makes us ready, communication begins only in union. "When I come to myself there are two things that lie in this communication: my being I, and my being with another. ... Communication always takes place between two people who join but remain two, who come to each other out of solitude and yet know solitude only because they are communicating."[182] Existential communication requires a delicate balance between total integration and isolation, for two must join in union, yet remain separate. As such, it seems we must regard solitude as perhaps more than preparatory, if it is also an integral component of the relationship. However, Jaspers gives some indication that the solitude of communication is a 'new solitude' compared to the loneliness of being ready for communication.[183] In loneliness, I am ready for communication, but not yet myself.[184] If in communication I 'dissolve myself in the other,' I cannot be lonely or in solitude, for there is nothing to be me.[185] I must accept the

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[178]PII p.56.
[179]PII p.7.
[180]PII p.7.
[181]PII p.7
[182]PII p.56.
[183]PII p.56.
[184]PII p.56.
[185]PII p.57.

solitude of being irreducibly singular if I am to enter into existential communication, understood as a community of individuals in the only form in which this is possible. I am possible Existenz in lonely readiness for communication, but real Existenz only so far as I maintain the tension between solitude and union in communication.

It is tempting to take the lonely self (I before communication) as possible Existenz, awaiting its evocation in communication, where upon it becomes real Existenz, actualized in union with other Existenzen. This gets some confirmation in the chapter on Communication: "Self-being means loneliness, but a loneliness in which I am not yet myself; for loneliness is the sense of readiness in possible Existenz -- which becomes real Existenz only in communication."[186] The question, then, is how we are to understand the relation between possible and real Existenz. The notion of latency or potentiality lends itself quite naturally. Perhaps possible Existenz is a pre-existing disposition to become real Existenz, actualized in communication. However, a latent self, existing merely as a possibility to be actualized, can no more freely enter into communication than can a non-self, without first having become independently actual, and this is what Jaspers disallows. Further this would seem to take possible Existenz and real Existenz as functioning on analogy to determinate quantities and this is the mistake of understanding Existenz in terms of existence. This cannot be the correct relationship.

Jaspers offers an interpretation of this relationship in terms of manifestation and realization, but again the discussion teeters on the brink of misunderstanding. "In communication I am revealed to myself, along with the other. This manifestation, however, is at the same time the realization of an I as a self."[187] For Existenz, "the process of becoming manifest is one of self-creation by self-elucidation."[188] In objective thinking of course, this makes no sense: what becomes manifest must already exist and cannot become realized in existence in the same process of its

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[186]PII p.56.

[187]PII p.58.

[188]PII p.58.

manifestation. Jaspers concedes this as an entirely appropriate view for a psychological observer.[189] In examining my traits and dispositions, what becomes manifest is only my 'inborn character,' which I have had from birth. Self-elucidation in this sense can only be the discovery of what is already there. As possible Existenz however, one must seek to elucidate the limits of existence, and thereby constrain the effectiveness of any such traits or dispositions. As a psychological observer, I may discover in myself a tendency to quick anger. As possible Existenz, I may use this knowledge to decide about myself, by willing the appropriate expression of this anger and moderating it otherwise.[190] I cannot escape this trait: I cannot will that empirically I should have the trait of mildness, for my anger is a real feature of my psychological situation. But my self-elucidation is more than the simple discovery of my traits, and the existential decision to be myself is more than a simple following of the bent of these traits. Existential self-elucidation is a taking hold of existence, and in self-handling, a bringing about of a manifestation of myself that is more than simply the sum of my empirical traits, but rather is also infused with my existential decisions as to how I am to be.

This 'how I am to be,' unlike empirically given character, is simultaneously manifestation and realization, though not in the empirically understood sense of either term. Manifestation is not the mere appearing of the given and realization is not an achievement that is able to rest on its own, apart from my continued decisions with respect to it. Rather, the decision is 'to transcend empirical existence in manifestation-realization of Existenz.' In dissatisfaction or in shortcoming, I become aware of the limits of existence with respect to my self, and of the 'beyond' in which my self can possibly be -- possible Existenz. I can philosophize on this ground, or seek to elucidate Existenz, but to do this I must transcend the objectivity of existence and cognition. In possible Existenz, I am in readiness to transcend, which I must do to become actual as real Existenz. The act of transcending is at once the manifestation and realization of

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[189]PII p.59.
[190]PII p.59.

Existenz. But since transcending is a leap beyond all objectivity, this realization cannot be understood as the production of one object out of another, nor out of a latent state of existence. Rather, transcending is the free grasp of being in the decision to be oneself. One expression for that transcending is 'being with others,' or 'existential communication.'

The discussion now has moved beyond our initial topic, preparatory deficiency. But what we have clarified is that the possibility that precedes communication will not be properly understood as the development of latent capacities to actuality. Rather preparatory deficiency is the readiness to transcend brought about by the recognition of the limits of empirical existence, which can be actualized in free decision. We have yet to see what it is about communication that is essential for transcending to Existenz, and why an other self is important, but this is a topic we must postpone for the moment. For now, we may count as our results the recognition that what precedes the self in communication is not a proto-self, objectively understood, but a readiness to transcend in a free decision to become myself in communication with a 'friend.'

b) *Meeting in Time.*

The readiness to transcend awaits only the chance for decision in the historic meeting of individuals, our second 'precedent' to communicative self-being. For though one must free oneself from empirical existence in dissatisfaction, the realization of Existenz in decision must be made actual in existence as the only possible medium. If two 'friends' are to enter into mutual creation, it must be done within the world and within time: for existential communication has no other content than mundane existence and no other means than realization in time. "Without mundane contents, existential communication has no phenomenal medium; without communication, such contents are senseless and void."[191] It would be a confusion to take Existenz to be akin to a mental *substance*, with its own processes and effects, and existential

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[191]PII pp.62-3.

communication to be like a mystical communion of souls. Rather, it is the real interaction of human beings, albeit grasped in the assurance of self-being that comes from elucidation of Existenz. "Real communication ... is the movement of self-being in the substance of reality."[192] The reality of empirical existence precedes communication between Existenzen as the opportunity and means by which it can take place, for existential communication shares only mundane ideas in objective form, but recognizing their limits, transcends these.[193] But this does not mean that the objective contents of communication are trivialized or not taken seriously. Instead, it is in taking seriously that moment in existence and time as the realization of communicative self-being that one transcends.[194]

The notion of meeting in time adds another qualification to the discussion. Requiring mundane existence as its phenomenal medium, yet never being identical with any of its objective contents, communication and the self-being it creates remain processes which achieve no objective result and are never complete in time. 'I myself' does not become a mundane object upon entering communication and endures no longer than the moment of certainty when I open myself to the other Existenz. "It [communication] becomes untrue as an objective result that is held fast, and it remains true as fidelity arising from the moment."[195] The moment of historic realization never becomes an achievement upon which one can rely. Rather, the self we become in these moments has its phenomenality entirely in 'becoming and disappearance,' in a transcendent 'fulfilment' that has no other actuality than that moment, yet is never simply identical to the temporal 'occasion' of its occurrence. Subject to the constraint of appearance in time, the self as a whole depends on the moment for its appearance, but by these constraints is dispersed into a process of becoming in which it never appears as an actual totality. Even as 'realization' in 'manifestation,' Existenz is never 'there:' it is, rather, an evanescence, as Jaspers frequently puts it.

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[192]PII p.61.
[193]PII pp.61-62.
[194]PII p.63.
[195]PII p.63.

The reality that precedes communication, then, is the historic chance of our meeting, an opportunity for realization that imposes on communication the constraints of an objectified contents and a state of constant becoming. This reality is in some sense 'not the right sort of stuff' for self-being: objective content is indifferent to individuality and temporal dispersion scatters the various moments of my self-being. Communicative self-being can arise out of them partly because of the qualities of historicity that allow a transcending of these limits. In grasping the moment as 'mine' and holding fast to it in fidelity, I can make the objective contents 'mine' and collect the scattered moments of my self-being into a fulfilment.

c) *Love.*

The active ingredient in the process of communication seems to be the third 'precedent.'

> "Love is not yet communication, but it is its font and its luminary. The consonance of belonging together ... makes us feel something unconditional which is henceforth a premise of communication ... . [Love] is like a monologue of original being. ... a reunion of those already joined together in eternity ... one in transcendence."[196]

Apparently, love precedes communication as a prior bond of two selves in transcendence, who, separated in mundane existence and needing to strive to breakthrough to possible Existenz, need only the historic chance to recollect their prior 'belonging together,' once their unconditionality is elucidated. 'Union' turns out to be 'reunion.' But what exactly Jaspers means by 'my unreasoning love of the individual' as the 'preceding substance of communication' creates problems for our interpretation.[197] If by 'individual' he means some specific, actual individual, he would seem to be proposing a romantic doctrine of souls united in eternal destiny, fated to meet and love. The actuality of the individual in this case would raise problems for his account of the self, since as such, the individual does not 'exist' in any form prior to the decisions that make one a self. The self that comes to be in communication cannot credibly be a pre-existing individual pairing. But

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[196]PII pp.64-5.
[197]PII p.64.

does 'individual' mean the individual *in general*? This would seem to be worse as an interpretation, since, given what we know of it so far, properly my drive in communication should be towards the singularity of the other and of myself. Is my attraction to the individual an attraction to the right 'kind' of thing, to my own kind with whom I can really communicate? But there can be no such extant kind for Jaspers, given the uniqueness and singularity he insists we must understand of self-being. The individual can only be the other self, manifested-realized in the decision to enter communication, but in what sense can my love of this individual precede our communication? What is meant by 'love'?

Clearly, Jaspers does not mean love in the commonly recognized usage, of infatuation, erotic attraction or co-dependency. Rather, love seems to be the motivation-before-motivator of communicative self-being: "What remains in the phenomenality of temporal existence is the motion of love."[198] "In temporal existence communication is the love-filled motion that seems aimed at unity... ."[199] Coming out of temporal existence, love is the feeling of 'something unconditional' that drives me to seek a unity with the other in communication, a kind of movement from the conditionality of mundane attractions to the possibility of unconditional loving.[200] This, as Jaspers says, is felt first "as a decision, as though about the lover's own being, and then as a necessity he cannot doubt."[201] In a sense, this seems to be a movement from temporal existence to historic appearance: love is the dynamism that, in contact with the other in existence and out of my awakened sense of possibility and longing for a friend, leads me beyond our existence and communication in time toward our historic co-realization in existential communication. I am forced into the medium of historicity as the only way this can be, where I strive to unite with the other in mutual creation. Love is the desire to become actual in the face of the other, to reveal myself to them and to know them as they are.

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[198]PII p.65.

[199]PII p.66.

[200]PII pp.64-65.

[201]PII p.65.

Love, however, is not itself enough to achieve an actual unity: indeed, such a unity would be inimical to love, communication and self-being, which depend on the duality of two Existenzen in relation. When friends actually become one, the relation between them is stifled: it is useless to think or to feel where the other is so close that he can neither learn from you nor teach you further. But the unity sought here is transcendent and as such, a rather different thing from unity in actuality.[202] In fact, Jaspers's formula for Existenzen unified in communication is the 'loving struggle.'[203] Communication as a loving struggle is the mutual striving of two Existenzen for the self-being of both individually, by each probing, questioning, challenging, provoking the other to the realization of its genuine self, 'I myself.' Unlike the struggle for existence, in which advantage, power over, and even the cancellation of the other are the rule, the mutual struggle for Existenz is one of solidarity, in which equality, mutual support, and the maintenance of each as an individual are necessary for the possibility of genuine self-being arising in communication.[204] The struggle in communication is loving in its solidarity, but tough in its demands for openness, sincerity, self-restraint and good will. The unity so achieved is not identity and does not become fixed: rather it depends on continual re-enactment in the historic decisions of possible Existenzen to open themselves to each other. Hence, love is not an independent process that acts upon pre-communicative existence, transforming it into self-being in communication. It depends on the freely actualized decision to transcend in communication, to leave one's isolation and join with another.

As preparatory deficiency was a preceding possibility and meeting in time was a preceding reality, love is the preceding substance of communicative self-being. "Love is the substantial source of communicative self-being. It can produce self-being as the movement of its own manifestation; it cannot perfect a self-being that would be conclusive."[205] Just as each of the

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[202]PII p.66.

[203]PII p.59.

[204]PII p.60.

[205]PII p.66.

previous precedents reflected an aspect of transcending, transcending from objective consciousness to openness to possibility and from existence in time to the fulfilment of the moment, so love is a transcending from conditional relationships to the other to an unconditional bond with that other, upon which depends our self-being. As preceding substance, love grounds this transcending. My sense of the deficiency in communication can open up the awareness that if I am to become myself, it must be possible to somehow grasp my singularity, and to do so I must step beyond communication in existence in all its objectified dimensions. But in my dependence on chance meeting in time, I recognize that to become real my self-being requires phenomenality in existence and time, while at the same time transcending them in grasping the occasion as my chance to become myself in communication with the other. In order to achieve the fulfilled moment of self-being, I seize my situation in existence as mine in a transcending grasp. Love adds a directedness to the transcending, toward a bond with the other: I transcend from factual togetherness towards that transcendent unity of Existenzen which comes about through our free decision to manifest ourselves before each other in our historic meeting. My transcending to possibility and to fulfilment are grounded by this transcending toward unity with the other, and get from it their own inner pull toward actualization of self-being. Love in this sense is an awareness of the value of an unconditional bond in which I and the other are open to truly become ourselves.

What seems to come before communicative self-being then seems to be two dimensions of transcending: on the one hand, the capacity to transcend in awareness, to grasp the limits of the determinate thought of consciousness at large and not be constrained by them, so that I may grasp myself as possibility, and on the other, the capacity to transcend in practical relation to myself, so that the givens of empirical existence, my social-biological situation and the constraint of temporality, do not determine me completely, but allow my own self-handling in deciding 'how I am to be.' As such, this capacity to transcend would not properly be self-being. Human beings must inescapably employ this transcending in the ordinary reflexivity of knowledge and action,

for if it were not basically present, humans would have no possibility of knowledge, action, or self-being. The primary difference between this basic transcending and self-being proper is that, while basic transcending is compatible with my having no overall grasp of myself and continuing to define and treat myself in terms of the objectivities of my situation, self-being requires the explicit, free decision to take hold of myself and to direct my transcending grasp of myself with due regard for the constraints imposed by my phenomenal appearance in historicity.

§18. *Communication and the Other.*

Jaspers claims that only in existential communication with another Existenz does my conscious grasp of my self comes to be realized. "If I want to be manifest, I will risk myself completely in communication, which is my only way to self-realization. ... This process of realization in manifestation does not occur in isolated Existenz. It occurs only with another. To myself as an individual I am neither manifest nor real."[206] But what is necessary about the other Existenz in this process? Even if one can accept that manifestation and realization of my self can be one and the same, still one is left wondering as to why such a realization is dependent upon communication with another Existenz. There seems to be no inherent reference in the notions of manifestation, realization, possible or real Existenz to the necessity of communication or co-creation with other Existenzen apart from Jaspers's insistence. What prevents one from deciding about oneself, manifesting and realizing oneself in the absence of others, or, if they have not similarly experienced dissatisfaction and been moved toward possible Existenz, in their contemptible presence as mere empirical existences?

Perhaps there is a fruitful comparison to be made with Aristotle's notion of friendship and the significance it has for the flourishing of the human being. Friendship appears as an important

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[206]PII p.59.

notion in the *Nichomachean Ethics* because of the role it plays in the development of virtue and attaining the greatest possible state of flourishing of the individual. Friendship derives from relations we have to ourself, for in proper self-love, I wish for myself, as I do for my friend, the greatest happiness and virtue, value life for its own sake, and desire that we may do what is good.[207] I have the same attitude to my friend as I do to myself, the desire that we both master ourselves to achieve the best possible life. However, self-mastery does not develop as a matter of natural growth, but requires choice guided by self-knowledge and knowledge of virtue. Knowledge of virtue it is perhaps possible to obtain by practical philosophy, but self-knowledge is more problematic. My security in assessing my virtues and my faults is constantly overshadowed by the possibility that out of weakness, I conceal my faults from myself and exaggerate my strengths. If this is the case, my efforts to improve will also be ineffective, and so will any future attempts at self-assessment. My friend may assist me here in, on the one hand, holding up a example of virtue to me with which I already identify, so that out of affinity, the virtue I perceive in the friend's character I also take to have direct implications for how I ought to be.[208] But on the other hand, the friend is more than a passive reflection and will confirm or disconfirm both my assessment of myself and my assessment of him. Thus two friends attain the greatest state of flourishing possible by entering into a reflexive relation in which they are mutually guided towards the proper handling of themselves in accord with virtue. The friend is a 'second self' in which my own self is ideally reflected.[209] Aristotle's essential expression of this friendship is 'living together,' meaning that the highest state of self-mastery is attained by a communal activity.[210]

The community of Existenzen pictured by Jaspers is indeed the community of two individuals in the most intimate relationship. The loving struggle which captures the sense of that relationship

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[207]Aristotle. *Ethics* Bk. 9; Ch. 4.

[208]Aristotle. *Ethics* Bk. 9; Ch. 9.

[209]Aristotle. *Ethics* Bk. 9; Ch. 4.

[210]Aristotle. *Ethics* Bk. 9; Ch. 9.

could be analogous to the reflective but responsible friend, who allows me to see myself for what I am more clearly. And of course the dimension of myself that we are concerned to see clearly here is that of my possibility or transcendence beyond empirical existence. The friend can assist here in much the same way as with virtue: by reflecting the reality of the historic decision to enter communication in shared risk of ourselves and by engaging with me, provoking and encouraging my self-manifestation and challenging its authenticity. Though our communication perhaps has no content beside the concerns of existence, in freely grasping the moment of communication we reveal ourselves to each other as possibility that can become in the medium of phenomenality. Our joint manifestation in communication with each other is also our realization in that historic moment. The other self is perhaps essential reflectively in ensuring the seriousness of my manifestation, in holding up a mirror in which I see what I become, so that I cannot fatally deceive myself about its reality, and retreat from realization. The other may this way compel me to 'own' my historicity, and accept its concrete reality as mine. Also the other self, in probing and questioning my manifestation, may elicit greater realization than I am capable of alone, assisting me to become aware of the full extent of my situation and of my possibilities. The other self may assist me toward greater completeness.

