

**18<sup>th</sup>  
Psychology For the Other  
Conference  
Seattle University**



**Transcendence and La Petite Bonté:  
Miracles of Mercy in Therapy and Everyday Life**

**November 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Weekend Program**

# PROGRAM GUIDE

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2022  
Father LeRoux, S.J. Room - Student Center 160

5:00-6:00 **DINNER AND RECEPTION**  
Please join us for drinks, dinner, and conversation

Student Presentations

6:00 - 6:20 **James Innocent:** *Bound by Paradox*

6:20 - 6:40 **Kaleb Sinclair:** *What Renders Change? The Paradox of Hope and Embodied Transformation*

6:40 - 7:00 **Logan Breitweiser:** *Failure and refusal: The face that goes unseen*

7:00 - 7:20 **Seth Hanke:** *Economics, isolation and totality: How the modern world separates us from the other*

7:20 - 7:40 **Sean Ambrose:** *The With, And, In & Also: A Reflective Meditation on Intimate Abilities from Womb to Therapy Room*

7:40 - 8:00 **Marc Turkel:** *Little Mercies as a contextual coping mechanism: Bounded Self and a Relational Eco System*

8:45

**Welcome and Introduction to Conference**

9:00 - 10:10     **Session 1: KEYNOTE - Marie Baird:** *Who Gets To Have a Face? A Levinasian Analysis of The Face in Society and Politics*

***BREAK 10:10 – 10:30***

10:30 - 11:20     **Session 2: Cynthia Coe:** *The Unintelligibility of the Other: Racialized Responses to Mental Health Crises*

***BREAK 11:20 – 11:30***

11:30 - 12:20     **Session 3: Sarah Pessin:** *Mercy Without Cheer?: Towards a Phenomenology of “Difficult Politics” and “Uncomfortable Virtues” in Levinas, MLK, and Marx*

**---- LUNCH BREAK 12:20 – 1:30 ----**

1:30 - 2:20     **Session 4: Eric Severson:** *The Ticking Clock: Rethinking the Time of Therapy with Plato and Levinas*

***BREAK 2:20 – 2:30***

**Saturday, NOVEMBER 5, 2022**  
**Oberto Commons - Sinegal 200 (in-person)**

2:30 – 3:20     **Session 5: Ryan Mest:** *Feeling and Time*

***BREAK 3:20 – 3:30***

3:30 – 4:20     **Session 6: Peter August:** *Birds, Calders, and the Blink of an Eye*

***BREAK 4:20 – 4:30***

4:30 – 5:20     **Session 7: Steen Halling:** *Interpreting Emmanuel Levinas: Looking at where the finger is pointing*

***BREAK 5:20 – 4:30***

5:30 – 6:20     **Session 8: Claire Chambers:** *Seeking One's Own Face: Understanding Non-suicidal Self-Injury*

6:30 PM         **Feel free to join us for drinks and food at Optimism.**

**Optimism Brewery**  
1158 Broadway  
Seattle WA  
[www.optimismbrewing.com](http://www.optimismbrewing.com)

**Layers Sandwich Co (Foodtruck at Optimism)**  
[www.layerssandwichco.com](http://www.layerssandwichco.com)

**Sunday, NOVEMBER 6, 2022**  
**Oberto Commons - Sinegal 200 (hybrid sessions)**

9:00-9:50      **Session 9: ONLINE - Anna Samolej:** *The experience of reconciliation in the context of identity narratives*

***BREAK 9:50 – 10:00***

10:00 - 10:50    **Session 10: ONLINE - Karl Sen Gupta:** *Reading Through the Lens of Judaism: Overcoming COVID's Crisis of Meaninglessness*

***BREAK 10:50 – 11:00***

11:00 - 11:50    **Session 11: Jen Hamann:** *The Phenomenological Experience of Living with Terminal Cancer: A Case Study*

***---- LUNCH BREAK 11:50 – 1:00----***

1:00 - 1:50      **Session 12: Joanne Halverson:** *Little Humble Wild Miracles*

***BREAK 1:50 – 2:00***

2:00 - 2:50      **Session 13: James Hatley:** *Etiquette beyond the Human: Home Making in the Company of Other Living Kinds through the Practice of Natural History*

***BREAK 2:50 – 3:00***



**Keynote Speaker: Marie Baird**

*Who Gets To Have a Face? A Levinasian Analysis of The Face in Society and Politics*

Dr. Baird is an Associate Professor and Director of the Jewish Studies Minor at Duquesne University. Her research interests include the theology of suffering, the philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas and Gianni Vattimo, and the role of ethics in theology and spirituality after the Holocaust. Her current research is focused on the phenomenology of the face/facelessness.

