1. Chapter 1

## SECTION ONE: Identity and Responsibility

### Address my own identity

My right and responsibility to speak as a cis het straight white male

How does the positionality of the speaker affect their capacity to speak to a text

“Authority” to speak on a topc

Positionality/Perspectivism/Standpoint

The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism

#### Check whether Hartsock cites Niezsche or Foucault

#### Pretty sure this is class-analysis/Marxist standpoint

#### See metaphorics of “perspecitivism” below

### Deferral of response

#### This a good and valid question and one that should remain open

#### Deferral and conversational responsibilty

#### Did Critchley write about this in “Ethics of Deconstruction?”

### Metaphorics of “responsibility” as responding in a conversation

#### Make the phenomenological example clear before abstraction

##### The temporality and ethics of texting

##### Why haven’t they written back yet?

##### How am I supposed to reply?

##### periodcity of checking to see if they wrote back -- Heraclitus

#### Maybe continue this below in discussion of Metaphorics

#### Derrida/Levinas on infinite conversation

##### T&I

##### W&D

## SECTION TWO: Metaphorics

### Violence and Metaphorics?

#### Derrida says Levinas mobilizes an “army of metaphors”

#### Which is itself

#### 

##### a metaphor

##### Nietzsche

##### “army” dicourse as militarism

#### Why is a metaphorical analysis important of interesting

#### Use “Metaphors we live by” to demonstrate the existential nature of metaphors

#### Maybe blabber about Austin, who I do not know

#### Words that do thngs

### Metaphorics of miltarism

### Metaphorics of familiarity

### Metaphorics of Maternity

* 1. “Maternity and "materiality" -- look at John Drabinski “Sensibility” book. First chapter

