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Saying Before the Said: Phenomenological Reflections on Gertrud Schwing's *A Way to the Souls of the Mentally Ill*

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The phenomenological tradition in philosophy and psychology places great emphasis upon human relationality, envisioned not as a correspondence between strictly bounded, monadic subjects, but rather as arising within intersubjectivity. For phenomenology, communication at its depth is a dynamic and constitutive event, rather than a signaling between fixed egos. Nowhere is this perspective clearer than in the work of Emmanuel Lévinas, who argued that the Other's call constitutes the "I" itself. Gertrud Schwing (1906–1995), author of *A Way to the Souls of the Mentally Ill* (1940), begins her book with a moving account of her work with a catatonic patient in a Viennese psychiatric hospital. Schwing's narrative is the point of departure for this phenomenological reflection on communication, intersubjectivity, and in Lévinas' words the "saying before the said" in the context of therapeutic work.

Keywords: phenomenology, intersubjectivity, Schwing, Husserl, Lévinas

> "le Dire est temoinage, Dire sans Dite . . . Dire que ne dit mot, qui signifie . . . ."
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> Lévinas (1978/2004, p. 236)

> "Saying is witnessing, speech without speaking . . . speech which says not a word, which signifies . . . ."
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> Lévinas (1998/2009, p. 150)

Gertrud Schwing (1906–1995), a pioneer in the therapeutic treatment of psychosis, was a nurse and member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute. The passage below relates an experience of hers while collaborating in Vienna with Drs Paul Federn, one of Freud's earliest students, and István Hollós, another early practitioner of psychoanalysis. It was my friend and colleague Dr. Akihiro Yoshida who first shared the following passage with me, from Schwing's (1940) book Ein Weg zur Seele des Geisteskranken (*A Way to the Souls of the Mentally Ill*). He shared the excerpt with me in a provocative way: as exemplifying a kind of lived experience that would be difficult–if not impossible–for phenomenology to illuminate, because what unfolds between Schwing and her patient, evocative and powerful, is almost entirely implicit. Here is Schwing's narrative:

> Patient Alice, age 30; diagnosis: catatonic state

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> Upon entering room No. 4, I was confronted by an uncanny silence and austerity. There was neither sound nor movement to indicate that the human figure rolled in under the blanket was still alive. All of the patient's relationships with the external world had been broken off for months; her eyes were closed, her lips silenced. She could only be fed by artificial means and even the minimum of nursing care required extraordinary effort.
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> Following Dr. Hollos' advice, every day at the same time I sat quietly for about one-half hour at the patient's bedside. For three or four days she remained quietly in her room. Then, one day the blanket was lifted a little; two dark eyes looked cautiously around, betraying the fear of a deeply wounded human being. Slowly, deliberately, the entire face was revealed; it was expressionless, masklike, dead. Seeming to gain confidence and security from my abiding, resolute passivity, she sat up and proceeded to observe me more fully. The following day, the silence which had been kept so long was broken: "Are you my sister?" she asked. "No," I replied. "But," she exclaimed, "Every day you have come to see me, today, yesterday, and the day before yesterday!" (Schwing, 1954, pp. 27-28)

Home and the Unheimlich

It is a deeply human story. A story that beings with a silent simulation of death: depersonalization, inarticulateness, and then moves into wordless copresence, awakening, and a spontaneous expression of intimacy. There is a rich clinical literature exploring the challenge of working with the silent other in the context of catatonia or schizophrenia. Gendlin (1972/2015) described his work with those suffering from schizophrenia as a process in which the therapist seeks "to reach the patient's feeling life," even in silence, and "he must somehow reach it, point at it, relate himself to it, ask about it, respond to it even without specifically knowing what it is;" thus, "these patients force therapists to point themselves at the directly felt, concrete, preverbal experiencing in the patient" (pp. 536–537). Prouty (2003) termed his clinical approach pretherapy, which like that of Gendlin, was "rooted in the phenomenological traditions" in psychology and psychiatry: Prouty reframed Husserl's return "to the things themselves" as a return to "The As Itself," meaning a return to that which announces itself as experientially given in the therapeutic encounter (p. 60). Like Gendlin, Prouty (2001) argued that "empathy is more difficult within pretherapy, because the therapist often does not know the client's frame of reference" and must gradually probe for a contact with the client's "preexpressive personhood" based on the sense that "'there is somebody in there" (p. 35). For Prouty (2001) it is the therapist's "empathic presence" that "breaks the isolation and begins the process of relating" (p. 35).