**Peter August**

*Birds, Calders, and the Blink of an Eye*

Peter August is a psychotherapist in private practice in Oakland, CA. He has worked with children, adolescents, and adults, including those who present as neurologically atypical, for the last thirty years. He has also worked for community mental-health organizations where he provided school based psychotherapy, early childhood mental health consultation, conducted post-doctoral seminars and facilitated case conferences. He holds degrees in psychology, dramatic arts and philosophy and is interested in the convergence of the therapeutic, philosophical, and literary. His presentations and publications include: *Twisting, Stamping, Turning; The Patient Comes to Love the Therapist and the Therapist Goes onto Write; What Sort of Thing is Nonsense: Fragmentary Writing as Clinical Experience; What Fascinates: Rereading Winnicott, Reading Blanchot; Love's Polysemy; Writing the Vignette and The Reversing of the Subjective; Is There a Language of Legos?; The End of Metaphor and the Beginning of Time; and Finding Time in Hide-and-Seek.*

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**Sean Ambrose**

*The With, And, In & Also: A Reflective Meditation on Intimate Abilities from Womb to Therapy Room*

Sean Ambrose is a working LMHCA and SeattleU MAP graduate. He's research is focused within intimate healing spaces, and the embodied abilities between breath, body, self and other, that might engender relational well-being as practice. He lives in the forest with his wolfdogs that are teaching him how to howl, become the night sky and hear the wind talk.

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**Logan Breitweiser**

*Failure and refusal: The face that goes unseen*

Logan Breitweiser was originally an undergraduate in philosophy at Seattle University who, earlier on in his academic career, had anticipations of pursuing a PhD in philosophy. However, due to the SU philosophy department's existential and phenomenological leanings, as well as to the influential teachings he received from such figures as Jason Wirth, James Risser, and Claire LeBeau, Logan has since been led to a more applied philosophical life – one where the supposed “divisions” of philosophy and psychology blur together into a deep and meaningful incoherence. Now striving to intertwine his philosophical background with his burgeoning development as a clinical psychotherapist, Logan is eager to set the existential question of life's meaning alongside the experiential realities of being and becoming.

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**Claire Chambers**

*Seeking One's Own Face: Understanding Non-suicidal Self-Injury*

Claire is a clinical psychotherapist in community mental health at Discovery Behavioral Healthcare in Port Townsend, WA, with a small private practice called Brackenfern Psychotherapy ([www.brackenfernpsychotherapy.com](http://www.brackenfernpsychotherapy.com)). Claire writes and researches about the interplay between performance, drama, theatre, ethics, politics, spirituality, and therapy. Claire earned degrees in theology and performance studies, and taught college drama for several years before turning to mental health work, and is a graduate of the Seattle University MAPS program. Claire is studying psychodrama, wants to be a psychodramatist, and thinks Levinasian psychodrama could totally be a thing. They're working on some sort of project or book about the fractal, kaleidoscoping relationship between interpersonal therapy in local community and ethical philosophy on a global scale. ([www.clairemariachambers.com](http://www.clairemariachambers.com))

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**Cynthia Coe**

*The Unintelligibility of the Other: Racialized Responses to Mental Health Crises*

Cynthia Coe is a professor of philosophy at Central Washington University. She has been interested in and writing about Levinasian ethics since graduate school and is the author of *Levinas and the Trauma of Responsibility* (2018) as well as various journal articles. She also researches and teaches feminist theory, philosophy of race, and 19th-20th century European philosophy.