Realization in the ways mentioned so far would seem to be greatly enhanced by the mutually reflective relationship to another Existenz, but not crucially enabled in a way not possible for a single self-reflective Existenz. Perhaps we must look further. In communication in existence, the substitutability of the communicants makes it unnecessary that there should be any polarity of solitude and union. Rather such communication depends solely on union, for it is in being able to interchange roles and knowledge that I can communicate here. This also makes impossible my finding any true self-being in these communicative relations, for the indefinite substitutability rules out the singularity I seek. By contrast, existential communication depends on polarity, for the two Existenzen must maintain both solitude and union in communication. I must stand alone as a singular one, even as I enter union with the other: if either of us

relinquishes our individuality, communication dies. Our communicative struggle must separate us and hold us together. If communication works at all, it works by forcing me to ascertain my limits, to work out in seriousness where I end and where the other begins. This is possible only so far as I enter into communicative struggle with another self also engaged in the struggle to establish and maintain his limits. On my own, even in full recognition of my possible Existenz and the need for historic realization, my limits remain ambiguous. I may decide about myself, claiming my situation as mine, but in moving toward my possibilities, the directions in which I may move and the extent to which I may go are potentially limitless. Everything of mundane existence offers itself as the opportunity for my self-actualization, though I may be subject to the constraints of immediate availability. But moving out from my situation, no direction in principle presents limits to my actualization, but rather offers occasions for it. Only the other self, in standing his ground before me in singularity, throws up a barrier to my self-actualization. In our communicative struggle, we come together in mutual definition of our limits. As Jaspers has said, this cannot be a total contest, for if I overrun the other, I lose myself as well. It is his singularity which I cannot grasp without destroying what is definitively not-I and not even potentially I, and it is only the reflection of this singularity that brings me to a realization of my own.

Limits are important in establishing the self as a whole which may be elucidated in communication. Communication is one aspect of the elucidation in which we approach the self as a whole. What allows me to grasp myself as a whole are the limits I establish and maintain in communication with other Existenzen. There are however a number of stumbling blocks that interfere with any direct grasp of the self. As phenomenal in existence, what appears of me is never to be taken for myself simply. My self is a non-objective entity transcendent upon existence. In historicity, my self appears as a fulfilment of the moment, but is fragmented and in constant becoming. What is 'I myself' remains dispersed in these things, which I must transcend in order to realize myself as a whole. But I cannot transcend to another kind of determinacy that

allows me a direct grasp of my self as a whole either, for I can only become myself in historic decision. Indeed, mutual creation in communication is also a historic process of constant becoming, dependent upon renewed engagement with the other as we mutually flesh out our boundaries. We must say then that the whole that is the self should not be understood in the same sense as a whole in existence, complete in a given instant and entirely available, but a transcendent and historic whole.

To summarize our discussion, the role of the other in communication is to make possible a grasp of the self through its limits, the particular nature of which is made available only in the reflective confrontation of selves. The 'not-I' of mundane being may serve to distinguish Existenz as possibility, but lacks the peculiar resistance that would prevent our mastering it in self-handling and incorporating it into my grasp of myself. The 'not-I' of another possible Existenz, however, repels my grasp or disappears as such, for here I confront an unmasterable singularity. It is the reflection of this singularity that reflectively directs my own grasp of my self in our mutual creation, and without this guide I would not attain to the appropriate level for selfhood.

§19. *Communication and Content.*

Being-with-others is an essential aspect of the transcending necessary to realize the level of Existenz. Existential communication forms not just the community of Existenzen, but allows their actualization in self-being. But what is unique about community or Being-with-others for Existenz? As biological or social beings, human beings do not stand in isolation, but rather can only be understood as members of a species or culture. As knowers, they cannot be understood independently of the standards of validity that constitute the community of knowers. As spiritual beings, again, the Idea under which they all find identity is the significant aspect of them. All the

forms of communication in existence found communities based around a content that reflects certain concerns, be they survival, the validity of knowledge or an ideal to which one can aspire. Grasping the community as a whole is necessary to understand what any member actually is. Existential communication has no different content from these forms of communication in existence, but the community it founds is rather different. Being-with-others seems paradoxical by comparison to these other forms of community, which in their central concern and mode of communication are clear as to what constitutes a member, while Jaspers has insisted upon the uniqueness and singularity of Existenz, which cannot be established on the basis of any of these forms of communication. What would it mean for singular beings to form a community? What must existential communication be to be a source of self-being?

Let us back up a bit and see how this has developed. As empirical existence, I am always in community via modes of communication appropriate to certain areas of concern or involvement. It was the sense of shortcoming in these modes of communication that prompted the move toward existential communication, for 'I myself' did not appear in these modes, but rather only one or other of my possible roles, which are themselves given from some outside source and occupiable by any of a number of possible 'I's. These two factors seem to be the problem. If I wish to seek 'my own origin,' seek 'myself *as* an origin,' the lack of any unique reference to myself and the heterogeneous sources of the ways 'I am' (my roles) will prevent the possibility of this. In reaction, I may isolate myself, seeking to stand upon myself alone, distinct from my roles.[211] But in fleeing away from the relations of existence to myself, I flee from what alone can make me real, for Existenz is realized in no other medium than existence, while never being simply identical to it. I cannot reject existence and its universal forms without rejecting the very possibility of realizing myself. But at the same time, should I hang on to existence and define myself as the mere negation of its determinacy, as abstract possibility, I lose myself in empty possibilities that will never be 'mine.' Isolated, I am either possibility without medium for

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[211]PII p.52

actualization, or objectivities without possibility. If communication is a source of Existenz, perhaps it is for this reason: it is about the preservation of possibilities which disappear in the universality of existence as well as in the solipsism of isolation.[212] The other, Jaspers seems to be saying, through communication, makes it possible for me to realize myself in existence yet remain more than simply that. In communication in existence, I am unable to find myself or my origin. Communication as a medium of existential possibility holds open my possible Existenz as I descend into historical realization of myself in existence by my free decision.[213]

Yet how does communication work as a medium of existential possibility? As Jaspers has remarked, communication has no content that is not accessible to consciousness as such. We communicate the stuff of existence and the objectivities of universally valid knowledge. But Existenz and the self are conceived as the contraries of these things, as what can never be universal, objective or fully determined in existence, and yet which must be expressed in this medium. As Jaspers frequently warns, any such communication runs the risk of being misunderstood or of misconceiving its subject matter, if indeed we are to think that it can be expressed in such a medium at all. It would be fatal to take my determinate, objective remarks in communication literally as facts about my self. Yet at the same time however, to become actual I must realize myself in existence through my historic choice of myself. And similarly, I choose this moment in existence to enter into communication with another Existenz, subject to all the constraints of that medium. But, if existential communication is really to be enjoined here, the other Existenz must also freely choose to become himself in this historic moment as well. If the other does not also respond to my overture as his historic chance to become, and in choosing to take his singular self to be directly implicated in this communication, 'overlook' its universal content, then communication will fail. What makes communication existential is that two Existenzen decide to relate to each other through their mutual free choice of the historic moment

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[212]PII p.56.
[213]PII p.54.

of communication. Each utterance reflects my renewed choice to be with that other, and aims at their freedom to enter into this relation as well. The objective content of communication is transcended in our free grasp of it as our mutual self-manifestation. The existential 'content' of communication is the free grasp of the historic moment as our chance to become ourselves in relation to each other. Communication can be a medium of possibility so far as it provokes our transcending to freedom without leaving behind our ground in historic realization.

Communication, then, is an essential form of transcending to the self. In entering into it, we move from a raw capacity for transcending, which may be unguided and misdirected, to a transcending that takes union with the other in a loving struggle as its guide. In enjoining communication with the other Existenz, I become reflectively aware of the boundaries of my self in the otherness of my communicative partner, and thus my transcending is directed beyond scattered leaps into non-objectivity towards the whole of my self-being. Although this whole is not immediately attainable in any individual act of transcending, for it is dispersed into my historicity, it guides my becoming in the free choice of my historic self. And finally, in communication, if at all existential, we transcend the mere objective contents of the medium of existence to the free grasp of self-being in that medium, as the focus of our awareness.

B. Buber: The 'You' and Encounter.

§20. *Twofoldness: I-It and I-You.*

The 'twofoldness' of human being expresses for Buber the relation character of being human. There are two essential, and essentially different, ways of being, characterized by the word pairs, I-It and I-You.

The I of the basic word I-You is different from that of the basic word I-It.
The I of the basic word I-It appears as an ego and becomes conscious of itself as a subject (of experience and use).
The I of the basic word I-You appears as a person and becomes conscious of itself as subjectivity (without any dependent genetive).
Egos appear by setting themselves apart from other egos.
Persons appear by entering into relation to other persons.[214]

In this section, we will examine the qualities of these two modes of being.

a) *I-It*

Buber characterizes the realm of the It as "the sphere of goal-directed verbs," in which the 'I' 'has something for his object.'[215] In other places, Buber introduces two broad headings under which these 'goal-directed verbs' may be grouped: "experience and use."[216] This, in short, seems to indicate a realm of intentional or appropriative awareness, of which Buber often remarks that it is not the sum total of human awareness. At various points, Buber tells us, directly or indirectly, that experience (and presumably use) 'remains on the surface of things,'[217] does not 'participate in the world,'[218] is composed of 'a loose bundle of qualities' or things,[219] is 'mediated by concepts,'[220] has 'a multitude of contents'[221] and is located temporally in the 'past.'[222] Interestingly, in contrasting experience with 'participation,' Buber remarks that experience is 'in the person experiencing,' not between them and the world, and nor does the world 'contribute' anything to the experience.[223] Also, the 'It-world' is not meant to distinguish the (actual) world of objects from the world of human beings. Nothing precludes my 'It' being

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[214]IT, 111-2
[215]IT, 54-5
[216]IT, 63, 65, 112
[217]IT, 55
[218]IT, 56
[219]IT, 59
[220]IT, 62-3
[221]IT, 63
[222]IT, 63
[223]IT, 56

another human being. Buber is clear on this point from the very beginning of *I and Thou*: the basic word, I-It, is not changed by the interjection of a He or She into the place of the It, for the relation established by the basic word is more primary than the terms of the relation.[224] To sum up, the world of experience and use, which includes the 'I' as a subject which takes an object by means of these relations, seems to have the following characteristics: it is *fragmentary* or *partial*, in contrast to what is whole; it is situated *egocentrically*, relative to the subject; it is *mediated* and *unoriginal*; and it is *objectifying*, or perhaps one should even say *constituting*, of the contents of awareness. This world has the quality of *mineness*, of being *my* field of objects, within *my* world, centred on *my* ego. However, this is not changed simply by including other such egos, by making this world 'objective' or 'intersubjective:' "You perceive it [this world] and take it for your 'truth'; it permits itself to be taken by you, but it does not give itself to you. It is only *about* it that you can come to an understanding with others; although it takes a somewhat different form for everybody, it is prepared to be a common object for you; but you cannot encounter others in it."[225] Indeed, this seems to be the world most common to human beings, for if this egocentric awareness is not the whole of human awareness as Buber says, it is without doubt the vastly predominant form of awareness. Buber gives a reason for this: the It-world is the world of human sustenance, survival and comfort. The necessities of daily life require that the I-It be spoken so that we may be pragmatic and effective in our conduct with our material environment and with other human beings.

Buber's characterization of the I-It is rather sparse. In the first part of *I and Thou*, the I-It is introduced mainly by contrast with the basic word I-You. The second part applies the I-It to the problem of alienation, in an extended account of how the It-world may propagate itself and come to dominate human awareness, but does not expand much on the initial sketch of the I-It. The imbalance in the effort Buber expended on characterizing each of the two basic words can

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[224]IT, 53
[225]IT, 83

perhaps be understood as a confidence that his reader would readily grasp the I-It as the familiar basis of everyday life, while the I-You may not be so easily recognized. Buber is careful to make the contrast of the I-It with the I-You in philosophical terms also. The difference is not 'outer versus inner experience,' nor 'manifest versus mystical experience.'[226] Nor is Buber contrasting realism with idealism.[227] Indeed, in spite of the antithesis between I-It and I-You, and Buber's frequent characterisation of one by negation of the qualities of the other, the distinction itself does not seem to be absolute. When one approaches another as a You, the objective qualities one may experience do not disappear but are included in the encounter, as Buber remarks of encountering the tree.[228] While not merely an object of knowledge or desire, the You is not an amorphous nothing either: on the contrary, it is entirely concrete, perhaps even more concrete than the objects of the It-world, yet evidently concrete in a sense to be distinguished from the everyday. The contrast is not between what is merely "looked at" rather than what is "spoken to," for to parallel 'experience,' Buber seems to introduce a 'seeing' not associated with experience and objects, which Kaufmann translates as 'beholding.'[229] The contrast is better understood as between *genuine presence* and *objectifications*, and the correspondingly different modes of awareness that are necessary for each. "For the real boundary, albeit one that floats and fluctuates, runs not between experience and non-experience, nor between the given and the not-given, not between the world of being and the world of value, but across all the regions between You and It: between presence and object."[230] Genuine presence confronts us 'bodily':[231] but an object is mastered as our possession. Perhaps the essential meaning of the It-world for Buber lies in its *self-centeredness* and *self-enclosedness*, or potential for such. Within its domain, one never confronts a genuine independent reality, but rather only one's own self-determined ideas. The certainties available from this point of view are those achieved by the exclusion of the alien.

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[226]IT, 56

[227]IT, 65

[228]IT, 58

[229]IT, 61; n.6

[230]IT, 63

[231]IT, 58, n.1; 63-4

This is an egocentric world, in which the 'I' appears as a desiring or knowing ego, but not as a complete person. Descartes's nightmare of being trapped in a dreamworld comes to mind here.

b) *I-You*

To be confronted by a genuine presence, then – to speak the basic word I-You – affords some form of escape from this self-enclosedness. As mentioned, we may describe the characteristics of the I-You by contrast to those of the I-It. Unlike the relation to an It, the I-You does not consist in taking an object, or in goal-directed verbs.[232] As opposed to merely experiencing and using, the I-You is a *'participation in actuality.'*[233] In the I-You, the mediation by intentionality (or perhaps by objectifying intentionality) is replaced by *immediacy*,[234] the partial or fragmentary focus of awareness by a *response to a whole*,[235] determination or constitution of the object by *reciprocity*, or *mutual action* of the terms upon each other,[236] and the ego by a *person* .[237] Finally, the It-world is a field of objects organized in space and time, all of which bear reference to each other as part of what they are,[238] whereas in the I-You the *'power of exclusiveness'* holds sway.[239] Let us look more closely at some of these terms.

By 'exclusiveness,' Buber apparently means a singular relationship with a being, and with a single whole being: "... man encounters being and becoming as what confronts him – always only *one* being and every thing only as a being."[240] Instead of consisting of 'things among things' or 'bundles of qualities,'[241] the I-You relation involves beings confronting beings, as beings, as

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[232]IT, 54-5
[233]IT, 56, 112-4
[234]IT, 62-63
[235]IT, 61-3
[236]IT, 58, 62, 65-67
[237]IT, 112
[238]IT, 55, 59, 82-4
[239]IT, 58, 60, 66, 83-4
[240]IT, 83
[241]IT, 59

wholes. "Nothing else is present but this one, but this one cosmically. Measure and comparison have fled. ... The encounters do not order themselves to become a world, but each is for you a sign of the world order."[242] Exclusiveness seems to imply that the world of relation happens as a unique relation (excluding all 'neighbouring' things[243]), which requires a commitment of one's whole being.[244] Yet, while relating to a whole prevents any partial relation or relation to a particular, this relation, as mentioned, includes all of the particulars in the being and all of the relations to them.[245] In the relation, it is not as though, mysteriously, the You has disappeared as a distinct object, with distinct qualities - his or her hair is still brown, he or she is still tall, and such other facts remain - but rather my attitude has changed. Buber is perhaps trying to characterize the dedication and the attitude necessary for one to 'turn toward' and be responsible for an other. In the context of a discussion of love as an example of 'an action of the whole which is not like action,'[246] he seems to make this connection. "Exclusiveness comes into being miraculously again and again – and now one can act, help, heal, educate, raise, redeem. Love is responsibility of an I for a You ... ."[247] Unlike the attitude that measures and compares, that assigns a place to each thing within the order of the world, the attitude of the I-You is not one of assimilation of the other, but one of living, present openness. The meaning of this will become clearer in later discussion of responsibility.

Buber further characterizes the I-You as a participation in being: "The I is actual through its participation in actuality."[248] Throughout *I and Thou*, Buber repeatedly makes remarks such as 'all actual life is encounter or relation.'[249] The clear implication of such remarks as these is to specify that participation or relation is a condition of a certain kind of being, of being a person.

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[242] IT, 83
[243] IT, 59
[244] IT, 60
[245] IT, 58
[246] IT, 62
[247] IT, 66
[248] IT, 113
[249] IT, 60, 62

"The person becomes conscious of himself as participating in being, as being-with, and this as a being."[250] It has already been noted that one's experiencing and using relation with objects and the world preclude participation: to experience or use is to appropriate an object for oneself, to determine it egocentrically. Neither the object nor the ego is a complete being, but rather are narrowed to the bare necessities for the function being undertaken. By contrast the I-You is a response of the whole person to another entire, whole being, which is beyond assimilation or appropriation. "All actuality is an activity in which I participate without being able to appropriate it. Where there is no participation, there is no actuality. Where there is self-appropriation, there is no actuality."[251] This might be understood simply as participation in *human* reality - as human beings are persons, to be quintessentially human is to participate in an I-You relationship with other human beings. But it is clear that Buber means this more directly as a metaphysical participation in being as well. This is obvious in the example of the tree, which in encounter confronts him 'bodily' with its presence, and when, in the "Afterword" (1957) to *I and Thou*, he states that those realms of nature which lack spontaneity and cannot strictly respond, nevertheless may exhibit a reciprocity of being itself, that has nothing but being.[252] There is a mystery to be solved in these remarks, but first we must introduce further aspects of the problem.