To encounter Schwing's narrative directly, let us now set aside this rich literature, and examine her first person account. In her very first words she describes encountering an "Unheimliche Stille" (1940; p. 10), an "uncanny silence." The word Unheimliche is our first clue as to the unspoken, feeling sense of room Number 4.

For Schwing the story is set in "room Number 4," not "Alice's room." These words are precise, because a person named Alice is not inhabiting the room. Indeed, Alice isn't inhabiting herself, so her bodily presence conveys an absence. The body in the room almost is not a human body. It's a body, Körper, not a meaningfully lived body, Leib. Or perhaps we can say, the way in which Alice is living her embodiment is in flight from it. She has vacated her own body, and that vacancy is not self-contained, it conveys a feeling sense to the visitor. This is so because being-at-home "in

one's own skin," as we say in English, is already an experience of being comfortably embodied in the world with others. Alienation is already a state of absence from this at-home-ness . . . estrangement, extraneus, foreign, literally "from outside." As van den Berg (1972) noted, for the catatonic patient there is a lack of the "direction, utility, and purpose" that characterizes everyday being-in-the-world; for her, time has "stopped flowing" (pp. 58–59).

Schwing's word, uncanny, unheimliche: it's a word with distinct resonances for an educated German speaker like her–its etymology conveys the setting's unhomelike (unheimisch) felt sense. Svenaeus' (2000a, 2000b, 2013) excellent work on this theme explores the ways in which Jentsch, Freud and later, Heidegger probed the meanings of this rich word, Unheimlichkeit, uncanniness. As Freud (2003) pointed out, heimelich means "dear and intimate, homely . . . belonging to the house, to the family, or regarded as belonging to it" (p. 126); uncanny is the opposite. First Jentsch, (1997/1906) and then Freud's paper Das Unheimliche (The Uncanny; Freud, 2003/1919) touched upon Hoffman's Tale "The Sandman" in which a young man falls in love with a beautiful girl he catches sight of through a window. After becoming entranced by this beautiful but oddly immobile girl, he's gazing through the window at her one day when in horror he witnesses her father pulling "her" eyes out–and abruptly recognizes his beloved was a mannequin, all along. Hoffman's narration creates in the reader a sense of uncanniness, Jentsch writes, by leaving the reader "in uncertainty as to whether he has a human person or rather an automaton before him" (Hoffman, 1997/1906; p. 11).

How close this is to Schwing's first impression of room Number 4! There is a "human figure," not a person, in the bed. Is the figure alive? No sign of life, even a human person named "Alice," is missing–for Schwing, it's not evident anyone or anything is alive here. Hence entering the room, Schwing reports a sense of jarring unfamiliarity, unhomelike-ness, which stands out precisely because it's juxtaposed with the most homelike of settings, being at rest in one's bed. But here, Schwing is in room Number 4, because Alice's room, her ersatz home, isn't remotely homelike, nor is Alice at home in herself; she is alienated from herself and everyone around her. The real Alice, we could say, is homeless, having fled herself. Part of this uncanniness, disembodiment, is Alice's simultaneous flight from herself and flight from others. She is literally hiding under the bedcovers, but not as herself, as racing away from herself while somehow still tethered to the body that remains as an almost dead object. The felt sense of the room seems to negate a sense of at-home-ness, because the human inhabiting it is fleeing her own humanity, and that also means fleeing the other's humanity. Uncanniness, Heidegger (1996) wrote, conveys this sense of "the nothing and nowhere," which "means at the same time not-being-at-home" (p. 176).