1. “Army of Metaphors”
2. Heraclitus : violence is fundamental to matter, to dynamis
   1. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Deleuze, Foucault
   2. Materialism of empiricism –
      1. Hobbes starts with this dynamic violence and winds up in war.
      2. Locke too
   3. Deleuze
      1. Empiricism and Subjectivity
      2. Maybe the Bergson book?
      3. Nietzsche essay in The New Neitzsche
      4. War Machine
3. Marx
   1. Genesis of Matter is death of Other (Marx)
   2. Vampirism in Marx
      1. Perspectivism
         1. Here speak about perspectivism from a Levinasian POV, as distinct from our common perspectivism (Levinas/Nietzsche)
         2. See Levinas, Perverter  
            <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/LevinasPerverter_20_1.htm>
         3. Nietzsche: “There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective “knowing.””[[4](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/DescartesAndNietzsche.htm#_ftn42)
         4. Levinas claims, “The difference between the Other and me do not depend upon different properties. ... They are due to the I-Other conjunction, to the inevitable *orientation* of being “starting from oneself” towards “the Other.” The priority of this orientation over the terms that are placed in it (and which can not arise without this orientation) summarizes the theses of the present work.”[[6](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn6)
4. IDENTITY
   1. Not sure what Identity is
   2. same with titles. professional titles. professors “endowed chair of so and so and such and such”
   3. respectablity politics PhD etc
   4. professnalization of thought
5. Identity as violence – internal and external violence
6. Hegel: identity isn’t something that you are born with. It is a complex process of violence
7. Same in Lacan
8. Levinas Identity is a momentary state in the dynamic of self and other. Always somethng that is responsive, so not entirely appropriate to say that one “has” an identity.
9. Identity is absolutely not possession, but rather dispossession.
10. A mode of responding ot the other
11. Levinas Perverter’s reading of gender and my understanding of my own positionality. namely the Self and Other transition between different states of masculinity/femininity in their interaaction
    1. Start out with gender and Critchley.
       1. “Can never view oneself from the outside and the asymmetry of ethical space” = Levinasian perspectivism (see Viewing Power)
       2. Also why the idea of intellectual property ownership of ideas is reidiulous we are in a converstaion
12. Methodological questions
13. Start with Critchely/gender/temporality
14. Then with critique/polemos == how do we enter into discussion into people we do not agree with
15. contrast this with Cohen on Derrida https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/LevinasPerverter\_20\_1.htm
    * 1. Elevations and Subversion
      2. As distressing as it can be when anger is directed against a thinker one admires, it seems even worse when someone defends his thought with hostility and even employs it as a weapon of attack. As writers who have taken responsibility for the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, we have already committed to responding to the protest that his writings have engendered. For this reason, it seems inappropriate for Richard A. Cohen to dismiss the feminist analysis of Tina Chanter’s “Antigone’s Dilemma” with so much brutality and condescension in his first book Elevations, characterizing her thoughtful and temperate article as “a hatchet job. Levinas is once more made to play the tired role of the male fall guy … So why even bother with Levinas, one wonders, that sophisticated intellectual male chauvinist pig?” (EHG 196) It is hard for me to understand how a scholar of Levinas--a philosopher of politeness if nothing else--could be so rude and patronizing to one of our sisters. However, Cohen dismisses Levinas’s critical questioners--feminist and otherwise--as “attackers” (EHG 195) none of whom is given the individuated respect for separated Otherness, but who are instead defined collectively as enemies who “demonstrate loyalty to a party or school.” (EHG 196)
      3. Elevations opens upon an ominous note. Cohen recounts, “I remember distinctly to this day the impression Levinas made on me. 'This is true', I thought, in contrast to all the philosophers and philosophies which are fascinating or provocative” (EHG xi). Although anyone who has read Levinas can certainly appreciate Cohen’s “naïve” (EHG xi) sense of wonder, Cohen makes the dangerous move of proclaiming Levinas’s thought to be “true,” momentarily overlooking Levinas’s crucial “elevation” of the Good over the True. Practically canonizing Levinas as a saint or prophet, such an orthodox interpretation verges on dogmatism. We can already hear in Cohen’s contempt for thinkers who are merely “fascinating or provocative” an effort to reduce the ethical height of Levinas’s phenomenological ethics to a belligerent morality of ressentiment.
      4. Although Cohen is an astute phenomenologist, he makes the mistake of placing the normative over the phenomenological without fully appreciating how Levinas’s phenomenology is already ethics. Cohen states that “the central claim in Levinas is that the face of the other is manifested in and manifests a moral height” (EHG 183). Nevertheless, he reduces Levinas’s thought to a set of moral platitudes: “It is quite simple: it is better to be good than anything else. It is better to help others than to help ourselves” (EEP 11). Contrary to Cohen’s interpretation, however, Levinas does not issue prescriptive commands, but instead demonstrates how the prescriptive is already embedded in the existential. Levinas’s project is closely akin to Husserl’s quest to determine the eidetic essences that structure experience (Ideas 7-8), and even more similar to Heidegger’s demonstration that our “everydayness” actually reflects a more fundamental ontology (BT 380-82). That is, Levinas demonstrates how all of our experiences, even the most “commonplace” (TI 53), are already bent eccentrically by our moral orientation towards the Other, already penetrated from the rear by obligation. For example, Levinas does not simply argue that “violence is bad,” but rather demonstrates that, thanks to the ethical relationship, our wills and our bodies are always exposed to violence (TI 229) yet this violence is always postponed (TI 236).
      5. Cohen equates Levinas’s motif of height with a “moral force” that justifies hierarchical judgments of “better” and “worse” (EEP 140). Without properly articulating what the terms “good” and “evil” mean in Levinas’s writing, Cohen expresses this contrast with astonishing violence, arguing that Levinas’s “battle cry would be ‘Against evil, for the good!’” (EEP 104) Such a polemical cry could not possibly come from Levinas, but rather from Nietzsche’s man of ressentiment. According to Nietzsche, ressentiment arises from two inversions: (a) horizontally, ressentiment, the “sanctification of revenge under the name of justice” (52), looks outwards for an enemy rather than looking inwards for virtue; (b) vertically, ressentiment expresses the hatred of lowly people for the high born, and their jealous effort to revalue moral height. This attitude of ressentiment is most apparent in Cohen’s description of Levinas as “teaching morality to the intellectual elite who … think themselves too intelligent, too sophisticated, too cultured for ordinary morality” (EEP 1)
      6. To avoid confusing Levinas’s moral height with ressentiment, we must oppose the hierarchical logic of dogmatic orthodoxy by becoming subverters, overturning thought from below. [3] Judaism has always been a religion for subversion, for radical ruptures of thought that express both supreme disobedience and supreme piety. As Susan Handelman claims, Judaism contains within it a “heretic hermeneutic [that] can be part of tradition while simultaneously rebelling against it” (201). Our first patriarch, Abraham, became such an iconoclast when he smashed the idols revered and sold by his own father.[4] Similarly, modern Judaism stands in the shadow of Sabbatai Sevi, the 17th century apostate Messiah who consummated the Jewish Law by violating it.[5]
16. POLEMOS and Heraclitus -- Relation to past thought
    1. End of critique
    2. Hartsock “Barracks Myth Hartsock, N. (1982) ‘The barracks community in western political thought: prolegomena to a feminist critique of war and politics’, Women’s Studies International Forum, 5:3/4.
       1. ”Before we consider the importance of the feminist critique, let us begin by asking what are the aims and aspirations of anarchism. Anarchism is sometimes defined simply as the refusal of the state. However, anarchism must strive towards a much more profound goal than this. The long history of authoritarian domination has penetrated our ways of thinking and acting so deeply that an anarchist critique must re-evaluate the very roots of political philosophy, of the thinking that considers communality in terms of political association. The feminist scholar Nancy Hartsock argues that Western political thinking has been shaped by the way that the Greek polis (city-state) emerged out of what she terms the ‘barracks community’ (Hartsock, 1982, p. 283). Within this military encampment, the paradigmatic virtues were defined as courage, heroism, glory and the striving for immortality; human relationships were conceived as being fundamentally antagonistic and competitive, as struggles for power and domination. Hartsock claims that war and the masculine role of the warrior-hero have been central to our conception of politics ever since: for example, the warrior’s dominance on the physical battlefield has been transformed into the citizen’s dominance on the battlefield of rhetoric and into the businessman’s dominance on the field of commerce (Hartsock, 1982, pp. 285–6).
    3. Heraclitus/Heidegger/POLEMOS as originary opening of being or whatever nonsense
       1. I wrote about this for Simon. Do I still have the paper?
    4. Thought as constituted as an agora, a field of struggle to be right as a macho paradigm
       1. AGORA, Greek history, military transition to political<https://classics.stanford.edu/publications/origins-democracy-ancient-greece>
       2. Arendt
    5. We will encounter our disagreements with others in different manner than critique
       1. For example above we recognized a question and held it open without answering it
       2. Unanswerability (Levinas) . not exactly “unanswerable” but more it’s always an infinite conversation without terminus or conclusion.
       3. Maybe explore the idea of “responsibility” as “responding” to someone else in a conversation, and what it means when one is unable to respond
       4. also buddhist notions of remaining within the problem rather than trying to answer it.
          1. Pema Chodron on “shenpa” for example
    6. “Respect for the Diversity of Tactics”
       1. Intellectual discourse is too often conceived as a fight -- Can my Hegel beat up your Heidegger; can my Russell beat up your Hegel; etc.
       2. The aim being to assert the superiority of my tradition of thinking over yours
       3. We are capable as thinkers and actors to accept a diversity of tactics; to explore one’s own avenue of subversion while respecting or at least attending to another avenue.
       4. one of the best traits of Hegel is his generosity in thinking; his belief that their must be an element of Truth in every thought for it to exist
       5. Explore alternatives to Hegel
          1. Explore Levinas, conversation, inheritance of thought
          2. Maybe also Nagarjuna’s critique of “svabha” self-existent entities
          3. would be cool to get madhyahamika / nagarjuna in here too  [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C5%ABlamadhyamakak%C4%81rik%C4%81](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mūlamadhyamakakārikā)