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**Karl Sen Gupta**

*Reading Through the Lens of Judaism: Overcoming COVID's Crisis of Meaninglessness*

I obtained my Ph.D. in the spring of 2021 from the University of Texas at Dallas. The subject of my dissertation is the role of kenosis in the ethical thought of Emmanuel Levinas. During the course of my dissertation, I place Levinas into a sort of dialogue with various writers and thinkers, including Fyodor Dostoevsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, Vasily Grossman, Primo Levi, and Elie Wiesel. I am, as is readily apparent, a lover of the Humanities and a profound believer in the interdisciplinary approach. Literature, Philosophy, Theology, and Cosmology are all irrevocably linked insofar as I am concerned.

As much as I love scholarship, I love teaching still more. My teaching philosophy can be summarized in terms of four core values: ethos, logos, liberalis, and humanitas. As a teacher, my students are not my consumers or clients; rather, I am ethically accountable to and for them: "Ethics is forceful not because it opposes power with more power... but rather because it opposes power with what appears to be weakness and vulnerability but is responsibility and sincerity," writes Levinas. I see myself as an exemplar for my students, and one key aspect of this entails fostering genuine conversation among them. Logos means not merely ratio, "reason" or "a rational plan or template," but sermo as well, and this latter term carries with it the idea of dialogue or conversation. As Levinas argues, "...the very fact of being in a conversation consists in recognizing in the Other a right over [my] egoism, and hence in justifying [myself]. Apology, in which the I at the same time asserts itself and inclines before the transcendent, belongs to the essence of conversation." I may be my students' teacher, but I must exemplify the humility and openness essential to real conversation.

I am a profound believer in knowledge that surpasses mere experience and use—hence my love of liberalis, which includes both a social and an ethical aspect: "free" as both "not servile" and "not bound (by prejudice, for example)." Above all, however, is the sense of "free" as in education, as in Liberal Arts: "The free study seeks nothing beyond itself and desires the activity of knowing for that activity's own sake," C. S. Lewis explains. "The pragmatist will of course ask, 'But what use is it?' and pronounce it 'bunk.'"

Finally, the humanity of the human is tied to the humanities, which attest to a certain vertical dimension to human being. One of the few sanctuaries for verticality in today's mechanistic culture,

Sven Birkerts urges, is to be found “...in authentic works of art...Immersed in a ballet performance, planted in front of a painting, we shatter the horizontal plane.”

**Steen Halling**

*Interpreting Emmanuel Levinas: Looking at where the finger is pointing*

I am a licensed psychologist and professor emeritus of psychology at Seattle University where I taught in the MA program in existential-phenomenological psychology as well as in the undergraduate program since 1976. Currently, I am on the Board of Directors for the Psychotherapy Cooperative, founded by Seattle University faculty and graduate students in 1997.

My late colleague Jan Rowe and I, working with graduate students, developed the dialogal phenomenological approach to research during our study on forgiving another , going on to study hopelessness, self-forgiveness, envy, and social activism using that approach. My publications have focused on the phenomenological study of psychopathology, disillusionment, interpersonal relations, and phenomenological research methods. Also, I am co-editor, with Ronald S. Valle, of *Existential-Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology* [Plenum, New York, 1989], and author of *Intimacy, Transcendence, and Psychology* [Palgrave, New York, 2008].

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**Joanne Halverson**

*Little Humble Wild Miracles*

Dr. Joanne Halverson grew up in the Pacific Northwest and has lived in both the city and in a cabin in the woods. She has a doctorate in clinical psychology from Antioch University and her masters in existential phenomenology from Seattle University. For over 30 years, she has worked as a therapist, educator at several universities, artist, supervisor, and researcher/writer. As both pupil and adopted family, she has been deeply involved with several traditional Coast Salish Indigenous spiritual leaders. Her intimacy with nature, interdependence, indigenous teachings and mystical experiences informs her work. Currently she is in private practice and leading wilderness retreats. She believes our lives, in present-day western culture, are too frequently lived within a torn web of connections which we need to work to restore in personal and social domains.

**Jen Hamman**

*The Phenomenological Experience of Living with Terminal Cancer: A Case Study*

Jen Hamann is a current Ph.D. student in clinical psychology at Duquesne University and an alumna of Seattle University's MAP program. She enjoys qualitative and phenomenological research, having completed several research studies throughout her academic career. Currently, Jen is working on her dissertation that seeks to explore the emotional landscape and bodily experience of queer urban natives in the Pacific Northwest.