In contrast, empathy is so to speak the flavor of one's contact with that intersubjectivity, the feeling commonality of me and you, our coinhabiting of a world (cf. Husserl, 1952/1989, §46). Room Number 4 is drained of that coinhabiting; this is part of its Unheimlichkeit. Alice is a subject hiding from her own subjectivity, and so in flight from the web of intersubjectivity, the world of "me" and "you" and "us." Describing the experience of someone suffering with schizophrenia, Gendlin, 1972/2015 wrote "Without any place or world he feels nothing, only weird and selfless"—words founded in Gendlin's clinical practice that we can read not as narrowly theoretical but descriptive, at least insofar as they seem to capture Schwing's sense of what Alice is undergoing (p. 525). The uncanny feeling of the room immediately impresses itself upon Schwing: already she is attuned to the message in Alice's meaningful absence. Schwing's brilliance, curiosity, and sensitivity is to already grant and trust in this meaningfulness: she accepts that she's already being communicated with, and she listens.

Selfhood as a Response to the Other

For phenomenology, the felt meanings of me and you and us are always intertwined, constituted within an intersubjective field; we could say, they are coarising. As phenomenology's founder, Edmund Husserl, wrote in the Crisis, "subjectivity is what it is–an ego functioning constitutively–only within intersubjectivity" (Husserl, 1970, p. 172). Thus, Husserl argued, "it is only through intertwining with exteriority that interiority can be posited . . . and an alter ego can 'exist' for me" (Hua 14, 336, cited in Taipale, 2007, p. 748). As Davidson (2018) observes in his discussion of the phenomenological social psychiatry of schizophrenia, for Husserl "human subjects come to constitute themselves as separate, independent egos as a result of, rather than prior to, their awareness of others like themselves" (p. 8). Phenomenologists argue that one's self-experience is never accurately grasped as truly solitary or preceding the experience of others—on the contrary, solitude is a moment within an always-already-constituted shared world; my own bodily presence is always already my participating in the world with others. Hence as Taipale notes, "subjectivity is not a closed sphere of immanence, but an expressive sphere where interiority and exteriority intersect" (2007, p. 743).

> Thus, as Ricoeur (1966) remarks in The Voluntary and the Involuntary:
>
> The subject is myself and your self . . . A personal body is someone's body, a subject's body, my body, and your body . . . empathy (Einfuehlung) is precisely the reading of the body of another is indicating acts which have a subjective aim and origin. Subjectivity is both "internal" and "external". . . I discovered body in the second person, body as motive, organ, and nature of another person. (p. 10)

Schwing is attuned to her own experience of uncanniness as she enters the room, feeling the relational between in its alienated absence, because as Merleau-Ponty wrote, "my body is also made up of their corporeality" (Merleau-Ponty, 2003, p. 218). Indeed he writes, "the other person appears through an extension of that compresence; he and I are like organs of one single intercorporeality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 168). Lau (2004) describes this embodied compresence as demonstrating "carnal syncretism," a developmental background of "syncretic spaciality" within which "the perception of the Other is. . .a constitutive element of the perception of the body proper. . ." (p. 153). Phenomenological psychiatrist J. H. van den Berg's (1972) observation of this constitutive process bears directly upon Schwing and Alice's encounter: "the other person plays a part in one's relationship to one's body;" she "can make the relationship closer" (p. 69). This intercorporeality is not an indistinct merging of self and other; rather, it is an always already-given, mute coexperiencing in the intersubjective (interhuman) field. So, Schwing is describing the felt meaning of the intercorporeal field, inside the small hospital room.

Being a subject is always to find myself already in contact with you: even in the extreme case of Alice, in which that contact is with someone in retreat from herself. Encountering another person is always a meeting of meanings of me for me, of you for yourself and for me, and of both of us for the encircling world–and, as we shall see, of me for you. Because Schwing now has a choice of how to respond, wordlessly, to Alice's wordless absence.