             1. Neither from itself nor from another. Nor from both. Nor without a cause, Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mūlamadhyamakakārikā#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGarfield19953-8)
             2. If intrinsic nature (svahbha) does not exist, of what will there be alteration? If intrinsic nature does exist, of what will there be alteration?
             3. Although (the term) "[self](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atman_(Buddhism))" is caused to be known (of, about), and although (a doctrine or teaching of) "[no self](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatta)" is taught. No "self" or any "nonself" whatsoever has been taught by the [Buddhas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhahood)
             4. This is probably a footnote
          4. The already-Othering of the Same
          5. Maybe somewhere in Derrida too.
    7. Passage in Levinas Totality and Infinity about community of inherited conversation
    8. No political change through emotional violence
       1. White fragility and white tears -- shaming people for their weakness, vulnerability, neediness
       2. Resentiment Niezsche (Aragorn, post@)
       3. “Are we fooled by morality” --Levinas
       4. Neitzsdhce Moral thought is violence. it is actually a will to power
    9. Heraclitus and Temporality
       1. “Continuous Creation” not “geneaology”
       2. Contra Deleuze/Heidegger/Nietzsche
       3. Levinas’s statement on Heraclitus “can not even step into a river once”
       4. “I is an other”
       5. the fissure of time is a continuous creation of Other into Self
       6. continuous creation -- a gendered generation, like biblical idea, maybe Spinoza too?
       7. Fundamental break up of matter vs continuous creation
       8. MEditation as deferral of response
       9. Meditation as deferral of response
       10. Derrida deferral
       11. Futurity not as anticipation eg heidegget
       12. Reminder to revisit the question
       13. Jugalo outreach
           1. Start out with Heraclitus and temporaralitu Futurity and responsibit
           2. Itu
           3. Anarche and mother originary responsibility before time
           4. Phenomenal existential experience
           5. Admit ignorance and experiment. What does this word mean
           6. Levias admut respons. For mistakes. Magonista Kropotkin
       14. Also Derrida Deferrral
       15. Futurity not as Heideggerian anticipation,
       16. As a reminder to revisit the question, an admission that I do not have either the first principle nor the final answer
       17. futurity as responsibility,
       18. Meditation as the deferral of one’s response to an impulse --- impulse encountered in sensibility, where we first encounter the toher
       19. Hans Jonas: Heidegger is a gnostic. Relevant here?
       20. Continuous Creation vs Geneology
           1. Viewing Power<https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm>
           2. Levinas’ analysis of light and his opposition to Heidegger can be understood through a comparison of the Jewish and the Christian accounts of creation. Following Nietzsche, Heidegger explicitly critiques Christianity as a popularization of the Platonic reduction of the logos (logoV.) Heidegger contends that the logos originally referred to Dasein as the gathering-place for the strife (polemoV) of Being. Christianity obscures this notion of logos-as-gathering by interpreting Christ as the logos. Following the Alexandrian-Jewish[[1]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm" \l "_ftn1) philosopher Philo, the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the phenomenon which mediates man’s relationship with the divine. Furthermore, John 1:9 explains Christ as the source of divine light as it is revealed to men, “That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” Therefore, this book collapses the concept of the logos as light with the notion of a publicly accessible Word which subsists outside of man’s existence. Against this, Heidegger forwards an almost Gnostic idea[[2]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm" \l "_ftn2) that each Dasein, as an individual, can potentially exist as its own true light, lighting itself as it comes into the world. In contrast to both John’s and Heidegger’s accounts of revelation, the Book of Genesis introduces God’s first act of creation in the following manner: “And God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light.” Contrary to the implicit claims of both John and Philo, this verse does not merely imply that revelation occurs through a substantive word, through the nominal. Rather, it describes the light of phenomena as preceded by and issuing forth from God’s exercise of speech.[[3]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn3)
           3. Levinas describes the light of truth and of representation as something which becomes manifested between speaking interlocutors. In his book Totality and Infinity, he carefully describes the phenomenological transformations of this discussion. Levinas describes me as I posit myself in a “Now,” in a present moment in which I speak to the Other, am heard by her, and receive a reply from him.[[4]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn4) As with Heidegger, Levinas employs the resources of Husserl’s phenomenology to follow the course of this discussion. Although Levinas, like Heidegger, opposes Husserl’s model of intentionality for implicitly positing a spectatorial subject which merely looks at an object, he finds metaphysical notions within Husserl which subvert the apparent ontological interpretations. He claims that Husserl’s major insight was that “notions under the direct gaze of thought that defines them are nevertheless, unbeknown to this naive thought revealed to be implanted in horizons unsuspected by this thought ... The break-up of the formal structure of thought (the noema of a noesis) into events which this structure dissimulates, but which sustain it and restore its concrete significance, constitutes a deduction — necessary and yet non-analytical.”[[5]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn5) Levinas demonstrates that the intentional relationship which separates consciousness from its objects is not foundational, but rather is itself produced through certain genealogical developments of the relationship between the Other and me.
           4. Levinas claims, “The difference between the Other and me do not depend upon different properties. ... They are due to the I-Other conjunction, to the inevitable orientation of being “starting from oneself” towards “the Other.” The priority of this orientation over the terms that are placed in it (and which can not arise without this orientation) summarizes the theses of the present work.”[[6]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn6) Levinas description of Being is as radically perspectival as Nietzsche’s.[[7]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn7) However, whereas Nietzsche describes the experiences of a subject whose being and whose perspectives are determined by its will to power, Levinas describes my experiences in having my being and my perspectives be determined by my ethical position as the interlocutor of the Other. Derrida’s analysis of the structure of Levinas’ writing illuminates his intricate perspectivism. “In Totality and Infinity the thematic development is neither purely descriptive nor purely deductive. It proceeds with the infinite insistence of waves on a beach: return and repetition, always, of the same wave against the same shore, in which however, as each return recapitulates itself, it also infinitely renews and enriches itself.”[[8]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn8) As Heidegger might say, Levinas’ writing repeatedly presents the same “factical situation,” yet, each time, it thematizes this situation from a new perspective. By varying perspectives, Levinas does not merely give the reader a “better view” of the same event. Rather, these different perspectives constitute each situation as a new and different ontological, phenomenological, and metaphysical event. These perspectives are produced as and through my intercourse with the Other. The evolution and transformation of our discussion produces intentional relationships which connect us and which orient me metaphysically. I speak to the Other who responds to me. As will be shown in this paper, each event within this complex intercourse reveals its own intentional horizons.
           5. To fully understand Levinas’ conception of vision and power, one must trace how these capacities evolve and transform throughout each stage of my ethical development. Against Heidegger’s description of Dasein as a dynamic temporalization, Levinas analyzes the time of discourse as a series of discrete, separated moments in which I am born, die and am reborn. In Time and the Other, he describes the birth of an individuated ego as his power to posit his identity, thereby escaping from the there is, an impersonal and eternal realm of undifferentiated existence. Totality and Infinity no longer refers to this event of separation as a power, but rather as the capacity to resist totalization. Levinas states, “The separation of the Same is produced in the form of an inner life, as psychism ... It is already a way of being, resistance to this totality. ... The dimension of the psychism opens under the force of the resistance a being opposes to its totalization.”[[9]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/TotalityAndInfinity.htm#_ftn9) In direct opposition to Heidegger’s assertion that Dasein’s power develops from its futural appropriation of its heritage, Levinas explains that my capacity to resist the weight of the past in a present moment constitutes my force of resistance. Previous to this moment of separation, this separation in and as a moment, I had effectively perished when my works and my statements were alienated from myself by the impersonal institutions and public interpretations which subsumed them. I break with the domination of the totality by shedding my former manifestation and founding myself in a new moment in which I have an opportunity to make a new statement. Not only does this psychism separate me temporally, it also separates me ontologically. Against Heidegger who sees Dasein’s Being as always embedded within the impersonal dominance of Being, Levinas reappropriates the Cartesian distinction between an internal mental sphere and an external reality. According to Levinas, I resist being absorbed by the tyranny of Being by establishing the limit of my identity and creating an interior psychical realm which can not be violated by any external force or person.
       21. ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF GENDER HERE : continuous transformation of masculine/feminine in process of continuous creation<http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/LevinasPerverter_20_1.htm>
           1. Throughout his work, most evidently in Totality and Infinity, Levinas employs motifs of kinship to describe my connection with alterity. When he describes the world as being "familiar to us" (TI 33), Levinas implies that experience is constituted as family members. Through each perspective of the ethical "relationship" (TI 39) opened at each instant of the ethical genealogy, the Other figures as a different relative: the father of futural fecundity (TI 274-277), the wife of the economic home (TI 154-156), the brother of political fraternity (TI 278-280), the sister soul of incestuous Eros (TI 254), and so on. The prevalence of these gendered family tropes has led many commentators to criticize Levinas for having a sexist and heteronormative bias. Over half a century ago in the foundational work of modern French feminism, The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir accused Levinas's figuration of woman as Other to be "an assertion of masculine privilege” (xvi n3). More recently, this protest has been expressed more angrily, with a recent article claiming that Levinas’s work articulates a “demonization of femininity and erasure of maternity” (Walsh 97).