**Seth Hanke**

*Economics, isolation and totality: How the modern world separates us from the other*

Seth Hanke is a second year student in the Seattle University MAP program. He completed his B.A. in Philosophy at Central Washington University where he first learned about Levinas, and he continues to approach life and psychology work with philosophy in mind. His interests include existential philosophy, Levinasian ethics, and postmodern philosophy.

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**James Hatley**

*Etiquette beyond the Human: Home Making in the Company of Other Living Kinds through the Practice of Natural History*

James Hatley is an emeritus professor in Philosophy and in Environmental Studies at Salisbury University in Maryland. His post retirement studies have been increasingly focused on the intersection of natural history with traditions of contemplative practice.

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**James Innocent**

*Bound by Paradox*

James Innocent is currently in his second year at the MAP program. This is currently the fourth Jesuit institution that James has attended, including his B.A. at Fordham University where he majored in Philosophy, with a minor in Psychology. Prior to joining the counseling space, he has worked in the field of law, international development, and technology. James enters this space with a love for the infinite potential between deep human connection and personal identity. From this love is the belief that every individual has different needs at different moments of time, whether that be spiritually, culturally, and/or experientially.

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**Dan Mills**

*An Other from another Other: Desire and the Ego in Levinas and Lacan*

Dan Mills has a PhD in English. His book, *Lacan, Foucault, and the Malleable Subject in Early Modern Utopian Literature*, was published by Routledge in 2020. He is currently working on an intellectual and cultural history of physiognomy.

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**Ryan Mest***Feeling and Time*

I am in private practice providing therapy, supervision, and scholarly as well as clinical training seminars. I previously ran the Integrative Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Practicum (IPPP) at Chatham University, have taught at Duquesne, Point Park, CCAC, and Wilmington universities, and have worked in community mental health as well as university counseling centers in addition to private practice.

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**Sarah Pessin***Mercy Without Cheer?: Towards a Phenomenology of “Difficult Politics” and “Uncomfortable Virtues” in Levinas, MLK, and Marx*

Sarah Pessin is Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Thought at the University of Denver where she also serves as Interfaith Chair. In her interdisciplinary work on meaning-making, Sarah engages intertwined questions about memory, hope, religion, race, embodiment, pluralism, paradox, and pardon, and she develops models of civic engagement that include living uncomfortably with real difference while working for justice. Author of Ibn Gabirol’s Theology of Desire (Cambridge 2013) and a wide range of publications in Jewish and Islamic Neoplatonisms as well as Levinasian ethics, she is currently working on a book on ‘embodied pardon’ in early Levinas, as well as a study of something she calls ‘uncomfortable virtues.’

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**Anna Samolej***The experience of reconciliation in the context of identity narratives*

Anna Magdalena Samolej. Since 2019, he has been a member of the Polish Society of Human Development Psychology. In 2017-2022, she carried out a research project of a doctor of social sciences in the field of developmental psychology at the Department of Developmental Psychology at the University of Warsaw. She has certificates of participation in scientific conferences, workshops and seminars at various universities. In addition, she conducted classes in schools in Warsaw and Lublin.

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**Eric Severson**

*The Ticking Clock: Rethinking the Time of Therapy with Plato and Levinas*

Eric Severson is a philosopher specializing in the work of Emmanuel Levinas. He is author of *Before Ethics* (Kendall Hunt, 2021), *Levinas's Philosophy of Time* (Duquesne University Press, 2013) and *Scandalous Obligation* (Beacon Hill Press, 2011), and editor of eight other books. Severson teaches philosophy at Seattle University.

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**Kaleb Sinclair**

*What Renders Change? The Paradox of Hope and Embodied Transformation*

Kaleb Sinclair is an aspiring psychologist who graduated from the master's program for psychology at Seattle University. Currently, Kaleb is working both in private practice and as a mental health therapist at Atlantic Street Center a non-profit organization purposed to provide services to the African American community in the greater Seattle area.