Schwing tells us that Dr Hollós had encouraged her to sit silently at Alice's bedside for thirty minutes each day. We should remember that Schwing was not the only caregiver visiting Alice, and in fact others had much more hands-on contact with her, because we're told Alice was being fed artificially, and no doubt bathed and turned more than daily too, so Alice was being touched by others multiple times every day. But how, and as what? Having vacated

her lived-body, resigned from engaging in the most rudimentary animal aspects of bodily life, her abandoned body was an empty house, a thing. So, it was an anonymous body-as-object-of-medical-science (Körper) that was being manipulated in the hospital, not a lived, personal body. This is not a criticism of the patient's medical care: an object can only be the passive recipient of objectivized acts–in other words, it takes two for a caring relation to take place, the giver and the receiver of the caring act.

Gertrud Schwing's first act, upon entering the room void of person-hood, is to silently accompany Alice personally. Schwing's silent accompaniment, attentively "keeping company," while apparently inactive compared with the "extraordinary efforts" the other hospital staff were engaged in sustaining Alice's inarticulate body, was in terms of the human, lived body more active than anyone else. Why? Because her presence, thanks precisely to her silence and refraining from intervening in any tactile way with Alice, was more profoundly relational than anything else occurring in the room. To attend silently to an other is already to engage actively with her: what Dauenhauer (1980) in Silence: The Phenomenon and its Ontological Significance calls "fore-silence" is already saturated with meanings: it is the silence that is already an anticipating, a waiting for, an inviting-of-next. So Schwing's silence is already communicative because it's already unspoken relating. As Dauenhauer writes, "silence presupposes recognized intersubjectivity" and "shows a multiplicity of possibly constitutable senses of the experience of intersubjectivity in discourse," which "requires an ontological interpretation of the significance and existential weight of these several senses" (1980, p. 80).

Such conclusions regarding silence might at first appear merely formal. But in working intimately with others, the intersubjectivity recognized in silence is not abstract, it is personal: and in this case, it is discovered through a personal, patient keeping company with an other amid their speechless pain and alienation. Gendlin (1972/2015) wrote that for the hospitalized patient, "chaotic and frightening masses of feelings and meanings" are often "preverbal and felt, but only capable of being carried forward gently in terms of (any) verbal vocabulary" (pp. 537-598). How much more does the quality of this attending matter when the patient is mute, like Alice. Regarding the attitude and orientation that is called for from the therapist, Gendlin (1972/2015) wrote, "I always assume that I am speaking to a sensible person, there inside the patient. This assumption has never failed of later confirmation, but in the face of this person's total unresponsiveness it is an assumption requiring imagination! I imagine I know I am talking to the person in there, somewhere–a fully human, almost certainly suffering person. . ." (p. 543). Schwing does not even speak—yet arguably she offers herself in a way fully in harmony with Gendlin's approach.

How then can we understand the words Alice eventually pronounces? How to understand Alice's words, without neglecting the long, uninterrupted silence that came before? Merleau-Ponty (1973) wrote that to understand saying:

> We should consider speech before it has been pronounced, against the ground of the silence which precedes it, which never ceases to accompany it, and without which it would say nothing. Moreover, we should be sensitive to the thread of silence from which the tissue of speech is woven . . .. If we want to understand language in its original mode of signifying, we shall have to pretend never to have spoken. We must perform a reduction upon language, without which it would still be hidden from our view–leading us back to what it signifies. (pp. 45-46)

In less technical language, Schwing's daily, patient silence at the bedside was a rhythmic message of open availability as presence for the other, even in Alice's self-vacancy. Without intervening in Alice's hiding–remember she was buried under the sheets–Schwing patiently offered herself as the you to the "I" of the woman who at that moment was not available to

her own personhood. Schwing offers herself as the "thou" accompanying Alice's vacant I, which is already intrinsically an invitation for Alice to reinhabit herself.

Witnessing Alice silently, patiently, and consistently, not as a medical object but in unspoken companionship is a silent act that already acknowledges and so "speaks" to Alice's personhood, and by doing so, evokes the person herself as a person.