Another implication of the contrast between the It-world and the You-world is that the I-You is reciprocal or mutual action, unlike the I-It which acts unilaterally. "Relation is reciprocity. My You acts on me as I act on it."[253] This is not to be understood as the mere interaction of forces. Rather, the terms that characterize this reciprocity for Buber are 'grace and will.'[254] The point here is that no action the 'I' may make on the You is sufficient to determine the relation: indeed, where this is so, no I-You relation can exist. The mutuality Buber describes is a mutual 'turning

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[250] IT, 113
[251] IT, 113
[252] IT, 173
[253] IT, 67
[254] IT, 58, 62

toward' each other,[255] such that if one party freely refuses, the relation falls short. Hence, it is 'by grace' that the You turns toward me - nothing I can do merits this, not even my own turning towards. But at the same time, my 'will' to relation must be present as my essential deed. "The You encounters me by grace – it cannot be found by seeking. But that I speak the basic word to it is a deed of my whole being, is my essential deed. The You encounters me. But I enter into direct relationship to it. Thus the relationship is election and electing, passive and active at once."[256] As a 'deed of the whole being,' turning toward the other cannot be a partial act, which may then be described as 'active' relative to the passivity of other parts. Again, what I can will is my openness to the encounter, which is more akin to passive waiting than to any act of provocation, of teasing out the other. This is perhaps also a matter of taking responsibility for the other, of genuine responding to them.[257] This again will be discussed later, but for now, let us note that the mutuality or reciprocity under discussion does not suppose that the 'I' and the You are strictly equals, or that the mutuality assumes an exchange of equivalents, as would be understood in everyday usage. Rather, in the "Afterword" to *I and Thou*, Buber addresses this question and suggests a couple of possible I-You relations that are nevertheless not reciprocal in the everyday sense: the teacher and pupil, and the therapist and patient.[258] The reciprocity or mutuality must here be understood metaphysically, in a sense that will not map directly onto the sense of everyday terms.

As should be coming clear, the notion of responsibility is perhaps the crucial component of the I-You, as it appears to link the previous notions. However, although mentioned in *I and Thou* briefly, along with the concomitant term 'address,' the concept of responsibility appears primarily in "Dialogue," "The Question of the Single One," "Education," and other works following *I and Thou*. Buber's frequent expression for what one does in taking up an I-You

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[255]D, 40

[256]IT, 62

[257]D, 34

[258]IT, 177-79

relationship, "turning towards,"[259] can be understood as a responding to the presence of another being, and so connected with responsibility. "Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding."[260] As Buber suggests, responsibility must not here be thought of in its specialized ethical connotations. Rather, it has a greater than normative sense of accountability, which can be indicated by the neologism "response-ability." This sense of response-ability contains the actuality of response in concrete situations and the normative requirement of responsibility, but broadens both. Buber's suggestion seems to be that "being held accountable" depends on a prior relationship that establishes a state of "being together with" another being. If this is the case, then something of this state of "being together," which would be the I-You mode of existence, must have a fundamentally normative character, which cannot be separated from it. Perhaps this can be found in the most concrete expression for responsibility, the phenomenon of address and answer. "Responsibility presupposes one who addresses me primarily, that is, from a realm independent of myself, and to whom I am answerable."[261] ("... a word demanding an answer has happened to me."[262]) To address me, a being must be separate from me and remain so even in relation: separate cannot mean only "having no relation".[263] From without I find myself called or addressed, by one who may require "something" of me. The force of this requirement derives from an essential state of being to which I am called, which is both the form and the content of the address. The content essentially is "to be able to be addressed and answer," whatever else it may be, and the form is simply the address itself. In any address, I am called to realize an essential dimension of human life, to attain to a certain state of being. That this is an essential state of being is enough to make me responsible, to make me answerable. This capacity to find oneself called upon and required to answer is the state of being in relation to an Other, to that which is independent from oneself.

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[259]D, 40

[260]D, 34

[261]"The Question of the Single One." p.66 in Buber, *Between Man and Man.*

[262]D, 29

[263]Cf. Levinas, who refers to a reality that encloses upon itself, separates itself: it acquires its peculiar independence in defining itself.

Perhaps this is the meaning of twofoldness. The I-It and I-You differentiate two modes of existence, the first characterized by egocentricity which is enclosed upon itself through appropriation of objects for experience or use, and the second by an essential decentring towards the Other, an independent opposite which is not an object of appropriation but a real presence. The way of being of the I-You involves participation in a mutual recognition and acceptance of responsibility with respect to a genuine Other, which will not occur without removing the ego from its position as the locus of a world of things. Of course, the mode of being described here is that of 'persons' as opposed to egos, making this relation to Otherness a defining feature of personhood. This essential feature Buber captures variously in such terms as Dialogue, Encounter, the 'Meeting,' the Between and the Interhuman. As we have noted, Buber makes this relation to, or encounter of, Otherness the essence of genuine humanity, 'real life' and the authentic 'experience' of anything. There is little question of the premium placed on the I-You by Buber, and this makes the reason for this only more evident. The I-You holds open an essential possibility of being, for without the possibility of encounter, it seems the wholeness of being accomplished in relation to genuine presence would be impossible.[264] The It-world by contrast is one in which fragmentary egos are subjected to grasping at mere aspects of beings, prevented by their relations of appropriation from authentic contact with each other or any thing. This is an important point: however, we must enquire into the nature of encounter to be sure we have understood the meaning of relation to Otherness. There are complications introduced into the account, partly as a result of ambiguities Buber has introduced either by what he has said or what he has failed to say.

§21. *Encounter.*

As mentioned, a factor which complicates the interpretation of Buber is his expansion of the

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[264]IT, 62

world of relation beyond life with human beings, to include nature and what he refers to as
"spiritual beings." Early in *I and Thou*, he lists the three spheres of relation.

> The first: life with nature. Here the relation vibrates in the dark and remains below language.
> The creatures stir across from us, but they are unable to come to us, and the You we say to them
> sticks to the threshold of language.
> The second: life with men. Here the relation is manifest and enters language. We can give and
> receive the You.
> The third: life with spiritual beings. Here the relation is wrapped in a cloud but reveals itself, it
> lacks but creates language. We hear no You and yet feel addressed; we answer – creating,
> thinking, acting: with our being we speak the basic word, unable to say You with our mouth."[265]

The status of the non-human I-You relations seems also to be the main topic of the "Afterword."

There we get further clarification of his intended meaning. The question is posed as to what sort

of reciprocity one may find in relation to beings incapable of language or perhaps even

animation. Buber refers to the domestication of animals and the partnerships that are possible

between human beings and animal companions. Human beings can 'draw animals into their

sphere,' apparently forming quasi-communities with them. Animals are not twofold like

humans, yet may still "turn toward another" and contemplate objects.[266] Buber suggests that

they are perhaps on the *threshold* of mutuality, and twofoldness is latent in them. Non-animate

nature however occupies the *pre-threshold* of mutuality, where even in the absence of

spontaneity there remains the 'reciprocity of being itself.' In this domain, one's I-You attitude

provides an opportunity for these beings to manifest their "living wholeness and unity."[267] The

third realm of spiritual beings does not refer to angels or disembodied spirits or anything of the

like. Buber's examples of this realm are the sayings of an ancient master and a Doric column.[268]

In the case of the sayings, or recorded words, of a master no longer present, it is easy to see how

one might adopt an I-You relation. For one may read with an analysing, dissecting mind, and

regard the book as a collection of facts and an intellectual structure to be sifted and broken down

– or one may adopt the attitude of You-saying, in which one opens oneself to be addressed by the

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[265] IT, 56-7
[266] IT, 172-3
[267] IT, 173
[268] IT, 173-76

perhaps long-dead master. This may be due mainly to the presence of language. Yet even with the Doric column there is spiritual form with which one of the right attitude may be confronted. It "lacks but creates language."[269] Here Buber seems to be describing how one may feel addressed by the 'spirit' communicated through verbal and non-verbal works, and respond to this, though nothing explicit or direct has been said. Spirit could perhaps refer to the intelligible, the traces of purposeful actions left behind. However, Buber also alludes to there being something more profound and mysterious about this as well.[270] The examples discussed are of spiritual forms that "have already entered the world," while there remains another category of those which "have not yet entered the world." Of this latter group, Buber gives no examples, remarking that it may be up to the testimony of the reader's own mysteries to reveal them.[271] This third realm Buber terms the *over-threshold* of mutuality.

Now, the problem this presents is as follows: if encounter or response-ability are to be described as essential aspects of a state of being, such that a relation to Otherness is a defining feature of such a being, should this be understood as an essential state of *human* being? On the one hand, the answer must be an obvious 'yes.' The primary focus of Buber's discussion is in every case the life of human beings. Further, an essential fact about human beings is that they are social animals. Interaction with other members of their species is a crucial part of the identity, to say nothing of the well-being, of human beings. A human infant steps progressively into relation as it develops: perhaps response-ability comes about as a result of socialization. This could make sense of the claims Buber makes for the primacy of the relation over the terms, as when he insists that the I-You or the I-It are more basic and original than the 'I.' For in this case, the relation could be seen to be independent of the terms in being embodied in human sociality. The norms of human relation pre-exist any human individual, and it is by adopting these norms (effectively, the I-You) that one enters human community. Human society is a product on the one hand of

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[269]IT, 57

[270]IT 176, see translator's note.

[271]IT, 174

human interaction and at the same time also independent of any particular interaction. Perhaps it also makes sense of such remarks as the following: "In the beginning is relation -- as a category of being, as readiness, as a form that reaches out to be filled, as a model of the soul; the *a priori* of relation; *the innate You*."[272] It has been remarked by such as commentator Nathan Rotenstreich[273] that philosophically, this is highly ill-chosen language.[274] Yet might it not be that the 'innate You' is simply the species-being of human being?

Can Buber merely be referring to the sociological or psychological facts of the matter then? Were that so, then the occasional grandioseness of his language would far outstrip its meaning. It is hard to see how this could count as 'an original fact of being' at all. If the above analysis were correct, the I-You would refer only to the species interaction of human beings, their talking to and living with other human beings. But if so, what would it mean to treat someone as an 'It,' as Buber clearly sees possible? For the I-You would designate no more than 'relations to human beings,' while the I-It would designate 'relations to objects,' which if simple facts of human behaviour, would leave inexplicable any motivation for a crossing-over of the two relations. In any event, Buber has said enough to eliminate this as a possible interpretation, being clear that much of human society is conducted in a degraded form akin to an 'I-It' relation. Further, the possibility of encounter with non-human Others becomes doubtful, for on the one hand, corollary to the above, there is no motivation to extend the 'You' to any being outside the human sphere. On the other hand, if human society is the model of reciprocity, it is obvious that few of the non-human Others are qualified to respond to human address, some lacking language, others even animation. This theme creates problems of interpretation throughout the historical course of Buber's writings. His emphasis seems to shift progressively further to the human sphere following *I and Thou*, in such works as "Dialogue" (1929) and the mention of non-human examples becomes rare to the point of non-existence in "Distance and Relation" (1951) and

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[272]IT, 78

[273]in *Immediacy and Its Limits: A Study in Martin Buber's Thought.* (Reading: Harwood Academic, 1991.)

[274]Rotenstreich, 12-14

"Elements of the Interhuman" (1957). Yet the "Afterword" to *I and Thou* (also 1957) returns to the theme of the non-human Other forcefully and in depth. Buber apparently wishes to maintain that the I-You is much broader than human sociality, including the possibility of response-ability in the face of animals and trees, as well as spiritual forms embodied in works of art. Domesticated animals are much less of a problem for the obvious reason of their living alongside human community, and spiritual forms, being products of human creation, can perhaps be understood to 'speak to one,' though it is hard to dismiss the claim that these cases should still be seen as metaphorical or anthropomorphizing extensions of a genuine I-You. As for the inanimate or even lifeless, however, it is unclear exactly what must count as address or answer in these cases, and if anything, the human case inevitably remains the paradigm.

It should be clear that Buber cannot mean simply to be describing human social relations in the notion of encounter or response-ability. Yet persistent interpretive questions remain. In short, we are asking which comes first: human being or the I-You? Is what Buber investigates under this heading primarily to be thought of as an original category of being in itself, or is it to be understood in light of given facts of human behaviour? Is what we are discussing metaphysical or social? Perhaps the problem is ultimately that while Buber clearly intends to present an original way of being in the basic word I-You, he also insists that this is no different from the concrete facts of human being. ("For I speak only of the actual human being, of you and me, of our life and our world ... ."[275]) Moreover, comprehension of his most metaphysical expressions of the I-You requires illustrations taken from the social world, which then require additional qualification to prevent further misunderstanding. There are three related, though not quite identical, interpretive issues that need to be addressed here. First, there is the problem of how relations to inanimate being fit under the heading of the I-You. This is significant mainly because it serves to raise the question of how we are to take the I-You generally. If You-saying which addresses rocks and trees must be considered seriously, a second look must be taken at

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[275] IT, 65

what it is to say 'You' to another human being. Second, the theme of the primacy or originality of the relation over the terms arises, because answers given to the first question may create problems for understanding the meaning of the primacy of relation, and vice versa. We have noted a possible interpretation of the primacy issue, though one perhaps doomed to failure, in the notion that society embodies a set of norms that antedate any human individual. To become an I, and say 'You,' is to have been shaped by this set of norms. This interpretation, as noted, undermines the possibility of the non-human You, yet is not without merit. Understanding the I-You as a set of norms which establish a new way of being for the terms of the relation through relating them has considerable potential as an interpretation. For example, consider the normative structure of a court of law. The terms of the various relations within the court do not pre-exist the relations themselves, in the sense that the designations, 'prosecutor' or 'defence counsel,' depend on recognition exactly through the relations that position them within the normative structure of the court. Individual persons may step into these roles, but 'becoming the defence counsel' depends on the antecedence of the normative structure of the court. In any case, care must be taken to ensure the greatest harmony between these two issues. Third, Buber also insists on the immediacy of the I-You relation. This means that no content must intervene in the dialogical relation which would mediate between the 'I' and the You, but rather the I-You is a direct encounter between whole beings or presences. Rotenstreich questions the plausibility of this view, suggesting that at the very least, there must be a content guiding my address in the dialogical relation so far as I must acknowledge the Other as a human being.[276] His suggestion seems simply that I must identify Others as human before I can respond to them. This of course raises the same set of issues as the above. Further, it raises the question of what we should understand to take place in encounter, and the question, if my address must be guided, what it is about the Other that enables "turning towards" or You-saying. Rather than deal with these topics sequentially, we will aim for a global interpretation, starting by addressing the comments of Rotenstreich.

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[276]See Rotenstreich, Chapter 7, "Ontology."

Rotenstreich's analysis of this issue can be found in the 'Ontology' chapter of his book: "the doctrine of dialogical mutuality is not based on the notion of a substance or a content that is conveyed in the dialogical meeting. ... the very dialogical meeting is, as it were, its own content."[277]   Buber wishes to avoid the mediation of any content in the dialogical situation, for this would undercut the immediacy of the meeting by interjecting a 'screen' between the partners. Rather than a content, what is received is the presence of the other. "Man receives, and what he receives is not a 'content' but a presence, a presence as a strength."[278]   Perhaps it is not that the partners in dialogue are excluded completely from an exchange of content, but the presence of each to the other in encounter is a necessary precedent to any such exchange. But Rotenstreich wonders further whether any situation is really without content as part of its constitution: for example, is not the dialogical situation accompanied by the acknowledgement of the other as a human being, so that here the unavoidable content is simply "the notion of man as man"?[279]   The thought here seems to be that without guiding markers to establish the appropriateness of address, You-saying would not be possible. Hence, some minimal content must intervene in the dialogical situation.

There are a number of things to be said about this. First, Buber plainly conceives of encounter as broader than simple human relations. Throughout his book, Rotenstreich makes very little of the theme of the non-human Other. What corresponds to 'the notion of man as man' in these cases? More importantly, what would it mean to acknowledge the other 'as a human being?' Does this involve me in classifying them as members of a certain species, or as members of my society or ethnic group, or more abstractly, as subjects or consciousnesses? When Rotenstreich claims that encounter necessarily involves some notion of what we encounter, that we encounter human beings as human beings, perhaps he is saying that there being "another like us" (the other's evident belonging to the same species as us) is a sign of the appropriateness of You-saying.

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[277]Rotenstreich, 45

[278]IT, 158

[279]Rotenstreich, 46

Physically, we are the same, and thereby distinguished from other animate life. Can the twofoldness of human life be accounted for by the distinction of species similarity and dissimilarity? One might argue that this age-old distinction is the basis of the twofoldness and hence of the apparent immediacy (through sheer ingrainedness) of the encounter in which address is given to the human other. However, this makes twofoldness dependent upon a prior distinction between the human and the non-human, which apparently undermines Buber's claim for the fundamental character and the originality of twofoldness. Also, Buber would surely describe any such relations as I-It relations. If I do approach a human being with the idea that this is a member of a certain species, social group, or some such, I have failed to encounter him as a presence, as whole (which perhaps nevertheless includes all those things without them being the primary fact of the encounter). Surely, the classification of the other into a species would establish an I-It relation, no matter that it is also *my* species. Even if I approach the other with the notion 'person' in mind, I have guided my relations to him by a certain essential content (rationality, worldliness, intersubjectivity, what have you). Thus, I have determined the nature of the experience of the other by the content of the notion 'person.' This seems to make the I-You seem like a special case of the I-It relation, distinguished only in being determined by a special kind of appropriation, through specifically validated concepts, such as 'person.' This raises the more general question of how an authentically personal relationship should be understood. Ironically, our point here seems to be that in having a personal relationship, what you cannot have is the concept of the 'person.' In any case, it seems that whatever I must acknowledge, if anything at all, in the other during an encounter must be broader and less specific than any of the above possibilities.