           2. For anyone who admires the work of Levinas, such anger is alarming. Rather than reacting against this feminist standpoint, however, it is precisely our responsibility as Levinas scholars to be awakened by this alarm and to respond sincerely to this anger. As Andrea Juno and V. Vale explain, “[Women’s] anger can spark and re-invigorate; it can bring hope and energy back into our lives and mobilize politically against the status quo” (5). Only by rendering Levinas vulnerable, by exposing him to feminist critique, can we begin to answer for the problems in his thought and perhaps even to use these problems to develop new insights into gender and sexuality.
           3. On the one hand, the feminist objection to Levinas’s language seems to be exactly correct. Without a doubt, Levinas uses gendered motifs throughout his philosophy, deploying familial structures inherited from both the Judaic and the Greek legacies of patriarchy.[[1]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/LevinasPerverter_20_1.htm#_edn1) At all moments of our reading, this should indeed trouble us. We should always refrain from masquerading his gendered language by replacing masculine pronouns with feminine ones, neutral ones, or even the hermaphroditic “he or she”; perhaps we should cease altogether to use “it” in our translations. We must keep in mind that Levinas articulates Humanisme de l’autre Homme, “Humanism of the Other Man,” and not, as a recent translation would have it, “Humanism of the Other.” On the other hand, only to claim that Levinas “privileges” the masculine over the feminine overlooks the more essential question: what does “privileging” mean and should we necessarily privilege the privileged over the secondary?
           4. Derrida astutely poses this methodological problem, “We will attempt to ask several questions. If they succeed in approaching the heart of this explication, they will be nothing less than objections but rather the questions put to us by Levinas” (WD 84). Perhaps the words that have caused so much controversy in Levinas’s work are the very terms that he himself opens up for discussion? Perhaps Levinas’s usage of filial tropes is not merely one of the “problems” in his view of politics (Critchley 174) but rather a problematic which must be deepened?
           5. More than any other thinker in the history of Western philosophy, Levinas stands accused in the very body of his texts, texts that “call for the critique exercised by another philosopher” (OTB 20), texts radically open to critical readings, texts that constantly require justification. Exactly because he employs binary gendered concepts, we can use Levinas’s texts to protest for justice not just in his work but in philosophy and in Western culture itself. Levinas has inherited sexist language and patriarchal logic from a long tradition of canonical Western thought--most of which has been written by white males[[2]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/LevinasPerverter_20_1.htm" \l "_edn2)--that has typically figured subjectivity as virility and citizenship as fraternity. Whereas many sensible, egalitarian thinkers try to masquerade this legacy by using gender-neutral language, Levinas deliberately foregrounds the problematic of gender. Therefore, perhaps a careful and critical reading of his texts can begin to think through the history of thought as masculine and to respond to the anger of our sisters.
    10. Critique and Polemos
        1. critique is itself a military posture
        2. a different type of relationship
        3. Discurve vs Conversive -- look around in Levinas
17. Political Economy
    1. OIKOS and economy
       1. OIKOS/Polis
       2. Fulfillment of human needs vs Control of Household
    2. Self and Property <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/SelfAndProperty_FinalEssay_WEB.htm>
       1. The question of consumption is more fundamental than the question of production. Political economy is a question of human needs, not the right of labor
       2. Needs > Work.
       3. All eating is eating-of-the-Other
       4. Objectivity itself is the corpse of the Other
       5. Explore eating / orality
       6. Everything we inject has a source …
       7. Explore breathing
          1. The Flow of the Breath: Levinas Mouth-to-Mouth with Buddhism" (Ch 13, 2014)<https://www.dupress.duq.edu/products/levinas-and-asian-thought>
          2. The Flow of the Breath: Levinas Mouth-to-Mouth with Buddhism (about consumption and orality, environmental concerns of consumption)
18. Servility and the Service economy
    1. The exploitation of care labor
       1. Dalla Costa & James
       2. Silvia Federici
       3. Nancy Folbre “The Invisible Heart” -- I wrote a paper for Nancy Fraser about this. Let me see if I can dig it up.
19. Viewing Power <https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm>
    1. Conclusion
    2. In this conclusion, I would like to take up Robert Gibbs’ challenge to consider possible relationships between Marx and Levinas though a rereading of this thesis.[[1]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftn1) The trajectory from Descartes to Levinas charts a profound transformation in man’s consumer relationship to a developing commodity economy. Descartes writes at a period which marks the beginning not only of modern thought, but also of bourgeois capitalism. Descartes’ description of himself figures him as almost the paradigmatic bourgeois consumer. Descartes sits down at his desk, calm and clear-headed, relaxing in the complacency of his home, to write his Meditations on First Philosophy. From this space of comfort, Descartes looks out at a threatening world filled with possible uncertainty and insecurity. In response, he attempts to preserve this security by domesticating exteriority. Descartes masters the external world by positing it as a set of objects which offer themselves to him for his contemplation. He does not figure his consciousness as a tabula rasa, reacting to new, unexpected sense-data. Rather, Descartes sets a table for himself with morsels which offer themselves for his consumption and domination.
    3. Nietzsche’s and Heidegger’s works express their distrust and disdain of this consumerist position. Both of them warn that Descartes’ spectatorial paradigm constitutes a cowardly retreat from life and its contingencies. Heidegger explains that mass culture submerges and loses Dasein by transforming its authentic possibilities into exchangeable and consumable commodities. Nietzsche contends that society effeminizes the individual, making him unable to assert his sovereign will-to-power. Both of them overcome their anxiety over modern economic circumstances by developing an anxiety over an underlying abyss. They assert that, by confronting the limits of one’s own existence, one can find one’s will to take risks, no matter what outcome fate may destine. In response to the flaccidity and passivity of modern selfhood, Nietzsche and Heidegger affirm the importance of creative, heroic individuals, of tragic artists and poetic builders. By doing so, both of them try to oppose the dominant consumerist subjectivity with a productive subjectivity. Nietzsche’s argues that the self should assert its will to power by producing new perspectives and creating new poetic visions. By developing a concept of possibility which can not be reduced to actuality, Heidegger establishes a process of perpetual production which can not be reduced simply to the commodities it produces. Furthermore, Heidegger’s Dasein confronts its world as entity which it can manipulate to promote its own possibilities like the solitary capitalist entrepreneur who exploits reality in the name of free enterprise.[[2]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftn2)
    4. Before discussing how Levinas’ works relate to consumer capitalism, I would like to meditate on what his work describes. Although Levinas is an ethical thinker, we must be precise about what this term means for him. Levinas is not a thinker of morals or virtues. He does not — at least, not explicitly — prescribe any specific behaviors or attitudes. Furthermore, he does not furnish us with the equivalent of a Kantian imperatives; he does not give us ground rules for moral laws. Instead, I would argue that Levinas’ project in Totality and Infinity is quite similar to Heidegger’s project of constructing a ontological phenomenology in Being and Time. Although the terminology often seems cryptic and the sentences often become dizzying, Levinas intends to describe the exact structures of our everyday empirical existence.
    5. Levinas’ philosophy attempts to radically reorient my conception of my life. Rather than letting me think of myself as an independent, autonomous entity, Levinas wrenches the center of my life outside of myself. Levinas teaches me just how radically I, at every moment of my life, am radically exposed to the wills of other people. The Other always maintains the capacity to shock me in both delightful and horrifying ways. My openness to the Other explains why I can not shut out another person’s suffering, even if I choose to ignore it. Conversely, this exposure also enables another person to invade my privacy in order to harm me. By orienting me towards ethics, Levinas does not necessarily make me act “better” in the conventional sense. Rather, he demonstrates how my interactions with others — and even my relationship with myself as one who transubstantiates into an Other over time — will always disrupt my self-assertive will. The Other confronts me as a person whose actions I can’t fully predict and whose statements I can’t completely control, yet whose commitments and words directly affect me. Furthermore, the Other seizes my destiny away from myself because he always takes over my projects and my works at the very moment that I project and produce them. Therefore, Levinas demonstrates that, in this post modern age of The Rapture, control will always slip out of our grasp and our will will always be violated by others.
    6. Like Marx, Levinas’ works meditate on the irreducible materiality of the human condition and on the need for economic justice. Totality and Infinity always brings the reader back to a contemplation of the incarnate nature of existence, showing how our transformations from one moment to another are always resurrections of the flesh. Furthermore, this book always makes me contemplate how my discourse, my commerce, with others always occurs through the economic relationships I establish with them and with myself. In his discussions of enjoyment, Levinas consistently praises Marx for recognizing the fundamental sincerity of man’s material desires. Describing life as alimentation, as eating, Levinas’ analysis of enjoyment grounds my existence in my consumerism. Rather than viewing the world as possibilities I can seize, I ground my existence on my sensual enjoyment of the objects I consume. Levinas cites Theophile Gautier’s assertion, “I am one of those people for whom the external world exists.”[[3]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftn3) He does not figure my life as a heroic one, but rather describes me as more of a dandy, as effeminate, indulging myself in the element.