Proximity as Calling

How is Gertrud Schwing's quality of presence an invocation? How, precisely, is it in + vocare, a calling upon Alice? Which evokes Alice, ex + vocare, meaning calls her out? Here, Lévinas' reflections on proximity and witnessing in Otherwise Than Being (Lévinas, 1998/2009) are helpful. First, proximity: for Lévinas, proximity "is quite distinct from every other relationship" (Lévinas, 1998/2009, p. 46). Proximity is not the mere coinciding of two strictly bounded, separate individuals. Instead, genuine proximity with another "has to be conceived as a responsibility for the other; it might be called humanity, or subjectivity, or self" (Lévinas, 1998/2009, p. 46).

Let us dwell for a moment with these words and the challenge they pose to the conception of selfhood as the property of a self, itself. Lévinas insists that proximity could be named humanity–yes, intimacy implies shared humanity–and subjectivity–yes again, to be a subject, rooted in subiectus, implies relationship–but his statement goes beyond this: Lévinas writes "or self" («ou soi»; Lévinas, 1978/2004, p. 78), emphasizing "self" in italics. I would argue we can without doing violence to the French translate soi here as "selfhood," because the substantive suffix -hood signifies a condition or state of being, and Lévinas is claiming that proximity with another, as a state of being, is constitutive of being a human self. My self is given to me through my proximity to another. In this sense we can read Alice's story as her recovering her humanity by responding to the felt proximity wordlessly offered by Schwing. Schwing's wordless presence is a response to Alice that calls her out of her negation and into her selfhood in response to this offer, as one woman in proximity to another. Gendlin (1972/2015) wrote, describing work with schizophrenia, that amid this kind of negation "Someone must respond. Only in being responded to does the patient then seem to have ongoing feelings and the ability to 'be aware' of them" (p. 529).

Schwing's presence is a silent bearing witness to Alice that is a response to Alice. What witnessing means, Lévinas wrote, "is not reducible to the relationship that leads from an index to the indicated;" that is, to witness is not the disengaged registering of what's occurring with an indifferently observed other (Lévinas, 1998/2009, pp. 150–151). Rather, to actively witness is to embody "a fraternity, a proximity that is possible only as an openness of self, an imprudent [in French, imprudent, that is, unreflected-upon] exposure to the other . . . exposing of the exposure, saying that does not say a word, that signifies, that, as responsibility, is signification itself, the-one-for-the-other" (1998/2009, pp. 150–151). Lévinas names this mode of relationship sincerity. Sincerity communicates caring contact and responsiveness that "is the meaning of language, before language scatters into words" (1998/2009, p. 151). Bearing witness to the other's selfhood is making oneself available to her, and not passively, but by actively acknowledging one's already-given contiguity with her, one's already-meaningful intercorporeality with her, the cohumanity that is already given to you both, together.

How is this bearing witness on behalf of Alice? "Bearing" means carrying, and in "bearing" witness, one receives and carries the copresence of the other, even in her absence from herself. Indeed the word bearing in the expression "bearing witness" comes into English from

a root that means carrying in the specific sense of carrying a child to term and giving birth: a mother carries the infant until the infant's ready to emerge from her enclosure in the mother and into the world, into the beginning of individual personhood. It is not too much to say that Schwing carries the testimony of Alice's selfhood for Alice when Alice has ceased to witness herself, and carries this wordlessly to the point that Alice herself emerges from the womb she's created for herself, covered in sheets, and headfirst reenters the world, first with sight, and finally with questioning words. This rebirth into communicative personhood is what Schwing's contact-full silence offers Alice. And it is Schwing's bearing witness to Alice's selfhood that calls Alice to emerge from anonymous absorption into human relation, and so back into contact with a world of others, and consequently with herself as belonging to a community with others.