Before his work with Atlantic Street Center throughout graduate school, Kaleb utilized psychological perspectives in various projects, scholarly and creative, to cultivate change. His existing work includes a co-written published article with a faculty member, Dr. LeBeau, the publication is entitled, "*King, Levinas and the Interruption of Love: The Alchemy of the Fire Fable.*" He is also the founder of the *Race Relations Podcast*, a platform dedicated to highlighting and redefining sacred storytelling, testimony, and education. His mission is to discuss systemic racial disparities in America through vulnerable and riveting dialogue, creating pathways for progressive change and space for hope in the hearts and minds of our beloved community. Most recently, Kaleb has been developing a transformative psychological model named "*The Empathy Model.*" This model's purpose is guiding individuals and relational partners, and the community on a journey and empowering themselves with tangible tools to solve conflict, heal relational wounds, understanding personal agency in condemning oppressive practices, reintegrate hope in communal bearing, and help express a deeper level of empathy.

In June 2021, Kaleb was awarded the Social Justice and Community Engagement award presented by the Graduate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Seattle University. This award recognizes the graduating student in the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Programs who has demonstrated a deep commitment to social justice and community engagement. The recipient has gone above and beyond in their service to others, carrying with them the founding principles of a Jesuit education, making choices as a leader for a just and humane world. Kaleb Sinclair emphatically believes that the world stands divided due to divisions in personal and public constitution and his life's work centers around attempting to help humankind remember our primordial bonds of fellowship and seek unity and active empathy as an alternative to oppression.

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**Cody Snyder**

*Face-to-Face: Anti-hermeneutics in the Clinic*

Cody Snyder is a third-year clinical psychology doctorate student at Pacifica Graduate Institute. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Johns College. His current field placement is at the Institute for Dynamic Practice in Santa Fe, NM. The institute provides a unique orientation in psychoanalysis via Lacan, Bion, and Winnicott. He is interested in anti-hermeneutic/anti-phenomenological theories and practices emerging from Levinas, Brassier, Lacan, and Laplanche.

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**Marc Turkel**

*Little Mercies as a contextual coping mechanism: Bounded Self and a Relational Eco System*

I am a 2022 graduate of the MAP, Existential Phenomenology Psychology, Program. I have many facets and depths of background, this precludes an easy bio. Suffice to say my career began with a B.F.A. in Photographic Illustration from R.I.T. and includes a 14 year stint at Microsoft having left as a Product Manager and so, yes, I needed a lot of prerequisites to begin the MAP program. I currently work as an LHMCA in a group practice and continue my lifetime project, the exploration of what it means to be a human being.

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**James Innocent** – *Bound by Paradox*

Existential-Phenomenology must consider how its predominantly white male cis-heterosexual foundation can integrate more voices in the 21st century. This is just as essential for creating an inclusive academic space as it is for continuing to develop effective ways to meet our future patients where they are at. Levinas provides an opportunity to explore the nature of the face and infinity, but we must do more than understand Levinasian metaethics and its limitations. As a budding EP therapist, I feel stuck in a duel between “the face” and “the white gaze”, when, in reality, I stand to gain from a wider array of possible ethical and existential dimensions (in addition to Levinas and Fanon). Some potential voices I will pull from include Audre Lorde, Amos Wilson and more. In parallel, I will attempt to relate this existential identity crisis of existential-phenomenology, to my own challenges reconciling who I am as a privileged bi-racial first generation Haitian American and latest generation colonial white male. The paradox I allude to is the power behind having seemingly different yet shared histories and lived experiences. I propose that we can resituate EP’s foundational thought into something that is more shared and while maintaining its complex glow and shape.

**Kaleb Sinclair** – *What Renders Change? The Paradox of Hope and Embodied Transformation*

My presentation will consist of a mediation on progress and change and how this applies those who still face persecution and oppression in this country. When I think about our current climate it is hard for me to point to clear evidence that America in some way has changed from what has happened since GF's murder. Yes, we have passed a few policies but, in many cases, it's gotten worse... It leads me to question if laws are enough to move thought and action forward. Laws that are etched in books and manuscripts unseen by the public eye or laws that can be retracted, not by the public's need which would represent multiple "faces"(faces who have been speaking but go unheard or silenced) but when political groups attempt to test their clout and cling to unempathetic legislation placing laws before the people. If this world is going to change, if this country is going to break the trend of burying its past through the narrative of American excellence, the face is needed. Not as a sacrifice or a martyr but as a constant horizon or lighthouse, warm and bright in its bearing but also unwavering in its truth that danger exists should we stray from the path (path being testimony from the face).