Rotenstreich also suggests that principles, such as reason, might serve as a third realm in which the dialogical situation is mediated. The other, Buber says, makes us answerable, response-able, in a way mere reason cannot. Rotenstreich denies this, suggesting that not only are we

answerable to reason, it may be a precondition of relation.[280] "We are also answerable to it, because the dynamics of relations are not unguided, and are, or at least may be, restrained, shaped, channelled."[281] Again, how should one envision this situation? If the dynamics of relation are not unguided, does this mean that we should be happy to include as an instance of genuine encounter, a dialogue guided, say, by the rules of a bureaucracy, which admittedly have a certain rationality? Or is it simply a 'common sense' that guides us? It would be hard to imagine human relations in the total absence of common understandings of what is appropriate in a given situation, and I certainly can be made answerable for my behaviour by such a sense of appropriateness. But in thinking reason cannot make us answerable, perhaps Buber has in mind only the sense of reason as a circumscribed system of rules with a specific application, localized and limited by its determinateness. When two members of the aforementioned bureaucratic institution meet to transact business, there may well be a set of procedures to shape their meeting. These may be entirely explicit and laid out in the company policy manual, and perhaps nothing more than is captured in these procedures takes place in a given meeting. If the dialogical situation is not unguided, it is not at any rate simply guided by a similarly limited sense of principles. If the dynamics of relation in genuine encounter may be shaped or channelled, perhaps Buber is saying they are not shaped or channelled in a way that may be given in its particulars, explicitly and in advance. Rather perhaps it is the dialogical situation of encounter itself that will establish how it will be shaped - it is not shaped in advance so that it merely takes on an available form, but rather is shaped as a result, produced by the encounter itself. Perhaps one could even say that the 'shape' is a leftover, a remnant of the genuine encounter, which while it may be described after the fact as having a certain principled shape, this no longer has normative force on the encounter, should it be on-going. The encounter of another person need not be predetermined, or if not, senseless. Perhaps a broader, indeterminate (or rather undeterminably less determinate) intelligibility or reason belongs to the encounter itself. When

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[280]Rotenstreich, 47
[281]Rotenstreich, 47

the 'I' and the You meet, they know how to proceed, not as one knows what rule governs the next play in a game, but by determining what will be as they go, through address and response. In this sense of reason, reason may be a precondition of encounter, or a concomitant. Without being arbitrary, what is reasonable in encounter is not guaranteed in advance either.

In the background, of course, are the questions of what motivates and what warrants the ascription of personhood or 'You-ness' to another being. If what motivates this ascription is a pre-given classification of animate beings into human and non-human species, then we should not expect the warrant for our ascriptions to correspond in every case to our motivations, as for example, in the case of an infant born with just enough brain damage to give her a set of reactions to the world but with none of the essential capacities of personhood. Our motivation here should be towards ascription yet this will prove unwarranted, given the connection between conscious life and the possession of significant neural development. The inverse case is where, in spite of the presence of neural development and evident self-awareness as displayed in animal behaviour, we refuse to attribute more to a creature than reaction or instinct. Decisions in these cases are clouded by the familiarity of our assumed behaviours toward the different groups of beings, the possibility of anthropomorphism, and the absence of common language. The problem is clearer with a wholly alien other, whose strange morphology and behaviour threaten any easy assimilation to the animal or to the human. What behaviour distinguishes the You from the non-You? Whatever means we allow to make the distinction must be able to cover this case as well as the case of distinguishing animal from human. Consciousness has greater generalizability than *human* consciousness, and however justified the refusal to attribute it to certain animals may be, it cannot be based on a simple difference of outward form which could force a different classification.

Language-use is often introduced here as an important factor. What is it about language that gives evidence of self-awareness? Why do we not believe we are having a conversation with a

talking parrot or with a automated voice menu on the telephone? With the parrot, few would persist long in the feeling that a genuine exchange of views was taking place. Even when chimpanzees and gorillas seem to master rudimentary symbol use, there remains a crucial ambiguity that makes straightforward, unqualified ascription of subjectivity unlikely. No doubt something like flexibility and adaptability of response combined with relevance of response enables those ascriptions. But what would allow us to make the distinction between a lack of self-awareness and the utterly other self-awareness? Would it make a difference if I were to hear the alien others using language among themselves (assuming this is actually identifiable)? I would not grasp anything of the content they (and possibly I) might share in the first instance, but what would happen to my tendency to attribute self-awareness to them? Surely it would go up dramatically in spite of my lacking any shared understanding with them, and in fact, it might be evident language-use that makes me believe we can share such an understanding. But if this is so, there is a distinction between 'language-use' and 'language-use for a certain content,' and similarly a distinction between 'understanding' and 'understanding a certain content.' This presses the point as to what it is we are attributing to another being when we attribute personhood to them. If it is an understanding of the world that can be shared in by ourselves, there should be no such distinction between understanding and understanding a certain content, for in that case, it is by the content that we identify the understanding. Is then the quality of possessing an understanding distinct from the quality of possessing an understanding of a certain content? How? How general or specific a content need it be? What perceptions would give us warrant of either? If an alien other and I are able to come to an (apparent) agreement about the significance of dried sticks and flinty rocks for our survival on a cold night, we both comprehend the basic goal of survival. But beyond that how much is potentially shared is undetermined.

However, is the attribution of personhood, or any other such quality, the assumption of encounter at all? We can, of course, engage in the attribution of personhood, and attempt to apply set criteria to given cases. But it is another question if this is what we are doing in relating

personally to another person. Perhaps the I-You relation can be profitably understood in terms of the notion of 'play.' Even where a rule is clear and explicitly set out, the application of the rule is still in question - is this case truly an instance covered by the rule? How should the rule be applied in these particular circumstances? Yet this does not mean the application of rules is arbitrary or unreasonable; the basic choice one makes is to respond to rules or norms, in a way not determinate prior to the response. We can imagine the application of one set of rules to be governed by another set of rules, and in some cases these may well be made explicit also: but so far as one inevitably reaches a point at which a rule must be applied, without guidance by any further rules, a simple response must be made. Play takes place in this gap between the determinacy of rules and the indeterminacy of their application. At the bottom of any rule-governed activity which may be made explicit in some degree, remains a response to those rules which may not be fully articulable, which we could term, rule-responsiveness. When we consider twofoldness, perhaps the I-It captures situations in which this responsiveness is not absent but subordinated to a set of rules, say, for identifying the species of a given creature. A given set of rules governs my appropriation of the world as objects of experience and use, which in so being appropriated, is revealed as rule-governed itself, so far as certain portions of it which I have isolated bear specific relations to other portions. In a sense, to treat someone as an It is to regard them as rule-governed but not rule-responsive; while the I-You relation is to respond to the responsiveness of the Other. Perhaps the quality of the other which is not conceptualizable, and is not what we attribute to him either, is exactly this responsiveness. So I do not attribute to the other the quality of being a human being, nor do I attribute possession of a world as an inner contents, nor do I attribute understanding per se, neither of a content nor understanding in itself, nor do I attribute principles to mediate the Other's relation to the world or other beings. I do not even attribute responsiveness: rather I don't attribute at all but respond. To be in an I-You relation is to open oneself responsively to the responsiveness of the Other. Perhaps in turning toward the other, sometimes I can do no more than await answer to my address. But at the heart of the I-You lies this openness to response, which neither classifies the other nor regulates the

contact through set procedures. What about the non-human Other? Opening oneself in responsiveness is not limited by, say, my expectations of the likelihood of a response from a tree (since seeing it as an inanimate object would likely prevent me from doing the things that would seek response). For if I don't attribute but respond myself (adopt a stance of responsiveness, 'turn towards') perhaps what counts as receiving a response is similarly not determined by any attribution or preconception. To approach encounter with a preconceived notion of what should count as response is surely just as destructive to the I-You as approaching the other through a preconception of what he should be. Perhaps the original question of how one should understand the possibility of address from inanimate beings was simply misconceived. Setting conditions for response would certainly allow one to regulate and classify one's grasp of the world, to separate the human and the non-human, to define suitable and unsuitable answers in given situations. But yet there remains the possibility of patient openness in the face of Otherness, which is itself the essential form of address.

The fundamental issue when we enquire into the meaning of the I-You and responsibility is perhaps whether all relations within the world are a matter of appropriation - of making ours an item of knowledge or an object of desire, in which conceptualization and technical ability function as tools to enhance the appropriate - *or* whether there is a possibility of relating in a way that does not 'make ours,' that dethrones and reorients the ego from the centre to the perimeter, that lets things 'become present' by being open to respond to that which eludes our appropriation - in short, whether there is a relation to a genuine Other as opposed to an object. This is the ultimate meaning of Buber's assertion of twofoldness. With this we have answered two of the above questions. The immediacy of the I-You expresses pure responsiveness of a relation to a genuine other. No content can intervene here for the possibility of encounter depends on not 'responding to the other *as* ... .' Hence Rotenstreich's assertion that some minimal content must mediate and guide such a relation effectively denies twofoldness. This could possibly be the case: there may be no genuine other, but human life would look rather different than it does.

Further it seems that the stumbling block to thinking of the non-human You can be resolved by pointing out that the classification of beings into animals, plants, responders and non-responders, is exactly what must be avoided in the I-You. If one approaches another being with 'speech-less, inanimate object' in mind, one cannot expect response. If one has the expectation that response is only 'linguistic, meaningful communication,' perhaps one cannot even expect to encounter genuine response from other human beings, for genuine response resists even this minimal codification. The responsiveness at the heart of encounter will not be so constrained. Hence it should seem that when we begin to grasp the meaning of You-saying, our question concerning the non-human other is dissipated.

However, one problem from above remains, and a new problem may have cropped up in the course of the above interpretation. The solutions to both problems so far have involved an examination of the requirements for the I-You, and have discovered it is the possibility of pure responsiveness, such that turning towards places me in a world of relation to Others. But does this perhaps undermine the possibility of adequately dealing with Buber's theme of the priority of the relation over the terms? In the course of the interpretation the emphasis has shifted from the relation to the 'I,' seeming to make the attitude of the 'I' responsible for establishing the relation. Of course, this does not fit with Buber's claims. Relation may not be reduced to an effect of its terms, as if the 'inborn You' should be invoked by the 'I' at the appropriate moment to bring about the relation. Hence we must investigate further to see if our analysis can be made consistent with this theme.

What does Buber mean by the primacy of the relation over the terms? We have noted that he seems to mean that before any I or You, there exists the relation, and we attempted to interpret this as perhaps referring to the way in which the social sphere pre-exists any given individual as a set of norms that relate individuals together. We have also noted such remarks as "In the beginning is relation -- as a category of being, as readiness, as a form that reaches out to be filled,

as a model of the soul; the *a priori* of relation; *the innate You*."[282]   Rotenstreich takes this to be

simply an assertion of the primary fact of relation, rather than a serious invoking of

philosophically problematic notions.[283]   This is plausible, but given the above start on an

interpretation, what we seem to be looking for in this 'primary fact of relation' is some kind of

norm.   One way we could understand the primacy of the relation over the terms, we noted, is by

taking the relation to be embodied in a norm or normative structure that defines and gives

relation to the terms.   The main problem for such an approach is that Buber clearly insists that he

refers only to the concrete facts of relation rather than ideals that might possibly be instantiated.

However, we can see where Buber himself refers to the very ideas we seem to require.   In the

"Afterword" again, discussing the topic of the non-human You, he remarks: "To understand it

[the I-You relationship] we must sometimes step out of our habits of thought, but not out of the

primal norms that determine men's thoughts about what is actual."[284]   It is hard to tell exactly

what we are to make of this, but perhaps we can suggest an interpretation that will be consistent

with what we have so far.   We have looked to society as a possible source of normative structure

and found it to be rather lacking in primacy.   Language, which Buber connects with the I-You, is

another possible source of normative structure, yet again cannot be the most basic form of

address and answer, for this would exclude the others who are not language-users.   So we are

looking of an instance of normative structure that is extremely basic.   Thus far we have made no

mention of the role of religion in Buber's thought – perhaps at this point it becomes essential.

The topic of *I and Thou*'s third part is the eternal You, and the connection between the human I-

You and the divine I-You.   It is there that Buber says the You-world "coheres in the centre in

which the extended lines of relationship intersect: in the eternal You."[285]   By 'cohering in the

eternal You,' the You-world is unified and made continuous, and has the power to give form.[286]

By 'turning back to this centre,' the power to relate is resurrected and one is preserved against the

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[282]IT, 78

[283]Rotenstreich, 14

[284]IT, 177 Italics mine.

[285]IT, 148

[286]IT, 149

alienation of the It-world.[287] Buber immediately broadens this transformative power to include the world, here evidently meaning more that the 'world of objects' that would correspond to the It-world. "Dimly we apprehend this double movement[288] - ... - as the *metacosmic primal form of duality* that inheres in the world as a whole in its relation to *that which is not the world*, and whose human form is the duality of attitudes, of basic words, and of the two aspects of the world."[289] He also refers to God as the "primal ground" in close connection with these ideas.[290] The primal forms of duality are also further characterized in these passages as "expansion into its own being ['turning away'] and returning to association (with God) ['turning towards'].”[291] Effectively, these are 'relation to the Same' and 'relation to the Other.' If we now are in a position to complete an interpretation, we may say something like this: the primal norms we are seeking are also the two movements of the 'metacosmic primal form of duality,' or the essential possibilities of being that are reflected in the basic words I-It and I-You. Buber's apparent account of these seems to place them as a metaphysical principle of God's creation: perhaps the original Self and Other is the relation between God and the created world. Perhaps the sense in which relation is 'in the beginning' is meant to be taken in a sense more literally cosmological than one might guess. The twofoldness which Buber seems first to locate in the life of humanity is now located at the basis of the cosmos, and described in very similar terms as originally in the human world. Buber's oft-remarked 'religious insight' is perhaps simply the recognition of the primacy and originality of the relation of difference, the Same and the Other.

In summary, this examination of Buber's work has sought insight into the nature of the mode of 'knowing' adequate to grasp Otherness, a paradigm of which is perhaps the relation between persons. As noted, cognitive relations, which involve conceptual appropriation, and practical relations, which involve practical appropriation, fail to approach the Other in a way that allows it

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[287]IT, 149

[288]'Turning towards' and 'turning away.' (See also IT, 164-5)

[289]IT, 149 Both italics mine.

[290]IT, 149; 164-5

[291]IT, 165

to manifest itself or become present. Yet, what remains is not void of meaning or practical effect. The dialogical situation forms a fundamental context in which it is possible for two to meet and create meaning through addressing each other. This is not immediately linguistic but becomes language, as the two creatively respond to each other. But the dialogical possibility also represents the possibility of a unique mode of existence, one in which the nature of each party depends on being touched in response by the other. Nothing apparently prepares the parties for dialogue: not linguistic capacity, being human, nor even being animate. A difference in existence is made by the simple possibility of response to another being. But although one leaves behind cognition and practical calculation, let none think they have abandoned the real world for some idyll, heartening but ultimately lacking in substance. On the contrary, it is the world of the self-enclosed ego, surrounded conceptually and practically with its self-centred appropriations, its paring down the world to meet its own needs, that falls short of reality. Encounter is the possibility of reality in its full presence breaking in upon this world, perhaps shocking the ego off its centre, forcing it, however little, to move in the direction of full personhood. Again, a paradigm of this is the address of another person, interrupting our reverie, demanding our attention, demanding to be heard and answered. The sense of response-ability, and subsequent feelings of obligation, derive from this call to reality, be it from the human or otherwise. The Other - an imposing rock face, an animal, or a child - insists that one become real, by responsively opening to its presence. Yet one cannot alone become real as a person, by sheer force of will: the call of the Other is also a grace by which one may accept the decentring necessary for personhood. As Buber says, 'all actual life is encounter.'