As Davidson (2018) remarks in his work on recovery and schizophrenia, "it will be extremely difficult to maintain a sense of human identity, or to regain a lost sense of identity, should others in my life not recognize in my face, not perceive in my eyes, the fundamental fact of my belonging to the human race" (p. 13). Schwing's attentiveness is felt by Alice as a call so intimate that Alice returns to the other and in consequence to herself. She articulates this felt proximity in terms of a felt, blood relationship: "Are you are my sister?" Meaning, our proximity goes all the way down to our blood and bones; you are the Thou who gives my I back to me, by evoking our already-given relatedness. Note, she greets Schwing not as a "care-giver" but as a felt sister: sisterhood means mutual care, the care is born of an already-present embodied continguity, a shared origin expressed as consanguinity. When Alice names Schwing as a sister, she simultaneously names herself as her sister's sister: this felt connection is the evocation itself that called Alice back to the world of the living. Misurell echoes this felt sense of familial coextensiveness in Wertz et al.'s (2018) study, documenting the story of a man struggling with paranoid schizophrenia, homelessness, and suicidality, whose turning-point experience of "homecoming" was being met by a health care provider who spoke to him, in his words, "like a momma," and to whom he spontaneously responded in kind, a watershed moment in his return to fuller living (pp. 110–111). In such a moment of "reconnecting vitally to the world," as Davidson and Solomon (2010) write, "it would be understandable that each step would be taken slowly, cautiously, and with care;" nothing less than self and world are being reconstituted (p. 126).

For Lévinas, events like these have the touch of the sacred "glory of the Infinite" (1998/2009, p. 150). Lévinas reads the Exodus story of Moses and the burning bush as emblematic of this proximity of the I to the Thou Whose call calls me into being as an I, the calling-into-being from passive anonymity to identity that we see echoed in Schwing's story with Alice. In Exodus 3:4, God calls out "Moses, Moses!" Moses answers: "Here I am!" Lévinas views the response "Here I am!" as emblematic of the very moment in which my I is constituted as response to call of the Other. Hence Isabelle Thomas-Fogiel writes that for Lévinas, "the other constitutes me deep down in myself, before myself," and this is a "foundational inter-subjectivity" that is not derivative of an exchange between already-constituted partners in dialogue (Thomas-Fogiel, 2011, p. 66). Rather, she writes, the call from the other is primary:

> This saying that always already constitutes me, by which I come into relation with another in sincerely exposing myself to him, this 'here I am' is like the trace of the infinite that traverses me and constitutes me. The 'Thou' to whom I am the response, this "Thou' by which I become a 'here I am,' is in fact originally the call of God" (Thomas-Fogiel, 2011, p. 68).

To plumb the meaning of proximity, Lévinas tells us, "this saying has to be reached in its existence antecedent to the said;" in other words, we must seek to discover "what does saying

signify before signifying a said?" (1998/2009, p. 46). Here, Lévinas argues, we have reached the limit of phenomenology insofar as phenomenological praxis is understood as "the thematization of the said," a striving for eidetic insight that privileges essential structures over the saying, and regards "saying as having its function purely correlative with the said" (1998/2009, p. 46). In overemphasizing this correlation, "saying runs the risk of being absorbed as soon as the said is formulated," with the consequence that we lose contact, in my terms, with the home ground of saying itself (1998/2009, p. 46).

What is this home ground? Both call and response are an expression of the originary saying from the home ground, which is entirely implicit—or rather, it is anteverbal. Yet, arguably the anteverbal is the most explicitly communicative ground imaginable, because it is the immediately sensed, lived intersubjective ground that provides the mutual communicative setting, motive and felt context for all speech acts. This inchoate intersubjective ground gives birth to saying itself, as distinct from the said as objectivized by reflection: a central thesis of Otherwise than Being is that saying cannot be truthfully regarded as a mere vessel for the expression of essences. Lévinas reverses the hierarchy which had privileged the said as essential meaning, arguing instead that "the said, the appearing, arises in the saying" (1998/2009, p. 46). The said is derivative, he argues: saying itself is originary, extratemporal, life-giving.