**Logan Breitweiser** – *Failure and refusal: The face that goes unseen*

Throughout this essay I will endeavor to question Levinas’s philosophy for the Other. More specifically, I would like to contemplate the realism and likelihood of any individual *actually* living their life in accordance with the tenets that are articulated in Levinas’s (1961) work, *Totality and Infinity*, and further contemplate the ways in which Levinas does and does not attend to this realism in his own work. As my starting point I will use Judith Butler’s (2000) essay,



“Ethical Ambivalence,” in which Butler shoulders herself with the task of mediating a conversation between the ethics of Nietzsche and Levinas. In her essay, Butler both illuminates and contends with several philosophical stalemates that arise within the intersections of Nietzsche’s philosophy of self and Levinas’s philosophy of other, and I believe these stalemates prove to be exceptionally constructive (even in their *destructive* implications) when it concerns an investigation into what sort of ethical life a person can *actually* endure – not merely strive for.

In the wake of Butler’s essay, thus I would strive to further flesh out what the results of these stalemates might then look like, using both philosophical theory and experiential psychology to better underscore this essay’s most central questions – How should we understand the moments when we fail to see the face of the Other? How should we understand the moments when we *refuse* to see the face of the Other? How should we understand the phenomenon of ethical exhaustion? And, what is the place of martyrdom within ethics and does it implicate an inherent violence at the core of the ethical encounter itself? These are a few of the most pertinent questions that I would like to ruminate on throughout the span of this essay, with the hope that, by the end of this writing, I might capture a better understanding of Levinasian ethics – one that can live and breathe just as much off the page as it can on the page.

**Seth Hanke** – *Economics, isolation and totality: How the modern world separates us from the other*

One of society’s most complex inventions is our modern global economic system which involves the lives of people all over the world. Despite creating prosperity for some, it is also one of the great instruments through which our alienation from others becomes amplified. Trade has evolved from a direct peer-to-peer exchange into a modern system of exchange where people are separated via complex electronic and physical intermediaries that encourage a totalitarian landscape in a direct affront against Levinasian ethics. The modern economy utilizes digital transactions and other complex economic interactions that rarely involve physical contact with other humans. This lack of intimate and immediate human interaction is also one if not the most significant cause for alienation of the other. Without the face or physical presence of the other in modern economics and life, the demand of the Face is weakened and becomes easier to ignore. Especially in a COVID influenced world, with many face-to-face interactions moving to online and the tolls that have been put on essential workers like nurses and teachers, I think that the Face has become more obfuscated and easier to ignore. Going forward into a post-COVID world, we will have to adjust to the new landscape. It might be that the only way to tackle alienation from the Other is to begin to focus on the little mercies that we can afford to the Other to rekindle a sense of infinity in an increasingly totalitarian world.

**Sean Ambrose** – *The With, And, In & Also: A Reflective Meditation on Intimate Abilities from Womb to Therapy Room*

The nourishing red sea-in-matrix presents intimacy in polar flow, in-between that is being And becoming as spatial mates. A first Friend-space that explores forms of porous bounding And

expansion excessing. In this meditation, womb-happenings are explored as developmental relational events that form the earliest Play ground, water, fire, and air spaces of intimate sphere exchange. The pre-oral phases are forgotten by psychoanalytic forefathers, yet within these events are primordial intimacy abilities that form all later transfers between self and other. To bring these implicit fleshly forces to words, is to breathe-in-body form, to contract awareness into earlier states of process spatiality, in attempt to practice such forgotten traces. The With or nourishing elemental-friend transfers melodic watery sonograms that impact the Also into bodily response, not as dialogue, but preverbal resonance. Out-of-womb this Also breathes flesh-into-world, one that is then re-forming an alternative In-spirational medium with the With. This back-and-forth flow is the And, the always present Other that I am With and in-With. The breath is the first ecto-uterine media in mineness, an autonomous formation in a further separation of the With that will always be with me. Thus, the breath is the original investment In self And other, a self that is formed in-body with-other, and that body as many others "to get to know better", to form ongoing intimate ally-ship, to listen in flesh with. Body and breath are aware-gifts for self and Other. These forgotten developmental abilities are at Play in the therapeutic space: the healing in-between of sensory spatial fields. The fields for the therapist are first their own breath, body, voice, and witness; spatial formations of practice and care; cultivated or forgotten. To re-member such abilities can enhance being-with each other; is to listen to the And, follow and lead in the most basic ways of intimacy. Through an embryologic and intrauterine spheropoetic mythos and phenomenology of spatial relations, I attempt to re-member these trace abilities, not in an attempt to re-create and appropriate the womb, but to source the embodied pulsations that echo from this primordial fluid intimacy, that we might become aware of Us as before and beyond reason and emotional oriented forms of awareness.