C. Levinas: The Face of the Other.

§22. *Separation.*

Levinas's work in *Totality and Infinity* supplies one of the most extended and probing accounts of the logic of the transcending relation to alterity. One of the critical points he makes concerning this relation (though this is not entirely neglected by Jaspers or Buber) is that genuine independence is required of both the Same and the Other if any genuine transcendence is possible. "Transcendence designates a relation with a reality infinitely distant from my own reality, yet without this distance destroying this relation and without this relation destroying this distance as would happen with relations within the same ... ."[292] Any relation in which the terms may adequately be described as the mere negation of each other, or as correlates of each other, or as simply reciprocal to each other, in principle admits of totalization,[293] the subsumption of the terms under an encompassing unity. This ultimately reduces the alterity of the other to sameness. To avoid this, the relation must be conceived as a 'breach of totality,' a relation in which the terms, while relating, nevertheless cannot be reduced. The radical separation of these terms, their resistance to totalization, is what Levinas regards as an absolute. To relate to the Other and yet maintain distance, to 'remain essentially at the point of departure' for the relation, is to be the same *absolutely*, to be an 'I.'[294] The absoluteness of the 'I' consists in 'having identity as one's content,' in 'having one's existing consist in identifying itself,' in *primal identity*.[295] This is to be found concretely in a relation between an I and a world. But the Other is not 'of my world.' The Other cannot merely reverse identity: the Same and the Other cannot strictly 'limit' each other, establish one by reference to the limits of the other, as this would again relativize and open them to totalization.[296] Nor can the Other be a simple reciprocal of ourselves: an alter-I, an alien ego.[297] We do not get to the other by simple multiplication. The metaphysically other is "other with an alterity constitutive of the very content of the other."[298] As Levinas remarks of the

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[292]TI, 41

[293]Totalization: "the intellectual operation by which that multiplicity of objects or points is encompassed." (TT, 39)

[294]TI, 36

[295]TI, 36

[296]TI, 39

[297]TI, 39

[298]TI, 39

Cartesian Infinite, "the distance that separates the *ideatum* and the idea constitutes the content of the *ideatum* itself."[299] The Other is constituted by its surpassing every idea that might capture it. Concretely, "the infinite in the finite ... is produced as Desire ... the Desire for the Infinite which the desirable arouses rather than satisfies."[300] But Desire here is nowise analogous to need, a lack in the needy for that which can satisfy; metaphysical Desire is desire for the Invisible, for relation to "what is not given, of which there is no idea."[301] Separation is achieved, it seems, in that the Same is constituted for itself in self-identification, quite independent of any other, while the Other's content is exactly its difference from any idea that could assimilate it. What relation remains possible will be discussed in later sections. In the following, we must delve further into Levinas's analyses of the Same and the Other to explicate their separation.

a) *Sameness*

The second major division of *Totality and Infinity*[302] is taken up with the description of relations within the domain of the Same, or Interiority. It would be natural enough to model this "interior" on transcendental subjectivity, understood in either a cognitive, affective or pragmatic sense, or even on the "mineness" of *Dasein*. But Levinas doesn't exactly mean any of these. To be separate, the 'I' must establish its identity by a positive movement, that allows its independence from the other. Levinas consequently must re-write these categories in a more original way, to bring out the essential self-presence of the 'I' in its interiority. The term Levinas uses for the 'I''s self-presence is *psychism*: "an *event* in being, a way of being" in which separation is produced in the form of an inner life or interiority.[303] This way of being resists totalization in having its own time, which in the form of memory is not absorbed into a universal, historical

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[299]TI, 49

[300] TI, 50

[301]TI, 34

[302]Section II. Interiority and Economy

[303]TI, 54

time shared by all,[304] and as a result, its own sort of freedom, which is a postponement of being determinately something (which the 'I' becomes).[305] Levinas describes the separation of the 'I' as *egoistic*, *atheistic* and *hedonistic*. Egoism and atheism refer to the way in which this being can enclose itself in a complete circle of self-reference, so complete that it can ignore any possible reference to God.[306] Hedonism refers to the basis of this being's self-maintenance in *sensibility* or *enjoyment*. The account of *life as enjoyment* is the principle of individuation of the 'I' in Levinas's account of the Same,[307] and to this we now turn.

The basic way an I is present to itself is not to be understood as representation or practice (involvement in being, participation) but rather as "living from ..." (or "living on ...") and enjoying life. "We live from 'good soup,' air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep, etc. ..."[308] In 'living from ...,' Levinas captures a commerce with my world in which I am nourished and happy, but which is prior to any theoretical, objective or practical enjoyment (comes even before my acts) involvement with my world. Enjoyment has the structure of need: I satisfy my need of something by assimilating it from the outside. The essence of enjoyment is *nourishment*, the transmutation of the other into the same.[309] In nourishment, I incorporate portions of the exterior into myself, which in becoming part of me, facilitate my living on the earth and my continued assimilation of it. But this is not to be understood as a means-ends relationship, nor as simple causality. It differs from a causal dependence, for in that case, the cause remain exterior to its effect, while nourishment is the assimilation of a causal source of my being. Although a nourishment can become a goal of my activity, this is not its primary signification. Indeed, for it to be such, a distance from involvement in living would be required, that at this level would contradict the integral whole formed by the 'I' and its world. I do not in the first instance reflect

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[304]TI, 56-7
[305]TI, 54, 59-60
[306]TI, 58
[307]TI, 59
[308]TI, 110
[309]TI, 111

on my needs and connect them purposefully to acts and objects that can satisfy them. Rather, life

is lived, lived on a content that feeds living, and is its own irreducible moment.[310] "To live from

bread is therefore neither to represent bread to oneself nor to act on it nor to act by means of it. ...

But if I eat my bread in order to labour and to live, I live *from* my labour and *from* my bread."[311]

Life is not bare existing, but is occupied with the contents that fill it and sustain it in living. Life

is not bare existence, but the *love of life*.[312]

It might seem that 'living from ...' imposes an inescapable dependence on the 'I'. I am 'needy'

and dependent upon my world for the satisfaction of those needs. However, in experiencing my

needs and enjoying their satisfaction, a kind of independence is achieved.[313] I am happy in my

needs, I enjoy my dependence, and indeed, without need and dependence, happiness would be

impossible. But enjoyment and happiness are a kind of independence because in incorporating

my nourishments, I raise myself up from the earth, take up a stance toward it and maintain myself

in it.[314] I make it mine, my enjoyment and nourishment. I thus begin to establish myself in

relation to the earth, and assert myself over it: I liberate an ego(a mineness) from brute

existence.[315] I remain needy, yet in satisfying myself upon the earth, am dominant. This begins

the fracture that inserts a detachment or distance between me and complete immersion in my

world. As we will see this distance will be further exploited in dwelling and labour, to the point

at which it supports the freedom to represent the world.

The next subsection of *Totality and Infinity*, "Enjoyment and Representation,"[316] opens with a

consideration of how the 'quasi-intentionality' of enjoyment, the directedness of the 'I' to the

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[310]TI, 111

[311]TI, 111

[312]TI, 111-112

[313]TI, 113

[314]TI, 114

[315]TI, 116

[316]II.B.

satisfaction of its needs in the world, compares to Husserl's intentionality of representation. This seems to parallel the considerations which opened the previous subsection, "Separation as Life,"[317] where Levinas compared the relations within the Same to the social relation between the Same and the Other. The point of the earlier subsection was that, while the social relation is *genuine* transcendence, relations within the Same deserve to be considered 'analogous' to transcendence so far as they also relate to an exterior world.[318] When Levinas turns to the question of the intentionality of enjoyment, he points out that this relation to exteriority within the Same 'lies below' the intentionality of representation, and ultimately grounds representation. "The intentionality of enjoyment ... consists in holding on to the exteriority which the transcendental method involved in representation suspends. To hold on to exteriority is not simply equivalent to affirming the world, but is to posit oneself in it corporeally."[319] Living from ... does not constitute that exteriority, but relates to it so as to "determine it while being determined by it."[320] The I accomplishes its position on the earth by the body, which in nourishing itself on the earth, overcomes its alterity and yet is sustained by that alterity.[321] The intentionality of enjoyment consists in 'sinking one's teeth into things' rather than in representing or constituting them. But by nourishment, the 'I' both sustains itself in its representing or constituting of the world and also lives from ... its representations. "The body naked and indigent is the very reverting, irreducible to a thought, of representation into life, of the subjectivity that represents into life which is sustained by these representations and *lives of them*; its indigence - its needs - affirm 'exteriority' as non-constituted, prior to all affirmation."[322] To hold on to exteriority is to be bodily needful on the earth, prior to any representing. But as the exteriority on to which one holds, what is the 'world of enjoyment' like? Most of the remaining subsections of section II are devoted to explicating the world of enjoyment, and we will only

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[317]II.A.

[318]TI, 109

[319]TI, 127

[320]TI, 128

[321]TI, 128-9

[322]TI, 127

briefly summarize them here.

The world that Levinas describes can perhaps be arranged on an axis, running away from the level of life as enjoyment in the direction of decreasing determination to what he has called the "there is" on one side, and in the direction of increasing determination to that which can become "property," and eventually objects subject to representation, on the other. The level of life as enjoyment is itself relatively indeterminate, yet concrete. "Enjoyment precisely does not reach [the things we enjoy] qua things. ... In enjoyment the things are not absorbed in the technical finality that organizes them into a system. They take form within a medium in which we take hold of them."[323] This medium Levinas refers to as 'the elemental.' In enjoyment, we find ourselves awash in qualities without support or substance, 'bathing in the element,' "earth, sea, light, city."[324] The elemental is "content without form," having only the dimension of 'depth' to characterize it.[325] 'Depth' means here that we never escape the element to achieve another point of view from which we can observe it in relation to something else. As deeply as I plunge into it, I am always surrounded by it. It s qualities may vary, but when the wind dies, the sunshine will be there, and when the sun sets, the cool, fragrant grass. Thus the elemental presents us with only a 'side' or 'surface,' which does not generate form, and nor does it refer to or determine anything.[326] Perhaps it is in this that qualities facilitate enjoyment: the quality or element is self-sufficient, entirely unto itself, and endless as such. In basking in sunshine, the quality of warm blazing energy characterizes enjoyment sufficiently without need to refer that quality on to anything else that may be on the 'other side' of the quality, and so begin to give it form. It is always possible to do so, but at that point we have left enjoyment by means of an abstraction. The intentionality of living from ... requires only my assimilation of the energy in enjoyment, and this suffices. Thus also any relation of instrumentality or utility is precluded, and again explains

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[323] TI, 130

[324] TI, 132

[325] TI, 131

[326] TI, 131-2

why enjoyment does not convert into any representational relation, for enjoyment is self-enclosed and purposeless. "To enjoy without utility, in pure loss, gratuitously, without referring to anything else, in pure expenditure – this is the human."[327]

As such, 'bathing' truly is the adequate relation with the element.[328] However this bathing is not to be thought either as a brute insensibility among qualities, nor as a kind of half-formed thought, needing to be raised to articulation. On the contrary, our relation to pure quality is likewise self-sufficient, not needing a reference to the understanding to explain itself. This is sensibility, which Levinas terms the *mode* of enjoyment. Sensibility is "sentiment, that is, the affectivity wherein the egoism of the 'I' pulsates."[329] Much of the work of this subsection serves to distinguish sensibility from understanding and the cognitive. "One does not know, one lives sensible qualities: the green of these leaves, the red of this sunset."[330] This is beyond our strict purpose here, so suffice it to say that sensibility describes primarily our capacity for enjoyment in living from ... the elements.

The level of the "there is" draws attention to a point that may seem so far to be overlooked. In the focus on life as enjoyment, it may seem that we have naively imagined a rather idyllic state, in which the 'I' floats amid pleasurable qualities. But do not some of these qualities bring suffering, even suffering unto death? Of course, this cannot be forgotten: in living from ... and enjoying life – living out of the love of life – one can hardly think that these pleasures do not give way to the struggle for survival. The time in which I may postpone my needs in order to work for their satisfaction is also the time in which those satisfactions may come too late. The qualities which come out of nowhere may not come at all: their indeterminateness is also an indetermination of the future.[331] The life of need and enjoyment brings with it this possible

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[327]TI, 133
[328]TI, 132
[329]TI, 135
[330]TI, 135
[331]TI, 141

insecurity. I cannot entirely possess the elemental, for even as it gives itself it escapes me. Beneath the qualities of the elemental, lies the indeterminateness that can swallow the future, an almost nothing Levinas calls the "there is." That which I live from ..., the elemental, extends into the "there is," still less determinate than the elemental, a kind of 'background noise' of being, which disturbs the security of enjoyment.[332]

To stave off the insecurity of life in the element, the 'I' has recourse to labour and possession, whereby it may be able to control the flux of satisfactions the element provides and reserve them for later enjoyment. But to accomplish this, the 'I' must somehow raise itself from strict immersion in enjoying the elements and take a position against them, and thus, it must attain the distance of detachment and freedom that we have already mentioned. This Levinas now terms "recollection:" "a suspension of the immediate reactions the world solicits in view of a greater attention to oneself, one's possibilities, and the situation."[333] Out of recollection, it will become possible for the ego to step back from immediate enjoyment, postpone its needs and work to arrange their satisfaction, thus labouring to form possessions out of the elements.[334] We are moving now from the indeterminacy of the 'I''s bathing in the element, towards the determination of itself and its world through its concrete 'working over' of its environment. Through the distance of recollection, the ego attains mastery over itself and its world, resulting first in the isolation of elements into items of property, and eventually in the formation of things and objects accessible to reflection – the objects of representational knowledge. We will briefly chart the course of this line of development in Levinas's thought, but first we must discuss the principal condition that makes possible the recollection or distance necessary to break with the element and begin to work it over, the 'dwelling.'

The dwelling or home is a place of retreat built into the world, an established territory from

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[332]TI, 142
[333]TI, 154
[334]TI, 154

which new assays into the world can be launched. My ability to attend to myself and my situation and be concerned over my needs, and consequently, the freedom to act, are facilitated by retreat into the dwelling. In dwelling, the 'I' can temporarily escape the ravages of nature, for within I obtain shelter and possibly stored nourishments. Perhaps the dwelling need not be an elaborate construction, but could rather be as simple as a cave one has claimed or even a crude lean-to composed of branches and leaves. What seems to be necessary in the dwelling is that by reducing the urgency of needs, the space is created in which elements may be put at our disposal and become subject to planning. Mastery and control become possible in the dwelling. It affords a space which holds the elements at bay, yet allows controlled access to them, whether this be controlled satisfaction of my needs with reserved nourishment or the control of shelter over the effect of the weather and climate.[335] "The primordial function of the home ... [consists] in breaking the plenum of the element, in opening in it the utopia in which the 'I' recollects itself in dwelling at home with itself."[336] Not that in the dwelling, I escape nature and the element, for the dwelling is situated in nature and is a place for the enjoyment of the element. What is essential is that the dwelling facilitates my obtaining a grasp over things, by securing me a position where I do not simply 'bathe' but now can master.

As a place of withdrawal from nature and the elements, in which one can recollect oneself and give attention to the problem of securing one's living, the dwelling must be more than a simple structure or building. One can perfectly well imagine a building being a hostile environment in which one cannot obtain the distance necessary to secure oneself. The home must be a genuine interior, be characterized by interiority as a presence to oneself. The space between the walls of the dwelling must have an intimacy and familiarity (as Levinas puts it) that allows one the pause, or distance, to plan and act on the world outside. But this intimacy and familiarity mean that the dwelling is already a human space, for they cannot simply refer to the fortuity of nature, happily

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[335] TI, 156-7
[336] TI, 156

providing for our needs. The home is different from the flourishing, beneficent glade. The difference lies in the discrete and silent presence in the home of what Levinas terms the feminine, or woman. It is this feminine presence that provides the home with the intimacy and familiarity necessary for a human welcome, allowing it to be a place of refuge.

This intimate and familiar presence places the dwelling between the levels of living from ... and language. In living from ..., the ego is alone in enjoyment, but in language, the fully explicit encounter with the Other is presupposed.[337] The feminine alterity present in the dwelling "includes all the possibilities of the transcendent relation with the Other," but exercises her function of interiority on the ground of a full human personality, which nonetheless can be reserved and must be to function as such.[338] The woman is discretion itself: human enough to be familiar and to provide, yet silent enough not to obtrude on the ego. One nervously fears Levinas has in mind the characterization of the family as a natural or proto-social relation, beneath the level of fully social and political relations, that feminist thinkers have convincingly argued facilitates the oppression of women. Levinas's own denial that he refers to actual human females here is not very satisfying.[339] However, perhaps there nothing more objectionable here than the ill-chosen use of woman as a symbol. Levinas might be understood as describing the way in which the home, in the absence of actual human encounter, refers obliquely to the presence of humans. The home manifests human presence in its sheer orientation toward human needs. Entering even a dark and abandoned house, one leaves behind a natural environment in which one bathes in the element, either to one's satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and enters a space defined by the functions it performs. The placement of windows and doors, the arrangement of interior rooms, speak of differing degrees of success in accomplishing human purposes - of allowing access to the world and preventing its unwanted encroachment upon human vulnerability. Inside the house, one no longer bathes, but is held above the element and afforded

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[337]TI, 155
[338]TI, 155
[339]TI, 157-8

controlled access to it. Temperature, for example, is manipulable, no longer something of which one is entirely at the mercy. Broken furniture is not like a failure to come forth of the element, but rather a failure to be adequate to a task - the broken bed fails to satisfy in a way quite unlike the stormy night on which one sleeps under the stars. Everything about the house speaks of human presence - even where no dweller comes out to welcome me, the house itself welcomes, in its orientation to human needs. The intimacy and familiarity of this space is not primarily that of familial or conjugal living-together, but the intimacy and familiarity of a space that "knows about" my life in enjoyment and my vulnerability - my humanity.

This example might lead to the objection that here we are supposing what the house is supposed to accomplish. As described the house clearly presupposes the distance of recollection and attention to needs that Levinas sees it effecting - indeed, as such the house is only planned out and built out of such a distance. But we can imagine equally well everything above being true of an incremental evolution. Levinas's account of dwelling requires no very abrupt transition, and perhaps even denies it. Can dwelling not begin with refuge sought under a toppled tree from a night of cold rain? Or the exploitation of frequent visits of our prey at a common water hole, or simply choosing to live nearer the fruit-bearing trees? Dwelling hardly need suppose the creation ex nihilo of the purposeful infrastructure of a modern city. Rather as the reorientation of natural satisfactions into purposeful relations to human need, dwelling can begin quite casually and rather closer to bathing in the element than one might imagine. Yet with it, the break is made.

The dwelling first suspends our immersion in the elemental through a postponement of our enjoyment. In this suspension we take up our position against the world and move toward it purposefully in labour. "The access to the world is produced in a movement that starts from the utopia of the dwelling and traverses a space to effect a primordial grasp, to seize and to take away. ... This grasp operated on the elemental is labour."[340] The means by which this is

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[340]TI, 158

accomplished is the hand.