Saying Before the Said

We can read Schwing's story as a call and response between herself and Alice, in which Schwing's call was a saying without a said, that invited Alice to reenter the world, a reentry consummated in her directly addressing Schwing by questioningly naming their already-felt relation. However, from another perspective, the one I began with above, Alice's silence was already communicative: the uncanniness in the room was already Alice's presence as absent as a person from herself and others, and this spoke loudly to Schwing as it would to anyone who attended fully to what was already occurring. From that perspective, the answer came from Schwing, whose presence was itself an anteverbal address that had a kind of life, grew in meaning with Schwing's constancy in accompaniment, and ripened for Alice as a signifying act to the point that Alice returned as herself in response to Schwing. This already-saying that begins before speech Lévinas names a "preoriginary saying" («dire préoriginaire»; Lévinas, 1978/2004, p. 237), borne on a copresence that's present even in the other's absence, a copresence that precedes and invites words, always exceeding those words. Gendlin (1972/2015) wrote, "We usually think we are doing nothing (at least, nothing useful) if we just sit in silence next to someone" (p. 545). Schwing's work with Alice exemplifies how full this silent copresence can be.

For me, Lévinas' phrase dire sans dit, the saying without the said, saying before a communication of information, before words, points to Schwing and Alice's already communicative cobelonging in the world. In Otherwise Than Being (1998/2009; e.g., pp. 10, 82) Lévinas characterizes this cobelonging as fraternity (fraternité) that echoes the word sister Alice uses to name her already-felt, intrinsic relatedness and mutual nearness with Schwing.[1]

The fraternal intimacy born of sincerity is not a bond between self-contained, separate others, even less it is a relationship of a disinterested scientist applying precisely calibrated

[1] In French, fraternité refers to the bonds between men or women as people: it is not exclusively male. For the historical absence of a distinctly female-gendered word equivalent to sisterhood in French, and the feminist coining of the experimental term sororité, see E. H. Kuykendall's chapter on Simone de Beauvoir in The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy (Kuykendall, 1989).

techniques to an objectified other: rather, it is precisely a relation of one-for-the-other, responsibility "to the point of substitution" (Lévinas, 1998/2009, p. 151). Levinas' words quoted at the opening of this article point to this quality: "Saying is witnessing, speech without speaking . . . speech which says not a word, which signifies . . ." (Lévinas, 1998/2009, p. 150). I have sought to articulate a Levinasian interpretation of Schwing's witnessing of Alice, in which witnessing means, as Inukai (2018) wrote, that "the 'I' placed in the relation with the Other who comes to it in the perspective of proximity, not of knowledge, has a responsibility to the Other" (p. 7). Schwing responds to Alice wordlessly, making herself available for proximity, turning to Alice's face even when Alice's face is hidden. That Schwing's "speech which says not a word" was full of signification for Alice is witnessed in Alice's return to speech and the substance of her words, "Are you my sister?" On Levinas' sense of witnessing, Chalier (2007) wrote that the other's face faces me with a "nakedness" that's given to me, simultaneously laying me bare, if I am fully present to her face, and commanding me to respond to her (p. 39).[2] Heeding that call, Schwing steps beyond any preexisting, presumed diagnostic knowledge about the other to be with her–Schwing's response is not the mere "intellectual work," in Chalier's (2007) words, of fulfilling her professional role. And in that stepping beyond for Alice, she fulfills the meaning of her duty of care for Alice.

Moreover, my argument is that this one-for-the-otherness, which is prelinguistic, is also registered anteverbally: the most our language can do is reflectively clarify what's already felt intercorporeally as the living consequence of sincerity in companionship. Yet, as phenomenology teaches us, reflectively clarifying meaning by means of words allows for a fuller intuiting of what's always already given to us, and broadens the horizon of possible responses to what's given–including what we give each other. That expanded horizon of sensing and responding is itself sedimented into the prereflective living layers of our affective and embodied consciousness, and in this way reshapes and reconditions our lived-responses to the flow of life by–at least–opening the door to greater fidelity to that fraternity.

[2] "L'abstraction du visage confronte à une nudité qui se donne à moi à la fois comme misère et comme commandement. Elle n'est pas produite par mon travail intellectuel. Au contraire, elle met à mal ce travail . . ." (Chalier, 2007, p. 29).

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