**Marc Turkel** – *Little Mercies as a contextual coping mechanism: Bounded Self and a Relational Eco System*

Small favors and kindnesses, these actions of mercy, for me, pose a big question within Levinasian philosophy. “*Ethical priority, according to Levinas, occurs as the moral height of the other person over being, essence, identity, manifestation, principles, in brief, over me*”. Levinas, Nemo (Ethics and Infinity, p. 10). That is to say *self*, by virtue of existing as a self has a fundamental right to exist unbothered amidst separation yet, able to transcend survival, ontology, interrupted by the assymetrical height of the other.

The Dutch movie, “the Forgotten Battle”, streaming on Netflix, is the story of the post D Day battle fought for the port of Antwerp; the army that controlled the territory adjacent to the tidal estuary (of Scheldt) also controlled access to resupply inland troops via the port. The movie follows multiple intersecting stories on both sides. One story is of a British aviator who crash lands in Zeeland and the other, a Dutch youth conscripted to serve in the German Army. As the movie culminates, the British aviator chases the Dutch soldier into an overgrown swampy area, only to hear a click, turn around, and realize a Luger is pointed at his face. We see his expression, that of a man realizing his death is imminent. The camera jump cuts to the Dutchman’s face as he holds the gun, tears begin to well up in his eyes, he very slowly lowers his pistol. Relieved and confused, not knowing what to do, the British aviator raises his rifle, will he kill this man? They exchange glances, for a moment, just two humans isolated from extant circumstances. The

Dutchman turns and walks away, the aviator lowers his rifle and watches the soldier disappear into the foggy distance.

In this presentation, I will address the need for a “relational context” for ‘self’ as allied with the natural world, the cosmos and intertwined with an eco-system given by the whole of community and world. As one relational African culture, Ubuntu, declares, “I am only because you are”. I found many relational threads weave through our own cultural contexts indicating a relational ‘self’ is, borrowing from what Levinas has said, our first experience (“metaphysics before ontology”), that which we’ve forgotten, and that which we *desire*.

Questions: As Ubuntu and other relational cultures and, indigenous intersubjective frameworks are acknowledged by Levinas at the level of the Third; are we now yearning for a societal transformation to the relational? Will little mercies offer the opportunity for societal transcendence from a Levinasian framework? Or inside the framework of our Western Culture, are “little mercies” a coping mechanism, the best we can hope for?

**1<sup>st</sup> Session (Keynote) – Marie Baird - *Who Gets To Have a Face? A Levinasian Analysis of The Face in Society and Politics***

Given the rise of nationalist, xenophobic, populist, and antisemitic movements in the United States, particularly in recent years, and given such movements' organizational and messaging efforts around what they consider to be the scourge of unwelcome immigration, one question arises most urgently: whose humanity is deserving of protection or, in Levinasian terms, who gets to have a face? What these movements all have in common is the refusal to recognize the face of the other precisely as a face because its unique irreplaceability—its very infinity—has been sacrificed on the altar of racist, populist, nationalist, or xenophobic objectification. This presentation will invoke Levinasian ethics to argue that the face leads “beyond” the objectifying impulse of perception because its most fundamental phenomenality is the plea not to be killed. The essay will argue further, invoking the social and political order, that the introduction of multiple faces, while necessitating the institutionalization of law and justice, remains predicated on the priority of the ethical obligation to encounter the face of the other without the objectifying impulse that denies the face its very humanity.