    7. Levinas’ ideas can be applied to think through concrete phenomena which we encounter in our contemporary consumerist economy. For example, Levinas explains that the Other retains his transcendence through his infinite capacity to clarify the image he presents. Although he may manifest a particular facade at one moment, the Other can always present a completely different one in a new moment. The infinity of temporality allows the Other to create himself anew in a form which I never could have anticipated. This description, I would argue, can give us a phenomenology of Madonna, the post-modern person par excellance. Doesn’t Madonna’s constitute her “identity” precisely on her infinite capacity to recreate herself from one album to another, from the Boy Toy of Borderline, to the seductress of Like a Virgin, to the sophisticated vamp of Vogue? Similarly, Levinas explains that one establishes oneself in the moment by positing oneself as a concrete work. By manifesting oneself in the public world, one creates oneself as a consumable object. Again, doesn’t Madonna’s “power” derive precisely from her infinite ability to exploit herself, her infinite capacity to control her own commodification?
    8. More importantly, Levinas’ analysis can also lend itself to a new critique of the consumerist economy. The anarchist Raoul Vaneigem, in his Revolution of Everyday Life critiques consumerism in, as the title suggests, a Heideggerian manner. He argues that modern society forces us into a survival mentality in which we merely consume goods rather exploring and exerting our creative wills.[[4]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftn4) Conversely, Levinas can help us to develop an an-archism of the other man. For Levinas, survival connotes a literal “living over,” an existence which lives off of those who have been slaughtered by history. Levinas explains that the self’s enjoyment derives through its concretization and incorporation of the elemental as objects for its bodily consumption. Furthermore, Levinas explains that this elemental enjoyment is produced from the materiality of the works it has inherited from the past, from the human suffering and death which has congealed itself in the production of a work. Levinas updates Marx’s analysis of capitalism as vampirism, Marx’s descriptions of the machinery of production sucking the life out of the bodies it consumes in production. He draws our attention to the fact that, in an era where all dresses are made from the blood of children and all overcoats are made from human hair, the everyday of consumption implicates the consumer in profound violence.
    9. Perhaps we can use Levinas to develop a phenomenology of social protest. The Other presents me with a being who “burns without being consumed,” whose humanity can not be fully absorbed by a consumer economy, yet whose epiphany also teaches me the possibility of a holocaust. Levinas figures me as someone who is profoundly aware of human suffering, even if I choose to ignore this degradation. Furthermore, in his later works, he repeatedly explains that the material needs of the Other are my own spiritual needs. The Other calls me away from my complacent comfort, demanding that I work to promote social and economic justice. Levinas describes ways in which I can confront systems of oppression. He explains that my freedom does not derive from my ability to exert my will, but rather from an awareness that anonymous powers always threaten to crush my freedom. Although outside powers can indeed control me and objectify me, I always maintain the infinite capacity to speak to the Other. Like Abraham who argues desperately against God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorra, I retain the infinite ability and duty to bear witness to the suffering of myself and the Other and to speak out against the concrete facts which oppress us.
    10. [[1]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftnref1) Robert Gibbs, Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas. [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.]
    11. [[2]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftnref2) Heidegger’s later work criticizes this exploitation of the world through his analysis of Enframing [Gestell.] See his piece “The Question Concerning Technology” in The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. [Translated by William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.]
    12. [[3]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftnref3) Existents and Existence p. 37
    13. [[4]](https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/ViewingPower/Conclusion.htm#_ftnref4) Raoul Vaneigem, The Revolution of Everyday Life, p. 159- 163. [London: Left Bank Books and Rebel Press, 1993]
20. Self and Property <https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/SelfAndProperty_FinalEssay_WEB.htm>
    1. The work of Emmanuel Levinas attempts to rethink the position of the individual self, reconsidering the way it is structured as a responsibility to the other person. Such an inquiry into selfhood necessarily raises the question of what is subsumed within the personal sphere, the suum. In his first magnum opus, Totality and Infinity, Levinas expresses this idea with a phrase borrowed from both Hegel and Sartre, writing that individual is ‘for-itself.’ “The subject is ‘for itself.’ It represents itself and knows itself as long as it is. But in knowing or representing itself, it possesses itself, dominates itself, extends its identity to what of itself comes to refute its identity” (87). Selfhood, Levinas explains, is not a stable identity but a process of self-identification, of appropriating the diversity of otherness and integrating it back into a unitary selfhood. Within Totality and Infinity, he delineates the steps by which this procedure occurs. Before the self involves itself in productive self-creation, he explains, its experience begins through consumption.
    2. Levinas explains that the ego is first produced as something that enjoys existence. The ego is neither a particular instance of a universal category nor something that partakes of elemental forces or codes, but rather something that lives a contented life, living from its contents, fulfilling itself by filling itself. Levinas describes this initial relationship to the world using the metaphorical language of eating, stating “Nourishment … is the transmutation of the other into the same, which is in the essence of enjoyment: an energy that is other, recognized as other … becomes, in enjoyment, my own energy, my strength, me. All enjoyment is in this sense alimentation” (111). This description of the dynamic emergence of selfhood contrasts dramatically with the analyses of Hegel and Locke. For Hegel, particularity first develops through the exercise of freedom, by the way one expresses oneself through the externalization of one’s will in property. Although Locke begins with self-preservation and the biblical dispensation for enjoyment, it is productive labour that turns the world into one’s own. In contrast, Levinas explains that the self initially relates to the other through a process of incorporation and not externalization, through consumption and not production. By emphasizing consumption, Levinas seems to be drawing attention the way in which one begins one’s existence -- not as an agent asserting its sovereign will and projecting its spirit onto things but rather as someone vulnerable who needs to be sustained by the world in order to survive.
    3. More than a reaction to either Locke or Hegel, Levinas’s emphasis on consumption seems to be a response to the way that Heidegger initially situates Dasein (human being). According to Heidegger, Dasein finds itself already thrown into a situation that surpasses it (174:135). Although this state of thrownness indicates certain susceptibility within its constitution, Dasein overcomes this passivity by recognizing how it is already engaged in the world. Dasein is already involved in a variety of productive relationships; it is related to things through relationships of utility that beckon to its hand. Once Dasein recognizes its engaged existence through the possessive relationships of mine-ness (Jemeinenigkeit) and authenticity / own-ness (Eigenlich), it can actively grasp things as they refer to it as ready-to-hand (Vorhanden), concerning itself by “producing, manipulating, and the like” (88) . According to Levinas, one first relates to the world through the mouth that eats rather than the hand that uses: man’s initial relationship is consuming the elemental rather than acting within Being. He remarks, “The consumption of foods is the food of life” (114). Therefore, he criticizes Heidegger's analysis for its overemphasis on productivity at the expense of consumption, remarking, "[Heidegger's model of the] world as a set of implements ... bears witness to a particular organization of labour in which foods take on the signification of fuel in the economic machinery. ... Dasein in Heidegger is never hungry" (134).
    4. Levinas describes several phenomenological transformations that respond to this dynamic of hunger. Part of this process entails the development of an economy in which personal property can exist. In itself, pure enjoyment does not engender any property ownership. Levinas employs the notion of the “elemental” to explain why this is so. Whereas Hegel finds a lack of will, a res nullis, within the natural world, Levinas describes it as permeated by anonymous elemental forces. Qualities without substances content sensible enjoyment. For example, Levinas states that one enjoys the “blue of the sky” (141). Here, he seems to be claiming that affectivity responds to the adjectival blue rather than a nominal thing such as the ideal of blueness, or the particular object described by blue, the sky. Affect responds to intensities, not to objects. Thus, Levinas states that these elements are “coming always without my being able to possess the source” (141). That is, within sensibility, one does not find concrete things which could be seized as property. Furthermore, Levinas explains enjoyment as a passive process, in which one is affected, undergoing waves of sensation. Levinas thus claims that ownership is ambiguous within this realm, writing “to possess by enjoying is also to be possessed” (158). In order for private property to emerge, the relationship of enjoyment must be transformed into a new configuration, a phenomenon which Levinas calls the Home.
    5. Levinas's notion of the Home seems to be an adaptation of Heidegger's description of how the individual relates to the world. In Being and Time, Heidegger argues that the self is not separated from things as a subject is from an object, but is already engaged in the world. According to Heidegger, the reason why Dasein is always already in a productive, manipulative relationship with the world is because it is always already “dwelling alongside” the world (54:80ff). Levinas's discussion of the "Home" seems to indicate his ironic critique of this idea. For Levinas, the Home is precisely the event that terminates engagement, separating the individual from the immediacy of his enjoyment. “Man abides in the world as having come to it from a private domain, from being at home with himself, in which at each moment that he retires” (152). Emerging from the welcome granted to him by an other person's hospitality, the home establishes a private being, walled off from the anonymity of sensible elements.
    6. By situating oneself inside the private realm of one’s domicile, one can relate the outside world back to oneself, laying claim to things within it as one’s property. This home enables labour and possession by creating a breach between the self and the elements in which it had been absorbed. Through this distance, one can exercise the power of a labouring hand which exercises labour and identifies property. Overcoming the transience of sensual affect, the hand draws from the element concrete things, objects that endure through time. In many ways, Levinas’s description of how property is acquired echoes Hegel’s notion that possession negates the independence of the thing (§59): “labour in its possessive grasp suspends the independence of the element… as property the thing is an existent that has lost its being” (158). For Levinas as for Hegel, possession entails the absolute domination of the property by the owner.