> Possession is accomplished in taking-possession or labour, the destiny of the hand. The hand is the organ of grasping and taking, the first and blind grasping in the teeming mass: it relates to me, to my egoist ends, things drawn from the element, which, beginning-less and endless, bathes and inundates the separated being. But the hand *relating* the elemental to the finality of needs constitutes things only by separating its take from immediate enjoyment, depositing it in a dwelling, conferring on it the status of a possession. Labour is the very *en-ergy* of acquisition."[341]

What kind of action is adequate to grasp the indeterminacy of the element? Groping, an action that probes, with the risk of failure, for a purchase on the end it seeks: "Groping, the work of the hand par excellence, and the work adequate to the *apeiron* of the element, makes possible the whole originality of the final cause."[342] In groping, the hand relates the element to the needs of the 'I', and to control the unforeseeableness of the future of its satisfactions, reserves it and removes it from change. Thus it acquires one characteristic of substance: durability.[343] But the hand also acts to delineate and give form to the element, in separating it from the other elements and making it movable or a *furnishing*, which may be possessed.[344] Thus the elemental becomes an item of property. Things are 'constituted' by the action of the hand, but Levinas does not seem to mean they are created out of nothing by it, rather it seems as though the hand first recognizes the being of the element and then suspends it. By the hand, the element is removed from enjoyment and transposed to mastery, controlled as a thing or possession.[345]

Similarly, the thing, having been raised to substance and form in possession, now becomes available for objectification and thematization in representation. However, the act of representing and its object are somewhat more problematic than possession and property. The thought that represents lives from ..., yet its transcendental pretension asserts that it constitutes this very life that conditions it: it supposes itself to have a priority over that for which it is "after

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[341]TI, 159

[342]TI, 167

[343]TI, 160

[344]TI, 161

[345]TI, 161

the fact."[346] How can Levinas's analysis account for this? We must first recall the production of separation and distance accomplished in the home. In dwelling, I remain steeped in the elements, yet take up a position opposed to them. The dwelling parcels off a portion of my environment and allows my access to the world 'by way of the door and the window,' which postpones my engagement and permits the exercise of thought. As recollection or memory, I am able to occupy a temporal gap in which thought is sovereign, determinative of the view I take without being itself determined.[347] The home effects this in giving me a controlled access to the elements, in which I am positioned over against them while yet steeped in living from them. My controlled access takes the form of possession and property whereby I reserve things for future enjoyment. But possession refers to my relation in the home to the discreet Other, the feminine welcome of the home. The home welcomes in that within are stocked things that are reserved 'for me' because the home enables a withdrawal from complete immersion in the element. But the withdrawal from the element presupposes the relation to the Other, at least the discreet feminine Other, as "something I do not live from."[348] The possibility of such a relation introduces the gap that allows me distance from that which I do live from. But to attain the distance of representation, to see a thing as in itself and not as my possession, I must be able to approach the Other in giving, making a gift of my possessions.[349] For this I need the actual Face of the Other, which challenges my possession with his height. Once my claim is contested, it is possible for me to see things as 'not mine' at all. The relation to the Other is also language, an offering to the other of my world in speech, which can establish community and the generality necessary for representation.[350] Yet at the same time, this relation to the Other is ethics: the freedom of representation is derived from the moral relation to the Other.[351]

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[346]TI, 169-70

[347]TI, 169-70

[348]TI, 170

[349]TI, 171

[350]TI, 76

[351]TI, 172

In this account, separation seems to be a process in which a self-centred point of view is created, which gains independence from its surroundings and can dominate them. Centred around the needful involvement of the 'I' in a world of enjoyment, this point of view constitutes what Levinas calls an 'egoist economy,' intending the root sense of economy as "the art of household management," which connects with his use of dwelling or house as the locus from which the world of the 'I' can be managed. Separation as 'egoist economy' means that the ego forms an 'exchange market' through which the exterior world is transmuted into possessions, by labour or representation. This relative other thus becomes the same, becomes part of the self-identification of the 'I', whereby the ego, constituting its world as 'mine,' constitutes itself as separated. Yet in this process, the 'I' is eventually lead to a glimpse of the presence of the Other, for the ultimate insufficiency of the egoist economy is shown up.[352] Perhaps we can identify three distinct moments of this process. The first moment of separation is the curious independence of 'happy dependence' in living among the elements. In living from ..., I have a sense of independence, in that in enjoying and satisfying myself on the elements, I am nourished and enabled for further action. I am dependent on the elements because of my needs, yet enjoy a certain flexibility in this dependence so far as nourishment temporarily lifts me and allows me to move on, pursue further nourishment. The second moment is the distance or detachment of recollection in the dwelling. When the dwelling is established I am able to recollect myself, which allows reflection on myself and my situation, planning and labour. Considerable freedom from need is obtained from the economic management of satisfactions enabled by dwelling. However, as we noted, this freedom is covertly based on the presence of human relations to each other - on that which I do not live from, unlike 'happy dependence' which is based on that which I do live from. The dwelling functions because it is already a human space, occupied by the discreet presence of feminine alterity. The distance from the element and nature acquired here seems to arise because of the implicit presence of something which I cannot relate adequately to my needs, something that won't fit within my economy. The possibility of not being immersed in need appears. The

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[352]TI, 179

final moment comes when the implicit presence of something that won't fit within my economy becomes explicit. Once the encounter with the Other takes place, there is the possibility of justifying my freedom, of investing it with moral charge. Freedom is raised above egoist self-assertion in being questioned by the presence of the other. The legitimacy of my assimilation of the world is shaken, for here is a being who cannot be dealt with by assimilation and challenges my rights to the world. I am raised above need and above possessiveness, for now I may make the world gift to this Other, in the form of hospitality or of representing (in discussing the world with the other, I make a gift of my representations). The insufficiency shown of egoist economy does not mean that it depends on the Other or is dialectically related to the Other. Rather it means that, in spite of the complete, enclosed interiority of my world of need, there remains another relation that has nothing to do with need - Desire for the Other. Desire for the Other is again another name Levinas gives to the metaphysical relation.[353] Desire "understands the remoteness, the alterity, the exteriority of the other. For Desire this alterity, non-adequate to the idea, has meaning. It is understood as the alterity of the Other and of the Most-High."[354] However the discussion of this relation must be put off for the appropriate section. We must next turn to Levinas's description of the Other.

b) *Otherness*

When we turn from Levinas's analysis of the Same to his analysis of the Other, we come up against a problem: the Other resists description in a way even aspects of the Same which lie beneath the level of representation (such as living from ...) do not. As we have already remarked, the other is true transcendence, for which alterity, its formal character, is its whole content. The Other is the breach of totality, what cannot be encompassed and made part of a represented whole. Thus any attempt at description is thwarted by the very meaning of the Other, for, to be

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[353]TI, 50
[354]TI, 34

adequate, such a description would seek to encompass it. Also, we will find it difficult to discuss Levinas's analysis of the Other without reference to the relation between the Same and the Other, as his principal focus is to present this relation as the supreme metaphysical principle. Nevertheless, the task of this section is to describe the analysis of the Other as presented by Levinas, emphasizing the absoluteness of the Other, the purity of its transcendence, as this might be considered formally and encountered concretely.

The pure transcendence of the Other, as the Infinite or the Invisible, Levinas terms 'absolute experience' and 'the immediate.'[355] What is sought is a pure experience of another being, a manifestation in itself of such a being that resists any attempt at assimilation in a way that the density of the element or the thing does not.[356] Levinas, in *Totality and Infinity*, still uses ontological language, and introduces a contrast between Being and phenomenality to differentiate the ways of being of Otherness and Sameness. The Same is subject entirely to the mediation of appropriation, labour, and representation, which perhaps can be summed up roughly as intentionality. A thing manifests itself as an answer to the question, 'what?' Thus, it appears as a content, wherein its manifestation is relative to something else - it is not taken for itself, but taken *as* something, or constituted as such.[357] Sameness is dominated by *phenomenality*, where nothing appears quite as itself, or as Levinas puts this point, "a present absenting itself from its presence."[358] By contrast, the Other is manifest, not as phenomenon, but as an in itself, or as Being. In a sense, the question 'who?' is put to the other, yet without this being a question of the same status as the question 'what?' and without 'the Other' being an answer either, for the Other is not manifest as a content.[359] It is of course possible that 'who?' be put as a question in this sense, and answered by a content, but in this case, it has lost its essentiality. In fact, all questioning presupposes the prior presence of the other to whom the question is put. This other

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[355]TI, 65-66, 52. Cf. "PInf."
[356]TI, 66
[357]TI, 177
[358]TI, 178
[359]TI, 177

has presented himself not as a content, but as a *Face* who can answer, and in expressing itself,
surpasses any containable content. In presenting itself, the Other "attends its own manifestation,"
takes up a position with its expression and answers for it.[360] When the question 'who?' is put
essentially, it is Desire for the Other, and the answer and the answerer coincide.[361] Thus, the
Other is absolute or in itself, for, in it, its being is present to its manifestation. Such a
manifestation is summed up in Levinas's notion of the Face.[362]

The Other presents himself concretely in the Face, which is not image, theme, or idea, but
expression. Levinas most often terms the appearance of the face 'revelation' or 'epiphany'. In
these words, he indicates the lack of determination by any conferral of meaning on our part: the
Face expresses itself, reveals itself. The Face is that which breaks into our world while yet
remaining outside, which *interpellates* itself into our order. As concrete Otherness, the Face is
the paradoxical separation in relation, wherein the distance of separation is not eliminated, nor is
the relation prevented. This paradox Levinas resolves in the notion of 'teaching.' "Teaching is a
discourse in which the master can bring to the student what the student does not yet know. It ...
continues the placing in me of the idea of infinity."[363] Teaching in this sense is no mere transfer
of a content from one interior to another, but rather it is expression and speech. As an 'epiphany
of exteriority,' the teacher's being enters into relation with mine, and what I receive is in a sense
no more than that. The idea of infinity, the 'thought thinking more than it can embrace,' the
'relation with the reality infinitely distant from mine,' does not describe even a superlative
content, but rather is simply the teacher's self-presenting. In expression and discourse, the
teacher attends his own manifestation. But again, discourse, expression and speech are not to be
understood as the presentation of a content in signs. Perhaps it is correct to say that speech and
expression in this sense precede and make possible expression through signs, because for this to

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[360] TI, 178
[361] TI, 177-8
[362] TI, 66
[363] TI, 180

occur, the Other must already present himself and attend himself in his manifestation: that is, be present as a face.[364]

Yet if this manifestation in speech has no phenomenal content, but rather is the self-presentation of a being, it is nevertheless not simply void. It has meaning, and its meaning is *ethical*.

> Expression manifests the presence of being, but not simply by drawing aside the veil of the phenomenon. It is of itself presence of a face, and hence appeal and teaching, *entry into relation* with me -- the ethical relation.[365]
>
> ...this overflowing presence is effectuated as a position *in face of* the same. The facing position, opposition par excellence, can be only as a moral summons.[366]

As already remarked, the face is no mere image, or even a neutral, factual presence of a being, but rather an imperative, "already a *no* cast to powers; its logos is: 'You shall not kill.'"[367]   Again, as Levinas puts this point in *Totality and Infinity*, "the face opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation ..."[368] Levinas makes clear that this sense of obligation to the other is no discovered empathy that might spring up in me when confronted with the other's face: "For the ethical relationship which subtends discourse is not a species of consciousness whose ray emanates from the 'I'; it puts the 'I' in question. This putting in question emanates from the other."[369] I am opposed by the other, put in question. The face is at once appeal and command. The face appeals to me out of its nudity and destitution, "the total uncoveredness and nakedness of his defenceless eyes, the straightforwardness, the absolute frankness of his gaze."[370] At the same time, in its attendance of its own manifestation, the face expresses its 'height,' its supraphenomenality.[371] It opens the dimension of the infinite, is the epiphany of a being that can

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[364]TI, 182
[365]TI, 181
[366]TI, 196
[367]PInf., 109
[368]TI, 201
[369]TI, 195
[370]PInf., 110
[371]TI, 200

present itself directly to an I.[372]   As Levinas puts this in "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity.", the other comes from a dimension of the ideal - the Other is closer to God.[373]   "Ethical resistance is the presence of the infinite."[374]   The face of the other seems to present both weakness, supplication, and the moral authority to command.[375]

Levinas is thus far clear that the presence of the Other has ethical 'force' in a way that does not depend on my recognition but rather would command my recognition, and that this ethical 'force' comes about simply as the presence of the infinite, the presence of a being that attends its own manifestation. But we must enquire further as to the nature and origin of this ethical 'force' and how exactly the face of the other escapes assimilation to my egoist economy. What commands my recognition of the other, when from within my economy his meaning can be only resource or threat? How am I 'put in question'?

Ethical resistance differs essentially from the resistance put to my will by the elements or things, and from the resistance encountered by opposed quantities of force. The Other's resistance to my assimilation or control is not that of another magnitude of force, which may be greater or lesser but remains essentially on par with that which it resists. Nor is it simply the unpredictability of his freedom.[376]   Things may be elusive and difficult, or entirely outside my grasp, and still not be essentially outside my power. None of these omit the possibility of measuring my force against them, and finding it adequate or wanting. The face does not confront me with my lack of power, but rather presents a new dimension that 'defies my ability for power,' that is exterior to that on which I can or cannot impose myself.[377]   This might mean that the Other, as attending his own manifestation and so, as infinite, is essentially non-assimilable, since every manifestation I could

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[372]PInf., 110

[373]PInf., 111-12

[374]PInf., 111

[375]Cf. *Alterity and Transcendence*, 104-5

[376]PInf., 110

[377]TI, 198

grasp would be surpassed by his presence to himself. This is certainly true - Levinas seems almost to credit this interpretation[378] - but alone it would not seem to account for any ethical meaning brought to me by the face, nor would it explain how I am 'put in question' by it. Rather, the opening of this new dimension alters the nature of power and my freedom.[379] "I am no longer able to have power: the structure of my freedom is ... completely reversed."[380] My power over things is the power to take, use and possess, but with the appearance of the other, I can no longer take, but I can *kill*.[381] Murder is a unique crime for Levinas in that it is the attempt to have power over what absolutely escapes power - it is directed exclusively to alterity and its total negation, but is opposed to the point of impotence in that even though I kill the other, I cannot possess my own act.[382] My act has a meaning I cannot master: injustice. I may dominate, exploit or destroy the other, yet without the other ever capitulating, renouncing its rights to me.[383] Even should I succeed in forcing from the other acknowledgement of my dominance, I have not done as I can do to the thing, assign its meaning with total mastery. The ethical resistance of the face puts me in question by opening a new dimension that is in principle beyond my power to determine: I am no longer the principle, no longer the centre of my world.[384] I can be unjust, without this depending on me at all.

However, part of the ethical meaning of the face is its authority and height - from where does the other get its ethical priority? With things, I measured them against myself - with the other, it is I that am measured.[385] The ethical consciousness into which I am brought by encountering the other is not open to reciprocity or to my own prudence, which would depend on my freedom. Rather, ethical consciousness is "the concrete form of a movement more fundamental than

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[378]TI, 199
[379]TI, 198
[380]PInf., 110
[381]TI, 198
[382]TI, 198
[383]PInf., 99
[384]PInf., 99
[385]PInf., 116

freedom, the idea of the infinite. It is the concrete form of what precedes freedom."[386] What precedes freedom is the situation in which 'one is not alone,' the social relation of the 'I' and the Other.[387] The other measures me: not as by a comparison with perfection, for the other has no such content, but only his very alterity. Rather I am measured in that, discovering what surpasses my egoism, I find myself to be not alone. This 'not aloneness' is for me primordial for it shows me that my spontaneous appropriation and constitution of the world is not the original moment (simply since there is something different from it, outside of its grasp from the first). Thus, when I appropriated goods in my egoist economy, this may as well have been usurpation, the theft of the very condition of existence from the other, and so, murder. This contact with transcendent reality precedes my choice and invests it with responsibility for the other. The realization of the unjustness of my arbitrary freedom can perhaps be described as like the recognition of 'forgotten duty,' or perhaps better as a 'call to pledged service.' The moral life is my existence justified and invested as a freedom, but this presupposes relation to the other and the distance it permits me to have from my immersion in the life of enjoyment.[388] Why then am I not aware of this from the start? As Levinas points out, my forgetfulness of this antecedent dependence and origin of my freedom is the price of separation.[389] Without separation, I would not be able to enter into relation with a genuine exteriority at all, but with it, it is possible even that I should forget God. My self-identification as the same makes possible the lapse of moral consciousness, reawakened by the face.

Otherness is thus the possibility of a *new relation*, one that escapes the economy of the ego. At the beginning of "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite,"[390] Levinas characterizes philosophy as the search for Truth, but then introduces two directions this search might pursue. In one, the search for truth means the autonomous quest to establish propositions by an ego seeking to

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[386]PInf., 118
[387]PInf., 118
[388]PInf., 117
[389]TI, 180
[390]PInf., 88-90

overcome any possible limits to its thought - and so seeking to reduce whatever is other to what is the same. The other direction is towards a genuine experience of this other, in which the investigator is transported beyond his own nature, beyond what is the same, into a relation with a reality distinct from him. It is this second possibility that opens with the face of the Other. 'Desire for the other' is the name for the search for truth in this second sense.

§23. *Relation.*

The relation between separated beings is what Levinas has called the social relation, and again also the idea of infinity, "the presence in a container of a content exceeding its capacity," transcendence and the metaphysical relation. It has been unavoidable in the above discussion of separation to make use of some of these ideas. But let us approach the topic directly now, starting from Levinas's notion of the sociality of the relation. Primary sociality is the "situation in which I am not alone, in which I am judged."[391] If the Face of the Other was the presence of the other being who judges me, as we saw last section, then the social relation is the 'face to face.' "Social relations ... are the original deployment of the relationship that is no longer open to the gaze that would encompass its terms, but is accomplished from me to the other in the face to face."[392] So here we have two topics that require explication: the sense in which the face to face is 'not open to the gaze' and to what it is open, and the situation in which I am judged.