    7. According to Levinas, my encounter with the other person prevents the spread of this domination. This transcendental experience of confronting another person is not akin either to sensual enjoyment or to masterful possession. The other person is an exterior entity, someone that cannot be absorbed into my internal sphere or made into part of my identity. However, this encounter is not experienced as a negative limit but rather as a something that is overly positive. The other person, according to Levinas, is not something that eludes the grasp of possession but someone who overwhelms it. In this experience, he claims, “the I, nonetheless, contains in itself what it can neither contain nor receive solely by virtue of its own identity” (27). Envisioning the other person’s visage, one’s mind is confronted with a paradoxical experience of containing more than its capacity, something that could not have come from consciousness itself and that consciousness can not integrate into the self’s own identity. When the other person expresses herself, she produces an image or a work that can be appropriated, yet simultaneously she also expresses a transcendence that cannot be dominated. However she presents herself, she both preserves her own privacy and maintains the ability to respond in unforeseeable ways. According to Levinas, the other person transcends not just the self’s power, but its power for power (198). The only way that one could attempt to exercise absolute power over another person, to appropriate them as property, would be to murder them. However, murder would grant one possession of only a corpse, not the person herself.
    8. The encounter with the other person alters the self’s intimate relationship to the world it possesses and allows for the emergence of a common sphere. Complementing the phenomenology of the Home, Levinas describes another process that conditions ownership, the genesis of the general. He explains that, because the other person halts the self’s effort to appropriate, it both throws property into question and conditions it. “Possession itself refers to more profound metaphysical relations: a thing does not resist acquisition. Other possessors – those whom one cannot possess – contest and therefore can sanction possession itself” (162). The presence of other persons challenges my immediate enjoyment of goods, and removes me from my solitary experience of them. Paradoxically, however, this same interaction also allows for the establishment of property. In order for appropriation to occur, a subject must be counterposed against a field of objects. According to Levinas, one achieves this separation by presenting oneself and one’s goods to the outside gaze of the visage, to the other person’s vision. “In order that I be able to see things in themselves, that is, represent them to myself, refuse both enjoyment and possession, I must know how to give what I possess” (171). According to Levinas, I become aware of the general sphere once I generously offer my world to the other person.
    9. With this analysis, Levinas’s account of the commons differs dramatically from Locke and Hegel. Although Locke believes that the world was given to man in common, only the negative duty to avoid injuring others remains after creation. Since the right to existence and the right to property are individuated, generality can only emerge from a consent reached between separated persons pursuing their own ends. On the other hand, Hegel understands the universal order of the state as that which already conditions the substantial objectification of the particular person. In contrast, Levinas asserts that I move from my own solitary enjoyment to the common world through communicating with the other person and entering into commerce with him. Levinas’s analysis of the commons seems to be preferable than that of Locke, who treats the commons either as a something natural that should be privatized or as the epiphenomenal outcome of aggregated interests. The contrast between Hegel and Levinas, the question of whether we move from the general to the interpersonal or the interpersonal to the general, is much more subtle. Here it seems worth noting, though, that within The Philosophy of Right, Hegel only seems to consider the logical categories of particularity and universality. He has no comparable term for alterity, no way to discuss the unique phenomenon of the other person, as he did in the Phenomenology of Spirit.
    10. For Levinas, the realm of generality is populated not by property or by objects, but by works. Labour not only incorporates things into my existence, it also produces a thing exterior to myself, a work, a thing that attests to the absence of the worker. Levinas uses this notion of the work to argue against Locke and Hegel's assertion that labour creates property. “The product of labour is not an inalienable possession, and it can be usurped by the Other. Works have a destiny independent of the I, are integrated into an ensemble of works: they can be exchanged, that is, be maintained in the anonymity of money” (176). Whereas Hegel explained how property expresses the self by the way it embodies the human will, Levinas insists that the work expresses the will as something from which the will has removed itself. Production for Levinas does not expand the personal sphere, but rather creates something external to it, something that can be expropriated and manipulated by other wills. For Levinas, my labour not only secures what belongs to me, but also situates those expressions of myself in a general economy where they can be appropriated by anyone. Therefore, the very act of self-assertion and self-manifestation is already a primary exposure and self-alienation. “The other can dispossess me of my work, take it or buy it, and thus direct my very behaviour; I am exposed to instigation. The work is destined to this alien Sinngebung [meaning-giving] from the moment of its origin in me” (227).
    11. Levinas describes the reverse process in a manner that further complicates the idea of ownership. Just as our absence is signalled in the ways that we express ourselves in our works, we also appropriate absences through our acquisitions. The other person, Levinas explains, is symbolized through the way that he has expressed himself in his works. Thus, I can acquire a certain kind of access to him through the way the person has expressed himself, but, Levinas explains, “we penetrate into this interior world as by burglary” (177). Levinas’s metaphor of burglary seems particularly striking in this discussion of property. As mentioned before, the primary threat against which Locke’s treatise defends is that of robbery: because the primary right of individuals is to promote their own self-interest, any infraction upon this privilege legitimates severe retribution. In contrast, Levinas’s describes how property is already theft: property is already situated in a public realm, and thus already subject to the economic dynamics of dispossession. More strikingly, Levinas’s example reconstrues the notion of thievery and the way it affects the personal sphere. For Levinas, the thief does not represent someone who takes property away from the sphere of selfhood, the suum, but rather someone who penetrates into it.
    12. Levinas further explores the susceptibility of the personal sphere in his second major book, Otherwise than Being. Otherwise than Being reworks the conceptual architecture of Totality and Infinity, focusing more closely on how the personal sphere develops from its responsibility to other persons. According to Levinas, the Western idea of selfhood is based on the idea that the self can possess itself through an act of identification. “In self-consciousness we identify ourselves across the multiplicity of temporal phases. It is as though subjective life in the form of consciousness consisted in being itself losing itself and finding itself again so as to possess itself by showing itself, proposing itself as a theme, exposing itself in truth” (99). In this statement, Levinas seems to be locating the problem of self-consciousness in what he refers to in an early essay as Heraclitus’s problem of the “illusory present” (“Reflections,” 65). Given that everything changes through the dynamic flux of time, how could one ever posit a stable identity for a thing such as the self? If one is always changing, isn’t the self already dispersed in otherness? Levinas claims that philosophy has consistently tried to resolve these problems by developing ways that one can integrate this diversity. It has proposed various themes through which one can grasp phenomena, allowing one to convert the external other into internal property and thereby establish self-possession.
    13. Levinas challenges the authority of these thematic organizing principles by demonstrating that before consciousness can appropriate the ex-ternal, the self is already ex-posed, already open to otherness. From the very beginning, the suum is already directed by its responsibility to other people. Otherwise than Being explains this prior exposure by clarifying one of the most puzzling aspects of Totality and Infinity: how is the “other” related to the “Other.” Totality and Infinity had presented two stages of the self’s development. First, the self emerges by integrating the “other” into the same, creating the identity of the self. Secondly, the self relates to the human “Other” as a transcendental entity that can not be appropriated. In Otherwise than Being, Levinas looks more carefully at the first stage of this process, explaining how sensible enjoyment and consumption is already ethical. Within sensibility, the self does not yet exist as a self-sufficient entity. As in Totality and Infinity, Levinas explains that consumption is the process by which the self achieves its identity. “The taste is the way a sensible subject becomes a volume, or the irreducible event in which the spatial phenomenon of biting becomes the identification called me, which becomes me through the life that lives from its very life” (73). Levinas argues that within this eating there is already a hunger that drives it. Whereas consciousness is driven to fulfill itself with contents, there is an underlying emptiness that perpetually troubles this fullness. According to Levinas, this emptiness indicates the presence of the other person’s absence. “The relationship with the other puts me into question, empties of myself and empties me without end, showing me ever new resources. I didn’t know I was so rich, but I no longer have the right to keep anything for myself” (“Meaning”, 94). One’s responsibility towards the other splits me open, preventing me from isolating myself as a self-sufficient, self-possessed identity. Levinas describes this process as an inversion and reversal of consumption: eating not only creates identity by internalizing the outside; it is also a “gnawing away at this very identity – identity gnawing away at itself – in a remorse” (OTB, 114).
    14. According to Levinas, the phenomenology of sensibility indicates an underlying vulnerability and exposedness to other persons. In contrast to Totality and Infinity’s claim that the self could be characterized as “for itself,” Levinas describes it in Otherwise than Being as a “for-the-other.” The very movement of incorporating otherness is also equivalent to being haunted by others already within oneself. The self is already committed to others before it is concerned with itself: it is exposed, posited in an external space filled with the wills of others. In Totality and Infinity, Levinas explained that the sphere of generality was comprised by works that testified to the absent wills of other people. This would suggest that, when we consume what the world offers, we are appropriating the remnants of others, incorporating their works and their actions as our own. We are thus claimed by others from the inside; we are created as entities who are already responsible for the legacy that other persons have left behind. Levinas explains “There is a paradox in responsibility, in that I am obliged without this obligation having begun in me, as though an order slipped into my consciousness like a thief, smuggled itself in me” (13). As in Totality and Infinity, Levinas’s reference to the thief refers not to the act of taking away an external object, but of penetrating into the interior. In Otherwise than Being, Levinas pushes this metaphor even further, to assert that consumption animates one’s own identity from the inside as a responsibility towards others.
    15. With this understanding of the world, Levinas helps us to reconsider and perhaps to overcome the prominence that the notion of private property has assumed in this moment of history. Levinas does so by reconsidering the notions of self, world, and other upon which are founded the ideology of possessive individualism and the institution of ownership, as well as the theories of both Hegel and Locke. In both of these writers, (1) the self is understood as an agent who exercises his labour to extend his sphere of selfhood; and (2) the world is understood as an empty vessel awaiting animation by the human will. Locke and Hegel do differ significantly with regard to their views on other people. Locke practically ignores social duties, whereas Hegel shows how universal social concerns always limit individual actions. Nevertheless, even Hegel argues that the particularity of each individual’s capacities and resources counterbalance the general right to social welfare, thereby sanctioning inequities in property ownership and modes of subsistence. In contrast, Levinas does not understand the world as merely an empty field awaiting human agency. For Levinas, the world is already occupied, haunted by the efforts of past generations of workers. The self begins its existence not as a productive labourer but as a consumer already enjoying the environment that others have created. Whereas Levinas’s viewpoint seems to be a vast improvement over both Locke and Hegel’s, he still shares a blind spot with the two of them. All three writers seem excessively humanist: for all of them, what matters the most in the world is the presence of human wills, either the self’s or the other person’s or society’s. The natural world itself exerts no significant claim on its own behalf. For this reason, we still need to consider what sorts of new ethical thinking will be adequate to respond to the environmental challenges confronting our planet today.
    16. Conclusion
    17. By analysing the primary encounter between self and world as one of consumption rather than production, Levinas becomes interesting for modern political-economic thought. He dislodges the central category of property ownership, conceiving selfhood as an absolute generosity. “The subjectivity of a man of flesh and blood … is a being torn up from oneself for another in the giving to other of the bread from one’s mouth” (142). Although Levinas’s hyperbolic language is rhetorically radical, it is not entirely clear the extent to which it can be read as being politically radical. Despite Levinas’s occasional references to Marx and his philosophical usage of the term “anarchy,” he still seems to support politically the “pathos of liberalism” (TI, 120). Nevertheless, this paper will conclude by trying to push Levinas’s thought in a more revolutionary direction. This will be done by analysing how this essay’s themes of property, production, and consumption are discussed by the Peter Kropotkin in his seminal declaration of anarchocommunism, The Conquest of Bread.
    18. Kropotkin criticizes the idea of property ownership because, like Levinas, he understands the world to be constituted by the works of other people. Thus, Kropotkin argues that no individual can lay claim to any particular object because the value of each thing depends on the efforts of an incalculable number of others. “And even to-day; the value of each dwelling, factory, and warehouse, which has been created by the accumulated labour of the millions of workers, now dead and buried, is only maintained by the very presence and labour of legions of the men who now inhabit that special corner of the globe” (6). According to Kropotkin, property claims are impossible because one’s existence already depends upon an infinite debt to others. The world within which one acts is already constituted by the historical deeds of past workers; one’s actions only become significant because they occur within a contemporary environment where other people currently labour.
    19. Given that everyone’s personal effort depends radically upon the efforts of others, Kropotkin further argues that ownership claims cannot be based on labour. Here, his claim is quite different from the critique of private property levelled by Karl Marx. In Although Marx’s early “humanist” writings are quite concerned with social needs (Heller, 40), his later critique of capitalism focuses more intensely on the inequity of social production, on an analysis of how the capitalist extracts surplus value from the labourer. In Capital, Marx roots the source of social value in human labour. In the first chapter, he claims that the total labour power of society can be divided into discrete units of average labour expended in a given hour (129), further distinguishing between simple and skilled labour. Kropotkin objects that Marxists and other collectivists place too much emphasis on determining the appropriate value of various kinds of labour. Thus, he argues:
    20. It is utterly impossible to draw a distinction between the work of each of these men. To measure the work by its results leads us to an absurdity; to divide the total work and to measure its fractions by the number of hours spent on the work also leads us to absurdity. One thing remains: to put needs above works, and first of all to recognize the right to live, and later on the right to well-being for all those who took their share in production. (231)
    21. Rather than focusing on labour, ownership, and production, Kropotkin asserts that people should organize themselves in such a way as to satisfy the human needs of consumption.
    22. Kropotkin criticizes the tradition of political economy from Adam Smith to Marx for consistently commencing their analyses with production rather than consumption. He defends his own decision to reverse the order by explaining
    23. Perhaps you will say [putting production before consumption] is logical. Before satisfying needs you must create the wherewithal to satisfy them. But before producing anything, must you not feel the need of it? Is it not necessity that first drove man to hunt, to raise cattle, to cultivate land, to make implements, and later on to invent machinery? Is it not the study of needs that should govern production? It would therefore be quite as logical to begin by considering needs and afterwards to discuss the means of production in order to satisfy these needs (238).
    24. Our capacity to produce, he claims, is sufficient to produce well-being for all, enough housing, clothing, luxury items, and food. The thing that prevents people from meeting their needs is the exploitation practiced within the contemporary system of private ownership, a system that reduces the majority of people to the barest subsistence. Instead of allowing this economic system to legitimate itself with the alibi that it practices efficient production, Kropotkin argues that we must begin by considering consumption. Society, he declares could only hope to meet the needs of all if it returns to the most fundamental question, the question of bread. “We have the temerity to declare that all have a right to bread, that there is enough bread for all, and that with this watchword of Bread for All the revolution will triumph” (69).
21. Against Militarism
    1. Carl Schmidt friend-enemy distinction
    2. The logic of militarism prevails not only within mainstream conceptions of politics, but also within various strands of radical thinking, from Marx’s belief that class struggle is the engine of history to Badiou’s celebration of the militant as a model for political subjectivity. Most alarming is the way that such militarism runs throughout the writings of the French Tiqqun group. Within these texts, we find the standard masculinist warnings against the way one is ‘castrated’ (Tiqqun, 2010b, p. 18) by mass society, as well as a hostile denunciation of the figure of the ‘Young Girl’, who represents for them the shallow bitch who succumbs to the idiocy of consumer culture. Worse yet are the recurrent calls to violence. Not only does it cite Clastres’s proclamation that ‘war is the truth of relations between communities’ (Tiqqun, 2010a, p. 22), but the text Introduction to Civil War also tells us, ‘Only the timid atom of imperial society thinks of “violence” as a radical and unique evil. ... For us, ultimately, violence is what has been taken from us, and today we need to take it back’ (Tiqqun, 2010a, p. 10). We are similarly informed that hostility is a primordial relationship and that the ‘hostis is a nothing that demands to be annihilate’ (2010a, p. 12).
22. Contra Deleuze/Nietzche/Hedegger influences in anarchism
    1. “War Machine” Deleuze / Guattari
    2. Neitzsche & post-anarchism
    3. Critique of the “immanence of power relations” <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/thesis.htm>
    4. Nietzhean heritage of Anarchism, especially the Deleuzian stuff
    5. Maybe some of it is very good. I have never read much Bifo or Negri
    6. Explore Heraclitus
    7. Tiqqun
    8. whatever post-Tiqqun stuff there is. I don’t know the literature. Endnotes? Commune.
23. Situationism and Levinas
    1. Levinas: For the Kids
    2. <https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/Levinas_FTK_Paper_WEB.htm>
    3. “The state of nausea that precedes vomiting, and from which vomiting will deliver us, encloses us on all sides. we are revolted from the inside; our depths smother beneath ourselves; even our hearts are sick -- Emmanuel Levinas, 1935, “
    4. “ People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth. -- Raoul Vaneigem, 1967 “
    5. Also read “De L’evasion” (1935) in comparison to Crimethinc “Evasion”
24. Anarchism as a practice of caring for the other
    1. Mutual aid as care
    2. I remember what [Kropotkin] did in Geneva in the winter of 1879 to help a group of Italian refugees in dire straits, among them myself; I remember the small attentions, I would call maternal, which he bestowed on me when one night in London having been the victim of an accident I went and knocked on his door; I recall the innumerable kind actions towards all sorts of people. (Malatesta, 1965, p. 258)
    3. metta suttra
       1. “just like a mother cares for it’s child …”
25. Past Work
    1. Viewing Power: (Descartes, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, implicitly Foucault. Ethical relations are more fundamental than power relations. Looks at perspectivism, starting with Cartesian cogito, through Nietzsche’s radicalization. finally Levinas as exterior-perspectivism)   
       <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/thesis.htm>
    2. Self and Property (Locke, Hegel, Levinas: Consumption is more primordial than Production) <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/SelfAndProperty_FinalEssay_WEB.htm>
    3. Levinas: FOR THE KIDS!!! (Levinas and Situationism/Vaneigem) <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/Levinas_FTK_Paper_WEB.htm>
    4. Levinas, Perverter (A very weird paper. Lots of wacky stuff. Look in here for Heraclitus, perspectivism, critique of Simon Critchley)