Throughout *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas makes use of a contrast between vision and speech, as a way of differentiating relations in which the other is assimilated by the same and relations in which the alterity of the other is preserved. Vision is the adequation of exteriority with interiority, the result of a *Sinngebung*, the manifestation of something as something.[393] As such,

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[391]TI, 304

[392]TI, 289-90

[393]TI, 295-6; also 34; III.A. *passim*

it best models the noema-noesis structure of classic intentionality, in which objects are constituted by their relation to the ego. In vision, the meaning of the Other is established *a priori* by the Same. When I encounter the Other, I certainly do *see* his face. However, if I confront the mere image of his face, I encounter nothing with any alterity at all. But when the Other speaks to me, addresses me in conversation, he attends his manifestation in the face and does not allow it to be encompassed in a visible image. Speech or discourse is the Other's expression, in which the manifestation and the manifested coincide, in which the speaker is personally present in his speech.[394] The speaker "comes to the assistance of his speech," as Levinas puts it, in remaining present to interpret himself. In this way, speech resists totalization. Even should someone attempt to appropriate the speech of the other, to constitute its meaning from a set of pre-given categories - for example, use psychopathological categories to reduce the significance of speech to symptoms - "an interlocutor arises again behind him whom thought has just apprehended."[395] No totalization will escape the possibility of facing the interlocutor in his otherness again, so far as the interlocutor remains to attend his speech. Speech differs from intentional relations like vision in that here we have signification in its original sense, not meaning conferred on one's surroundings, projected by an ego maintaining his dominion, but the irruption of significance from exteriority.[396]

The Other attains presence in the relation by attending his manifestation in speech. The absolute difference of the other, the separation in relation of the two terms, is accomplished only in language according to Levinas. "Language is perhaps to be defined as the very power to break the continuity of being or of history."[397] This indeed seems to be the formal structure of language, which consists in "presenting the transcendent."[398] When two parties speak, they enter a relation from which they are able to remain separate. Even when they speak about each other,

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[394]TI, 296

[395]TI, 295

[396]TI, 66

[397]TI, 195

[398]TI, 195

their presence to each other is not reduced to a theme or a content of their discourse, for they attend their expression and come to its assistance. "The word that bears on the Other as a theme seems to contain the Other. But already it is said to the Other who, as interlocutor, has quit the theme that encompassed him, and upsurges inevitably behind the said."[399] When the Other is addressed, he is solicited to speak, but more than simply delivering a body of information, he is also invited to attend his expression, to interpret or defend it. Thus in the relation of language or discourse between two parties, the transcendent is present as the presence of the Other to his own speech. The idea of the infinite is given to me here in that, receiving the Other's speech, there remains his unencompassable presence as speaker as the 'more' in my thought of him. Other possible relations to the other, such as knowing or perceiving (vision), seem able to encompass their objects, by appropriating them to a network of significations and constituting them. Speech alone seems to allow its 'object' to remain aloof and not be constituted by the relation. Not that Levinas fails to recognize that speech or language can very well impose a meaning on their objects - perhaps in degenerate forms this would be a principal way in which one may attempt to master the Other, by controlling his significance with preassigned meanings. Rather Levinas seems to be thinking of an essential nature of language, or perhaps its genuineness, when he describes this formal structure, one that underlies any of particular language or given meaning.

We must however go beyond the merely formal structure of language to its more profound significance, as Levinas indicates.

> In discourse the divergence that inevitably opens between the Other as my theme and the Other as my interlocutor, emancipated from the theme that seemed a moment to hold him, forthwith contests the meaning I ascribe to my interlocutors. The formal structure of language thereby announces the ethical inviolability of the Other and, without any odour of the "numinous," his "holiness."[400]

The Other's presence to his own speech puts my thematization on the defensive. Even my most

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[399]TI, 195
[400]TI, 195

accurate characterization fails to encompass the Other, who beyond any theme, remains present to rebut it. In genuine speech I give up any right to 'the final say,' to have my thematization determine the truth, to be justified in asserting my own world. For the presence of the Other to his own speech renders impossible the unique access to complete truth for any given theme. Language thus invokes a moral summons: the presence of the Other in this surpassing sense puts in question my freedom to determine the world, either as an object of truth and knowledge, or as my possession. In exercising this freedom, I may have usurped from the Other his truth or the satisfaction of his needs. Even if I am convinced of my own rectitude, hereafter it is clear that justification lies elsewhere, beyond my reach. Even if I count myself justified by my own lights, I cannot alone determine this as justified and not merely another usurpation. The possibility of freedom's justification belongs to the Other which is the nature of his height. The essence of conversation is apology - one recognizes the right the Other has over oneself and humbles oneself before him. Yet at the same time an apology is an appeal for justice, for recognition from the other of one's integrity and responsibility.[401]

What of the 'I' in this relation? I can attend myself, attain 'being in itself,' by approaching the Other.[402] When I welcome the face, I expose myself to the questioning of the other and am faced with the urgency of response. I can be present to myself in being responsible to the other, and attend myself so far as I respond. "Being attentive signifies a surplus of consciousness, and presupposes the call of the other. To be attentive is to recognize the mastery of the other, to receive his command, or, more exactly, to receive from him the command to command."[403] In attending myself, I move from phenomenality to being. As noted above, I also discover the insufficiency of my egoist economy in this way, not as a lack or a limit imposed by the Other, but rather as the incommensurability of Desire that breaks interiority.[404] As we have noted earlier,

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[401]TI, 40
[402]TI, 178
[403] TI, 178
[404]TI, 179

Desire is a certain kind of quest for Truth - that in which I seek genuine transcendence, the relation with what is absolutely exterior. What I have in discourse with the Other is absolute experience, without *a priori* or cognition of objects,[405] yet which has a meaning, an ethical meaning, the signification that is prior to my own conferral of meaning. As Levinas remarks, "the Other is the prime intelligible."[406] By giving the possibility of justified freedom, the Other liberates me from the arbitrariness of the world in which I am able to constitute and assign the meaning to anything. Thus I am oriented by relation to the other in a world no longer entirely mine but shared in sociality, which is intelligible independently of my comprehension yet also open to me, when I attend myself in speech with the Other. Truth is produced and significance is given to me in being taught by the Other: "Teaching is a way for truth to be produced such that it is not my work, such that I could not derive it from my own interiority."[407]

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[405] TI, 61-2
[406] TI, 293
[407] TI, 295

Conclusion.

§24. *A Unique Relation.*

Someone comes and says something. Without really needing to think, I understand what is said, refer it without difficulty to familiar codes. But why all these *interruptions*? If I must be self-enclosed, woven into a cocoon of smoothly harmonious meanings, whence the irruption of this which requires my attention, demands it, and challenges me? Why must there be something new and foreign?

Someone comes and says something. This time I do not quite understand, or am not entirely sure of having understood. On the other hand, if I must open outward, find myself by relation to an exterior, why can I not be taken up by it? What is left unsubsumed into universal harmony, why does anything remain separate from all-encompassing unity?

a) Heterology.

One possible approach to alterity is to regard the Other as a form of alternative self, an alter-ego or alien-I, which is in principle located on common ground with us, within a common field. Difference may then arise from conditions understood from a common point of view, and end up being merely perspectival variations, a matter of the incompleteness of certain points of view. Perhaps alterity is a matter of alienation from a common condition, or perhaps from competition for common resources. In both cases, commonly understood conditions can be cited in explanation of difference: needs, for example, instantiated in different ways. At this point, mediation of difference is possible through the common ground in both parties. It causes one little trouble to normalize, to assign a position, meaning and value to, the obtrusive.

However, this is to start from a point of view in which difference is only a mask of the same, in which the primary assumption is that the common is original and difference is incidental. This is essentially a *homological* approach.

The alternate is a genuinely *heterological* approach, which does not begin with the assumption that difference's assimilation is theoretically given in advance, and harmony is simply a practical problem. A genuine heterology cannot begin with the assumption of a common field, but rather that the difference is the original moment. Heterology proposes to study the appearance of alterity, or rather its "breaking in" upon one, its irruption. With no common field, in which regulated interface is possible, one must rely upon encounter and discovery. At the least however, one can expect these encounters to be liminal events, an incursion at one's limits or boundaries. Hence the interest in limits and boundaries: one must approach and explore their own limits in the effort to better prepare for and understand the encounter (so far as this may rely on a developed sense of what is really the Same). The nature of limits is required understanding for those who wish to transcend them, for those who wish to have 'open borders.' Charting one's own frontier is crucial to the recognition of the genuinely new and different.

b) The Meeting.

Encounter, or the Meeting, should be regarded as a way of being, not as a merely coincidental relation, possible for two extant entities, such as spatial proximity. Here we have a unique relation, a transcending (apparently crossing boundaries, limits) in which limits are maintained, which is essentially and must be a paradox, the Idea of infinity, the thought that thinks what it cannot contain.

Something genuinely original occurs in the face-to-face. Prior (logically not temporally) to the encounter, one resided in a centre from which the world was defined. The self-enclosedness of

this world formed a seamless web, of one's own needs, one's 'knowledge,' one's 'imperatives.' The irruption of alterity deposes the 'I' from its centre, contests its territory and challenges its rights. Surprisingly, the 'I' may genuinely feel this force. What is the shame, the uncertainty experienced? Not lack of power or fear, for force may be met with force. Rather, what one experiences is the 'imperative' of the other, in the face of which force is ashamed of its reply.[408] This is new: prior to the encounter, one could scarcely speak of the 'I''s 'knowledge' or 'values.' Something was missing that was essential to such talk, in the absence of which it makes little sense. It was discovered in the face of the other, for it is only in relation to the other that norms can have meaning.

This is a genuine new possibility of being: to meet, to face the Other or the 'You,' is the transcendence truly worth of the name. It is captured most adequately in the Idea of Infinity, and expressed in the Desire for the Other. But at its very basis it requires that our ontology should be heterological, that reality is essentially divided from the beginning between Sameness and Otherness.

c) Decentring.

What is it on which the 'I' is centred before the decentring meeting with the other?

One does not centre on one's own subjectivity, but rather from the beginning, one is externally centred – to be anything like a subjectivity is to already inhabit a space of norms of behaviour, rationality, value, etc. This is given in advance, perhaps by society at its most essential level. But the 'I' must internalize this, centring itself in those norms, finding its identity in conformity with them.

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[408]Not to say that by the ways of stealth, the 'I' does not ever creep back to its former throne.

The other then decentres one by presenting a challenge, or interrupts the ease of this identification -- the repose of identity in internalized norms. But to where is one decentred? Not simply to those external sources of normativity – they are lost the instant one must look on them from outside. Not simply to the other's world - discovery of this difference is often accompanied by horror and confusion at the thought of being colonized by them. Rather one is forced into a genuine middle, from which one must equally confront both one's own identity and the Other's difference.

What does one gain from this upheaval? One's first centre in norms internalized from society was not original or essential. When decentred by the Other, one discovered the original and essential in identity – that it is a product of confrontation of worlds, that it depends on dialogue, in which that identity is kept dynamic, no longer allowed to grow stagnant and static. The notion of community similarly missed what was genuine - it remained an abstract 'they,' which was a 'we' so far as it was internalized. True community is now possible as a living encounter, not a static homogeneity, but in the between, in dialogue with the Other.

d) Dialogical Logic.

"Dialogue is the most fundamental form of rational activity."[409]

Whence rationality? Is not the rational the quintessentially rule-governed? Perhaps we could introduce Aristotle's strict (or active) and non-strict (or obedient) senses of reason here. One may be obedient to reason as to one's father – in this sense reason is simply following the carefully laid out guidance of a superior principle. If I wish to program a computer there is a set of definable practices which I may and must follow. Yet there remains the active exercise of the rational principle: this is the instance in which one operates in a free exercise that transcends any

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[409]Roberts, *The Logic of Reflection,* 47.

given set of rules, yet may exploit many possible sets of rules. I work to formulate a new programming language. What would guide this exercise? We can in principle assign no external determination to this sense of reasoning: this would make it simply an instance of the first sense of reason. Yet it is not meaningless – why not? A pre-given set of problems to which a priority is assigned, thus making certain responses appropriate? Probably not so narrow a context. We could never raise all such conditions that would determine the appropriateness of a response to articulation.

When I follow the rules and program the computer, or give it up as a useless waste of time, I act reasonably for the most part. But if I act reasonably in following the rules, do rules govern 'reasonableness?' Ultimately it cannot be. Even where a rule is clear and explicitly set out, the application of the rule is still in question - "is this case truly an instance of X?" - yet the application is not arbitrary or unreasonable. The basic choice is to respond to rules or norms in a way that is not determinate prior to the response. Although I 'play' here, and respond freely to the presence of rules, I am still reasonable, perhaps quintessentially so. To truly use rules one must be able to respond actively, decide about them, and not simply obey. Reason in the broadest sense is responsiveness. But responsiveness is not originally responsiveness to rules: responsiveness is 'always in the face of the Other.' In encounter, I meet the other and respond purely to the other's presence. The dialogue that is possible in this responsiveness is fundamental in the sense that it underlies the possibility of any rule-governed interaction. As a form of play, dialogue is neither a fully determined nor is it without meaning. As one is able to move outside the rule-governed in dialogue, one is able to create meaning. Hence, if one is to comprehend logic, one must do so *dia*logically. On must seek a logic of the 'between.'

§25. *Four Answers.*

Let us gather the results of our studies of our four thinkers. Let us finally present them with our four questions to see how they may answer. In this section, we shall address the first three of our questions:

1. *What is the nature of genuine limitation, as contrasted with boundaries?*

2. *What mode of thought or experience is adequate to appreciate the nature of limitation and subsequently, alterity?*

3. *What do we discover about alterity by regarding it through the problem of limitation?*

However, we shall put off until the last section the fourth question, because of its speculative nature:

4. *What recommendations for the practice of thinking may be derived from this investigation?*

a) Kant.

To some extent, forcing Kant to answer just these questions is somewhat inappropriate, for their significance is most at home 'downstream,' intellectually and historically, from his time. What corresponds in Kant's thought to what we have termed the 'outside' in its full sense may be difficult to say. However, we have a likely candidate (already pressed into service as such) in the notion of the noumenal. The notion of the noumenal helps Kant deal with the issue of what it is that lies outside concepts, as it becomes clear that what may be thought by means of concepts is not all that is thinkable. It does this in two senses, which may not fit together entirely well: first, the noumenal is the particularity of intuition, the 'X' forever beyond the sum of applied concepts. Yet, second, it is also the intelligible beyond the merely cognizable, the potential completeness of science, humanity's ultimate moral destiny, and the harmony of freedom and nature. The limit

for Kant, the sense of the boundedness of thought, arises from the contrast between the field of application of the concepts, experience proper, and what is thinkable in the broader sense - effectively the contrast between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*. Cognition is established by the constitutive limits imposed on it by the understanding. The determining relation to sensibility that the understanding has in its legislative authority, makes possible and validates certain forms of cognition over a certain domain. However, the instant one begins to ask questions of totality, for example, concerning the completeness of the empirical sciences, reason in a regulative function must step in. As we have noted, Kant does not totalize reason, but leaves open the possibility that the totality of conditions may be fulfilled through the progress of history.

Yet the overall systematicity of the faculties requires relations between conceptual thought and its exterior. Reason transcends, so far as it thinks totality, though it would be a mistake to take this as determinative of any reality. Hence, feeling is left to reveal the true nature of the mind, in the experience of the sublime and respect for the moral law. The ultimate order of the faculties is revealed in this 'higher faculty of feeling.' In these experiences, which we have suggested function something like an orientation or an antinomy, the limits of the sensible and cognizable are exposed and placed in relation to reason and the supersensible. The deepest part of the soul points to the highest, as Deleuze points out, for what is ultimately revealed by such experiences is the priority of the moral. Whatever is cognizable, whatever we may articulate conceptually, whatever sensible reality and sensuous desire offer, the destiny of humanity lies in its moral nature.

What has Kant shown us that is truly 'other?' We may find no satisfactory answer to this question. We may look again to the experiences of the sublime and respect for the moral, but in vain. For on the one hand, the sublime seems to have more to do with the structure of the faculties and their system than with the presence of anything genuinely exterior, apparently existing merely as a function of the interplay between the faculties of sense and reason: if

imagination did not have a limit to what it could grasp in intuition, or if reason tended not to ideas of totality, there would be no experience of the sublime. Even the supersensible, to which the sublime draws attention, is primarily the supersensible as present in human being, as Kant repeatedly remarks, for the sublime is to be sought "merely in ourselves and in our attitude of thought."[410] If there is anything prodigious in the sublime it is something prodigious within our being, not outside it, and hence, no sublime 'objects' to be encountered. On the other hand, the positive content in the sublime, the attention drawn to the supersensible, is subordinated to the practical. As already discussed, for Kant, the movement in judging the sublime is in the direction of the faculty of the moral determination of the will. Besides suggesting a preparatory role for the sublime in cultivating or inspiring ethical sentiments, he remarks that the feeling of the sublime cannot well be thought without a mental disposition akin to the moral, presumably referring to respect.[411] Again there is little ground on which to build a notion of the sublime as a presence. Yet here a more adequate experience of exteriority may well be found in the moral law, as that which has a claim on the will and which must be answered. Respect has almost the character of an exterior breaking in upon one, in the humiliating force with which the moral law strikes down our self-love. This interestingly parallels the discovery in Buber and Levinas of a moral imperative in the presence of the other person. Nevertheless, Kant's respect for the moral law does not require the concrete presence of an other person, but again only the ordering of the faculties. After all the moral law is not heteronomous, but autonomous, derivable from the nature of the rational being. Even though the most important part of the moral law concerns the treatment of other persons for Kant, the other person has moral significance because they share in a rational nature. Hence, the moral other is really an alter-ego, another 'I,' and not genuinely other at all. Finally, we must conclude that, in spite of its importance in the Kantian system, the noumenal nevertheless remains merely formal, and too negative to serve as an adequate notion of exteriority.

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[410] *CJ.* §23, 27, 28.

[411] *CJ.* General Remark. p.109.

b) Jaspers.