       1. Since the inauguration of modern French feminism in Simone DeBeauvoir’s The Second Sex, Emmanuel Levinas has been criticized for the way his thought employs gendered, familial tropes. In response, this paper argues that, although this does constitute a very real and urgent problematic in Levinas’s thought, it only becomes a problem when his writing is read in a hermeneutically "straight" manner. Beneath the apparent hetero-normative veneer of Levinas's prose lurk traces of queerness. By closely tracing the motifs that Levinas correlates with gender, this paper will illustrate how, at each instant in the ethical relationship, the Self is always transforming between masculine- and feminine-gendered performances for a feminine- or masculine-gendered Other. Rather than embodying a conservative and essentialist view of sexuality, Levinas articulates an existential performative perversity.
    5. <http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/LevinasPerverter_20_1.htm>
    6. Anarchism of the Other Person (Levinas and Anarchsm)
26. <https://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/writing/Levinas/AnarchismOtherPerson_WEB.htm>
    * 1. Throughout his writing, the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas uses the term anarchy to critique different modes of temporal, thematic, and political ordering. After an exploration of the Greek meanings of anarcian, this paper discusses the way that Levinas uses anarchy to point towards an ethical responsibility that arises before the political time of history. This interruption of time also disrupts the self's ownership of personal private property. The political ramifications of Levinas' distinction between autarchy, the selfish assertion of absolute ownership, and anarchy is illuminated by comparison with the works of various anarchists. Lastly, Levinas' development of the notion of anarchy is historically situated among the actual anarchist events unfolding around him.
    1. Undoing patriarchy, subverting politics: anarchism as a practice of care
27. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mitchell-cowen-verter-undoing-patriarchy-subverting-politics-anarchism-as-a-practice-of-care>
28. The Flow of the Breath: Levinas Mouth-to-Mouth with Buddhism (about consumption and orality, environmental concerns of consumption)
29. Bibliography
    1. How much new stuff to read?
    2. AGORA, Greek history, military transition to political<https://classics.stanford.edu/publications/origins-democracy-ancient-greece>
    3. Arendt on polis
    4. Silvia Federici
    5. Dalla Costa and James
    6. Nancy Folbre
    7. <https://www.amazon.com/Black-Hunter-Forms-Thought-Society/dp/0801859514> pierre vidal naquet, ancient greece
    8. I think the gateway drug for anthropology is probably Barry Strauss and Josh Ober
    9. Sasha Luci, feminist mom stuff
    10. bell hooks, stuff about “home”
    11. black mothering
30. DEVA WOODLY TALK
31. current moment
32. scholar of social movements
33. public discourse
34. rebecca solnits stuff
35. safety and care in a very personal manner. i am a mother …
36. pandemic and movmeneet
37. black feminsit principles
38. radical and pragmatic
39. radocal political imagination
40. practical steps
41. politics of care
42. acknowledgement of trauma, healing, interdepeendance, unapologetic blackness, abolitionist, restorative justice
43. one of the main ways care is enacted is healing justice
44. mode of analysis that oppression causes harm more than ….
45. requires personal and political action towards care
46. causes us harm and is part of what we take into account
47. essential part of being a part of healing
48. eradicate causes of harm
49. impossible to resolve trauma and heal while only focus on internal processes
50. structural analysis at ts center
51. personal care not that stuff
52. (maybe take down Foucault here)
53. not individual responsibility to heal themselves
54. social ills require social action
55. black feminist practice always in context
56. care not only an ethics but also a politics
57. activity of governance basic need and responsibility to provide care for human life
58. deep affinity with voluminous
59. JOAN TRONTO
60. caring democracy
61. “care for citizens and care for democracy itself”
62. claim because they matter
63. no alternative
64. no abstraction
65. people simply matter
66. PRIORITY OF NEEDS!!!!
67. to matter -- to exist as mass at rest
68. EXACTLY!!!!
69. materiality (form/matter aristotle, levinas)
70. entitles you to care
71. reason for distress, blah blah ….
72. not dependent on properties or rights etc
73. no justification is necessary
74. “No justification” -- foundation of the Ethical
75. provision of what is necessary for upkeep ….
76. provide for needs
77. politics of care
78. hurting
79. full personhood
80. material deprivation
81. it matters if we are hurting
82. experience of politics
83. values feelings as embodiment what actually exiss
84. acknowledges devalued values in masuclintiy
85. REVALUATION OF VALUES
86. “interdependence” -- this is where we are talking about the Other, work on breathing
87. unapologetic blackness vs. respectability politics
88. center marginalized
89. celebration of black joy
90. affirmation of black joy
91. (LOOK AT BARBARA EHRENREICH’s book on joy?”
92. accountability/interdependence
93. CLEARLY LEVINVAS AND RESPONSIBLITY
94. abolitionist
95. ASK SOL IF HE HAS ANY GOOD WORK
96. origin of movement
97. Lorde “institutional dehumanization” systems of oppression
98. racial capitalism
99. Cedric Robinson
100. capitalism racialized
101. new dimension of the way lived experience is intertwined
102. anti black racism is virulent
103. heart of logic
104. some are disqualified from universal (?)
105. rights
106. puts lived experience as its center
107. country has pit directly care for life against the interests of the trump authoritarian capitalism
108. profits > care
109. understand resonance of politics of care
110. which movement for black lives has been talking about from its inception
111. observable fact of black lives
112. people should not suffer for ugh i forgot
113. also the case that the people of black lives with the movement
114. do people have what they need to live and thrive
115. from this point of view the purpose of governance
116. OIKONOMOS
117. people matter they do not need to suffer
118. participating in the responsibility
119. one of the folks that i interviewed nikita mitchell (MITCHELL!)
120. enact politics of care this way
121. a lot of the way
122. we are doing something magical and new
123. not just politicy change but also
124. renpairing new community as basis of our power
125. tending to emotions of people involved because we have to practice now who we want to be in future
126. TEMPORALITY LEVINAS
127. NEW WORLD IN THE SHELL OF THE OLD
128. movement and greater polity are in the midst of that struggle
129. key to the way of finding that way is by talking and thinking about interdependence (LEVINAS, NAGARJUNA)
130. creating material and social conditions in which people will not hurt each other
131. pragmatic. practical. not utopian
132. fighting for allocation of resources
133. caring for people
134. preventing as many from being locked up as possible
135. policing is no good (MARIANNE KABA, RUTH WILSON GILMORE)
136. policing and jail do not do what they pretend
137. MAGON QUOTE HERE “we did not need jailers”
138. change how people think about crime
139. cause harm because already are victims of crime
140. incorporates how we feel and how we are embodied
141. how we are in the world
142. from here to there
143. ANARCHIST ETHICS
144. QandA
145. insurrection and joy
146. develop practices to take care of themselves and each other (avoid burn out in protest)
147. being grounded and centered healing justice
148. HEALKING JUSTICE
149. social movement
150. institutions become self serving
151. demand of the people
152. lost this part about Weber it was smart though
153. disability studies
154. the idea of care from the idea to fix marginalized bodies
155. CARE in LEAH LATCHI “Care Work”
156. care at the center of our politics
157. people in all their different varieties can live and thrive
158. black feminist frameworks
159. we have no prisons or police
160. from punishment to care
161. diminish presence in accordance with the lack of need
162. PRISON FUNCTION OF STATE
163. SOCIAL FUNCTION OF STATE
164. CARE AS ANARCHISM
165. what kind of social institutions
166. what do you mean? i follow the work of abolitionsists MARRIANE KABA GILMORE etc
167. really basic. don’t spend your money on cps. why on punishment
168. HUMAN NEEDS
169. i don’t want to put my money on jail
170. moved past that point i don’t want to say
171. i can’t imagine it yet
172. NEW SOCIETY IN SHELL OF OLD
173. what does it mean that “can’t imagine yet”
174. FUTURITY
175. Q:
176. violence
177. black men violence towards black women
178. “leave out the laundry”
179. WHAAAAAAT? IS THIS THE SAME AS LEAVE THE PROBLEM IN THE OPEN?
180. patriarchy intersectionality
181. compound oppressions
182. depending on one’s category
183. not only racism but also the way that racism is gendered
184. sexism and misogyny
185. directed a lot of different violences
186. more interested in systems rather than attitudes
187. BEAUITUFL GENIUS
188. attached to capitalism
189. men have a lot of work to do on masculinity
190. (here the dynamics of healing -- not beating up people)
191. Q: radical and pragmatic
192. imagining new possibilities
193. simultaneous
194. community control autonomous zones
195. state for the provision of care?
196. ideological diversity within the movement
197. DIVERSITY OF TACTICS
198. localities have issues, what methods they are going to take etc
199. community control is important but also it does not negate state responsibility
200. there still is a state
201. community comes
202. different localities, care at the center
203. lived experience at the center
204. not ideology
205. Q: how does movement for black lives be translated transnationally
206. internationalism
207. always an interest to be both local and transnational
208. care is always the answer
209. move from that moment
210. Q: deborah
211. compare and contrast human rights discourse with politics of care
212. rights is not enough
213. HEGEL PHILOSPHY OF RIGHT
214. not about rights
215. not from ABSTRACT to PARTICULAR
216. she already knows her hegel
217. doesn’t consider right qua right
218. systematically and demonstrably unable to be housed
219. same life span
220. not starting from abstract principles
221. CAPABILITIES APPROACH
222. it has some affinities
223. Nussbaum
224. politics of care unlocked from a rights framework
225. not a JURIDICAL problem
226. what people are able to do
227. capabilities gives you a back end
228. what are people capable of? what should they give
229. THE PRIORITY OF HUMAN NEEDS
230. capitalism?
231. no.
232. capitalism is focused on profit
233. TALK ABOUT RESOURCE EXTACTION SOMEWHERE -- WHEN WE ARE TALKING ABOUT OBJECTIVITY AND DEATH, POLITICAL ECONOMY
234. what do we choose? reopening economy or life and health
235. Random Notes to Self
     1. Juggalos as “Community Who Have Nothing in Common” (Lingis). Read their stuff.
     2. Kropotkin -- opposition to Darwinism and Social Darwinism
        1. Social Darwinism as a program of the right
     3. Trans stuff
        1. Not sure what Identity is
        2. Identity as violence
        3. Hegel
        4. Levinas

Nagarjuna: let’s get a close etymology of dependant-co-arising and svahbha

1. [**Mitchell Verter**](https://www.facebook.com/mangoo.spangoo?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE1NzI2Njg5MDc4Nzc5MV8xMDE1NzI2NjkwODYxNzc5MQ%3D%3D) I can't even tell you how much I despise this idea. All of my politics and writing are focused on human vulnerability and trauma. Criticizing someone because they are "fragile" or because they shed "tears" is the most bullying kind of politics around. It is an adaptation of macho sadism to left politics and it is completely grotesque. It is an active encouragement of emotional abuse as a political strategy.
2. <https://newrepublic.com/article/156032/diversity-training-isnt-enough-pamela-newkirk-robin-diangelo-books-reviews?fbclid=IwAR3TtcnHNH0FkToY5GlrI4mn5No5gZ8SimbhqM56K5lVX-ZSwPJGR68V1K0>