In Jaspers, we have two possible choices as examples of limitation. An important limit lies between all dimensions of existence and Existenz. Objectification, unavoidable in existence, falls short of providing the assurance in ourselves we seek, and hence by confronting the limits of existence, we are led . to transcend to the level of Existenz, where self-assurance is attainable. In so revealing the dimension of possibility, we may grasp the non-objective wholeness possible for self-being. But Jaspers reveals another kind of limit in the notion of existential communication, a limit between the self and another self. Again, this is a feature of the pursuit of wholeness in self-being: to achieve actuality the self requires interaction with another self, which does not simply become another objectification for it, but remains other. But since the other is able to assist in realization by acting as a mirror for my self, again it is best understood as an alter-ego, a "second self" as Jaspers puts it. The boundedness of thought for Jaspers can be understood on a model with Heidegger's Fallenness, an absorption in the world of the along-side and Dasein-with, or in Jasper's terms, absorption in existence and spirit.[412]

In both cases of limitation, one is ideally led to transcend. Transcending thought allows us to grasp our limitation, for example, in the shortcoming of objectification and in confronting limits to existence in limit-situations. Coping within existence is thwarted by the confrontation with the brute and unavoidable fate of existence in limit-situations, and one learns one can and must transcend existence. Yet in communication with another Existenz, I also learn of the limits to possibility and transcending, for what I discover is that I cannot avoid becoming actual in just the historic situation I am in, that authentic possibility is grounded in existence, that the only realization possible for self-being is the choice of existence. Communication with other Existenzen requires us to engage with the existence of the other as the historic appearance of another Existenz. One must look on the physical presence of the other as imbued with a surplus

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[412]Spirit as explained above (§16), being involvement in communities of 'ideas.'

of meaning - the possibilities of an Existenz, as elements of their becoming whole in a unique concretion. In entering into communication, I also choose to become actual in existence, as a realization of my possibilities. Hence, transcending thought weds possibility and actuality in the historic appearance of self-being. Jaspers seems to describe a standard course for the development of transcending: first, one may transcend to the abstract possibility available to consciousness as such, but to become true transcending, this must lead on to the vital possibilities of possible Existenz, and then to action, as thought of possibility becomes temporally fused with actuality in existence. Transcending thought is assisted in this by the techniques of elucidation, which facilitate the overcoming of objectified thought.

The character of alterity is similarly as manifold as the sense of limitation for Jaspers. Alterity may be experienced as freedom in grasping possibility, as destiny in limit-situations and as the loving struggle in communication. In self-retrieval from objectification, Existenz realizes that its self-being is 'up to it,' that choice is an origin of self-being. This may be termed a sort of alterity here, so far as from the point of view of existence, one's life as a determinate, concrete being, the possibilities that require one's decision appear to come from outside of its sphere. In a reciprocal sense, destiny, realizable in confronting limit-situations, plays a similar role. The limit-situations present me with a sense of necessary concreteness that seems alien to possible Existenz. One confronts the inevitable cessation of existence in death, or the unavoidability of struggle, and is brought to the realization that without concrete existence, possibility is meaningless. Yet at the same time, one can invest oneself in these inevitable situations and make them one's own, make them into one's destiny. In a sense, we can regard these experiences as of a kind of alterity: in Jaspers's thought, they play the role of highlighting important limits. However, once again, we are dealing with a merely negative, relative concept of alterity here. Much closer to the conception we are looking for is Jaspers's notion of the loving struggle in communication with another Existenz. One requires an other self to become actual, as we discussed in §18, partly in the sense that one requires a mirror but more importantly in the sense

that in loving struggle, one encounters a limit of active resistance. The other self repels my objectification of him, or challenges my own self-objectification, thus forcing me transcend again. The notion of active resistance, the challenge of the other, in loving struggle is a more adequate notion of the alterity, offering a sense of the reality of the other as a kind of presence and as possessing a force that challenges the interior. However, as we have remarked, the other self who engages us in loving struggle still seems to be merely an alter-ego. The whole significance of communication seems tied up in the effort to reveal the wholeness of self-being, and like Kant's noumenal, remains too thoroughly absorbed in egocentric concerns. Further, in spite of the value of transcending existence and the objective, Jaspers's transcending thought seems to only end up in a kind of suspension: it assists our coming to self-realization in qualifying existence and objectification, but only to return to these as the medium of our actuality as real Existenz. Transcending can reveal the inadequacy of existence for us, but seems to remain merely negative – *this* is not enough, but ___. Perhaps we can expect a more positive characterization from our last two thinkers.

c) Buber.

Genuine limitation, for Buber, is "the boundary between You and It: presence and object" as he puts it.[413] In this passage, he makes clear that the essential boundary is not between what we can experience and what we cannot, but rather between two different ways of being. The main division here is between the monological and the dialogical, 'turning away' and 'turning toward.' In a sense, the boundedness of thought for Buber is again a kind of absorption in the world. As he mentions, the It-world is the world of human survival, and the experience and use he describes is also a pre-occupation with the discrete qualities of things. 'Turning away' means to move the centre of one's being into this preoccupation: to find in one's own desire or one's own perspectivity the focal point of one's concern or awareness - in short, to centre the source of

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[413]IT, 63.

one's normative relations on one's own self-centredness.

We also have a much more definitive answer concerning the status of the thought that transcends: it is the address and answer of response-ability to a 'You.' The instant one has opened up one's self-enclosedness to dialogue, one has transcended the monological state of being. Unlike, Jaspers's loving struggle, 'turning toward' is grounded in something more than a negative: 'turning toward' is a decentring of self-enclosedness into the relation, into the 'between.' Having realized the fundamental relationality of one's being, the locus of being is moved outside oneself: the 'I' can no longer be simply the centre of its world. This discussion has already blended into the topic of our third question. The character of alterity is to be found in the decentring force of the demand for an answer, a response. The address from the 'You' is a call to open oneself and turn toward the other, and thereby attain to a certain mode of being, personhood. Again, the I-You has ethical import in that the pure responsiveness that is the basis of the encounter also founds all responsibility. The relationality of the I-You shifts the centre from an egoistic perspectivity to a superior centre of value in the 'between,' that of the responsiveness possible between genuine presences.

Levinas has criticised (with much admiration) Buber's views for their character of mutuality or reciprocity.[414] The relation to the other, in Levinas's view, is not an exchange that can be assigned as fair rate, as reciprocity seems to suggest. The simple presence of Otherness is enough to imbalance the whole field. Hence, if Buber's view of the encounter is one in which the I and the You are on an equal footing, it fails to adequately address the nature of alterity. Yet, one may wonder if Levinas is entirely fair to Buber's views. There is much in Buber that suggests his interpretation but much also that points in another direction, closer to Levinas's own views. This may be difficult to resolve, given that the greatest problem in interpreting Buber is often both what he has said and what he has failed to say.

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[414]See *Alterity and Transcendence*. Part II.

d) Levinas.

Levinas bears marked similarities to Buber, in spite of the critique he makes. The principal sense of limit lies between the separated being, or what is Sameness, and the Other, and is again a distinction between ways of being, rather than merely between modes of perception. Perhaps the best view of the boundedness of thought can be found in the distinction Levinas makes between the quest for truth as a form of assimilation and as the absolute experience of difference. One possible direction of the search for truth is to seek to reduce all otherness to the same, to make of all knowledge propositions adjudicated from one's own centre. This corresponds roughly to a kind of assertion of the rights of the separated being over its life as enjoyment. In living from ... one 'bathes' in a preoccupation with enjoyments that lies below the level of representation. As this rises to articulation, it becomes property for the 'I' and eventually representation. Yet in the other direction, we can see that a limit must fall between this egoistic economy and Desire for the Other, for the search for truth may be for the experience of alterity, of a distinct reality. This is the genuine transcendence, of which Levinas has remarked, 'transcendence is alive in the other man.'[415] The thought adequate to the experience of limits is that openness to difference in the experience of the Face of the Other, and the character of alterity grasped in the Face is very similar to that for Buber, again a moral summons. The Face of the Other is a 'no' to powers, as Levinas has said. When I encounter the Other I am decentred again: no longer am I justified in my enclosedness, and economy. I am placed in question as a result: my possessions, my knowledge perhaps all represent 'plunder' of sorts. Though I might retaliate and seek to kill the other, I do not possess my own act as I perhaps could in separation, for now it has a significance I could not give nor take away - 'murder.'

To sum up, we must say the most adequate view of the problem belongs to Levinas, for though very similar to Buber, he extensively works out the details of the essential relation we have been

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[415]*Alterity and Transcendence.* p. ix.

discussing. Genuine limitation lies between what is Same and what is Other, is found in the separated being. Yet given the metaphysical relation as the Idea of Infinity, true transcendence is encounter of the Other in speech, in the pure responsiveness that founds language. Here the most authentic or genuine experience possible, the quest for truth that seeks alterity, is the discovery in encounter of the Other, and the listening to the Other's self-attending speech. The fundamental idea that alterity may reveal for us is that relation to difference is the ontological foundation of all normativity, that value originates in the speech of the Other.

§26. *Thinking Differently.*

> There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all.
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> Michel Foucault[416]

The personal mission Foucault discusses in this passage places considerable significance on seeking to transcend the present conditions of one's thought. To be sure, probing and challenging the conditions of one's thought, to the extent possible, is a crucial part of self-regard, and an obligation for the intellectual or academic researcher such as was Foucault. But perhaps there is a more than personal significance one may derive from the possibility of thinking differently.

There has been a sub-theme running through the work here, which has occasionally risen to the surface. In the background lies a concern that there may be a general tendency of thought to enclose itself, to withdraw from relation, to 'turn away.' Despite the argument of this essay being that relation to alterity is an essential feature of a certain kind of being, we have left open

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[416] Foucault, Michel. From a published draft of the "Preface" to *The Use of Pleasure*. In Rabinow, Paul. (Ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. (New York: Pantheon, 1984.)

the possibility that this might not be performed automatically by every being that has potential for it, that as things stand, withdrawal is often somehow privileged and seen to be preferable, or even as the origin of value. In the opening passages, we have discussed the 'tendency to normalization' that is possible in interaction with alterity, which would act to assimilate difference to a domain of normalcy. We have reasons at hand why this tendency might be expected – the absorption in objectivity, Fallenness, the inevitable concern for survival in the world, that the 'You' must succumb to becoming 'It,' that separation is every bit as essential as relation. Our view of this tendency may be easily guessed to be one of concern, that perhaps there is a basic problem with self-enclosedness, with turning away, even though it may not be avoidable. At the same time, the positive view here cannot be that absorption into alterity, a kind of mystical union and oneness, is to be desired. Indeed, in valuing alterity, this course is absolutely blocked, for the relation we are concerned with is one in which the separation of the terms is maintained in relation, that two independent beings encounter, not absorb each other. If it is possible at all to speak of thought forming quasi-social groupings – modes or bodies of thought, discursive formations (to borrow Foucault's term) - which may be defined in a variety of ways over and above the merely social, for example, in terms of breadth of scope, depth of insight or values, stringency of standards of justification, and such: if this is possible, then perhaps the relations a body of thought maintains with other bodies of thought can be urged as an important standard by which to assess the relative validity or worth of bodies of thought.

Some bodies of thought function by enclosing themselves within a compound of ideas, a bunker of concept, and cope with difference by means of categories that relativize difference to their own standards. This may be inevitable due to the pragmatics of our situation, in pursuit of the sheer security provided by a firmly establish body of knowledge. But may we not require more of thought, perhaps a thinking that opens itself to difference, that allows genuine dissent? To some extent, this places a paradoxical demand upon thought, for tolerating dissent may undermine the whole point of thinking. On the one hand, we demand something essentially self-defeating; on

the other, if one achieved a tolerance of dissent, we should perhaps be suspicious that this dissent really is an assimilated, neutralized, 'approved' dissent. Yet as Levinas distinguishes between ways of pursuing the truth which seek to establish propositions by assimilation and those that seek to encounter genuine difference in discovery, perhaps we might insist that at least some thinking be discovery.

So, let us return finally to the fourth of our questions, and indicate what recommendation for the practice of thinking we may derive from this enquiry. Our conclusion has been that reason in the broadest sense is responsiveness to an other, be it another person or the completely alien. As we mentioned in our introduction, it would be something of a paradox to at this point lay down a set of rules for responsiveness, given that the responsiveness we have pursued seems to lie beneath any articulable set of rules. However, we could say that there are enabling skills that contribute to becoming responsive. These can be trained for, even though perhaps nothing can be taught directly about responsiveness itself. For example, in a game of basketball, the players "play" - that is, no pre-given strategy or set of tactics are adequate in themselves to capture what happens on the court in an actual game: but at the same time there are drills used in practice that make it possible for players to be successful in play on the court. Since responsiveness is 'being reasonable' in the broadest sense, the practices that enable it form a kind of ethic of thought (in the sense of forming habits that are enabling). One could even say that we seek something like 'epistemic virtues.' Let us suggest what skills we can from our enquiry.

Though we found Jaspers's account to be wanting, his recommendations for enabling transcending thought may have considerable value. In his methodological remarks in *Philosophy*, Jaspers suggests three ways in which the objectivity and generality of thought may be made to serve transcending in the elucidation of Existenz. First, since Existenz is beyond the limits of existence, the study of objects may lead to the limit of what may be objectively conceived. In a scientific discipline perhaps it is possible to identify the points at which the

pursuit of answers leads beyond general concepts. At this point an appeal to transcendence may be necessary to proceed further. Secondly, the objectifications that appear in such areas as psychology, logic and metaphysics may themselves be exploited. As mentioned, elucidating thought can no more dispense with objectivities than can it depend entirely upon them. Rather a clear understanding of the intelligibility of objects is necessary if the different intelligibility of elucidation is to become clear.[417] What may arise at this point is "an awareness of not knowing something which is present nonetheless."[418] In the objectifications of psychology, for example, a certain knowledge is maintained, suitable to the standards of consciousness as such, but which may yet seem without depth unless accompanied by the movement of possible Existenz.[419] Possible Existenz may recognize something of itself in these objectifications without identifying itself with them.[420] In this way existential significance may be wrested from objectivity. Jaspers also suggests that a sort of hermeneutic circle may be possible, in which the existential meaning of the elucidating thought may become clearer as objective contemplation of it is forced to run in a circle, defeating comprehension but pointing toward a non-objective significance. Alternatively, existential elucidation may be done by revealing the objective contradictoriness of elucidating statements. In these means, the objectivities are used to strengthen by contrast the elucidating thought. Finally, Jaspers suggests the invention of 'existential signa,' which would function as pure signs or as a set of non-objective categories. Jaspers's main notions, such as self-being, communication, and historicity, are such signs, which he refers to as "specific generalities."[421] The function of such signs is not to establish new objects or a field of study: rather the sign's generality is tied to their resonance in Existenzen, which in each case is only through the specific possibilities of a given Existenz.[422] These signs are already existential in meaning, but only through the activity of possible Existenz.

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[417]PII, 13

[418]PII, 13

[419]PII, 13

[420]PII, 12

[421]PII, 15

[422]PII, 16

Turning to Buber, the most direct and most fundamental suggestion he gives appears in the two essays, "Distance and Relation" and "Elements of the Interhuman." If objectifying awareness is fatal to encounter, reducing as it does the 'You' to a collection of qualities, we must strive to encourage the opposite, what Buber terms 'making present.'[423] Making present is becoming aware of the essential difference of the other in the definite, unique way peculiar to him, to perceive his wholeness. This rests on the capacity to 'imagine the real;' the "capacity to hold before the soul a reality arising at this moment, but not able to be directly experienced" in which "something of the character of what is imagined is joined to the act of imagining."[424] In Buber's example, this sounds very much like an empathic understanding, for it is suggested that we 'imagine the reality of another's pain by feeling some degree of it.' However, unlike empathy which perhaps depends on the generality of experience, 'imagining the real' is an effort to perceive the 'uniqueness of the other's dynamic centre.'[425] Further in one's address to the other, one must avoid imposing one's views or exploiting the psychological qualities of the other to achieve one's ends. Rather, one must take the approach of the true educator, and allow 'what is right' to 'unfold' of itself. 'Unfolding' requires that one trust in truth and goodness as an essential possibility of the other, so the progress toward the best view, whatever it may be, is encouraged.[426] In sum, this is not so different from the two points, never using as a mere means and sometimes treating as an end, of Kant's principle of the End-in-Itself.

From Levinas, we may give heed to the contrast between vision and speech. Vision, as we have noted, is the adequation of exteriority with interiority, the manifestation of something as something, perhaps in an image.[427] In vision, one inevitably confronts the results of one's own meaning conferring and thus cannot be a true relation to an exterior. Rather, "exteriority ... is

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[423]"Distance and Relation," 60; "Elements of the Interhuman.," 70. Both essays appear in *The Knowledge of Man.*

[424]"Distance and Relation," 60.

[425]"Elements of the Interhuman.," 70.

[426]"Elements of the Interhuman.," 72.

[427]TI, 296.

true in a face to face that is no longer entirely vision, but goes further than vision."[428] What may go further than vision is the attendance of a being to its own presence in speech. Speech relates the phenomenon to exteriority, or to Infinity, as Levinas puts it, in so far as, in facing the Other in speech, I may view him as phenomenon presenting itself to my vision, but when the Other speaks, replies back or rebuts me, the Infinity of his presence is pressed upon me.[429] I am unable to totalize him in a concept, for he attends himself, answers for his speech and so transcends every concept. Speech is a means by which the Other and I can meet, as long as we both attend our speaking. "Attention and the explicit thought it makes possible are ... consciousness itself. But the eminently sovereign attention in me is what essentially responds to an appeal. Attention is attention to something because it is attention to someone."[430] It is not clear what one may do practically with this suggestion, but given that vision is an overwhelmingly predominant metaphor for knowledge and reality, one might attempt to become aware of the use of this metaphor and even to change it in favour of speech as a metaphor.

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[428]TI, 290.

[429]TI, 98.

[430]TI, 99.

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