**2<sup>nd</sup> session – Cynthia Coe - *The Unintelligibility of the Other: Racialized Responses to Mental Health Crises***

In this presentation I will examine what resources Levinas offers to help us make sense of racial disparities in responses to mental health crises. I have in mind cases of African-American men in crisis who are framed by police responders as threats to their communities: Daniel Prude (Rochester, 2020) and Walter Wallace, Jr. (Philadelphia, 2020) as notable, publicized examples. I would like to pull feminist disability studies into conversation with Levinas to think about the failures of responsibility, or the refusal of moral attention, that is deeply shaped by the identity of the person suffering. When is a person perceived as a threat, and when are they perceived as vulnerable and in need of care? Levinas's discourse refers to an “unmarked,” socially un-situated other, but his concept of responsibility and the paths by which we attempt to contain or disavow responsibility can help us to understand more concretely the fragility of the ethical encounter. What feminist disability studies adds to Levinas's work is an emphasis on the contingent perceptions and interpretations of disability, which allows to critique how the built environment interacts with a person's lived experience. As we consider built environments, we should take into account the raced and gendered specificity of those interactions. In bringing together Levinas, philosophy of race, and disability studies, I hope to explore how the mercy of “the small goodness” can disrupt dehumanizing habits of moral attention.

**3<sup>rd</sup> session – Sarah Pessin - *Mercy Without Cheer?: Towards a Phenomenology of “Difficult Politics” and “Uncomfortable Virtues” in Levinas, MLK, and Marx***

When it comes to political applications of Levinas, we are often overtly or tacitly invited into a spirit of warm togetherness and upbeat cheer in relation to our neighbors—and even strangers and enemies. In this paper, I recommend that there is a different way to apply Levinasian mercy on the public stage. Drawing on early Levinas alongside Martin Luther King, Jr.’s insights on divine love and David Graeber’s Marxist insights on “baseline communism,” I develop a phenomenology of “difficult politics” animated by a spirit of “uncomfortable virtues”: Uncomfortable virtues are difficult modes of coexistence that invite us into a spirit of interhuman debt, “precarious pardon,” and “hard hope.” While the spirit of embrace and joy is appropriate for a wide range of personal and therapeutic contexts, and while Levinas places *jouissance* at the core of life, applying Levinas to politics is less about asking ourselves to “hug it out” with rivals and more about learning to live from, into, and beside one another in a spirit of deep responsibility. I speak in this regard of a move from anemic political phenomenologies of “rancor or rainbows”—where we either hate on each other or delight in each other—to a spirit of “responsibility and risk” that is much harder to bear but is well worth bearing. It’s a politics of “mercy without cheer,” and it paves our way to more ethical and equitable futures with our neighbors, far and near.

**4<sup>th</sup> session – Eric Severson - *The Ticking Clock: Rethinking the Time of Therapy with Plato and Levinas***

In the *Theaetetus*, we find Socrates on his way to court but paused for a leisurely conversation with a young scholar. Before his scheduled appearance in court, Socrates stops for a long conversation with the geometer Theodorus, and a promising young scholar named Theaetetus. During the dialogue, Socrates takes an apparent break (“digression”) from a discussion about epistemology, and directs some attention to the pressure of *time* on both speech and the process of understanding. This digression in the *Theaetetus* is instigated by Theodorus’ suggestion that they can have a prolonged conversation because “we have plenty of time, haven’t we, Socrates?” (Plato, 2004, p. 66 (172c)). In response, Socrates introduces a contrast between the disposition of their philosophical conversation and the ways of the courts. At the intersection of these two modalities, or temporalities, is the technological instrument of timekeeping: clocks. Socrates complains about the impact of the clock on *testimony*, referring to one of the first clocks on earth – the Athenian *clepsydra* (literally, water-thief). The philosopher, he goes on to explain, grows accustomed to letting ideas, and speeches, take their course as long as is necessary to arrive at the truth. The philosopher can, in this way, sometimes arrive at a conclusion that the pressures of time would have prevented. The shifty prosecutors at courts, he points out, use time *against* the one who is testifying.

This paper will describe the stunning way Socrates captures the powerful and distorting force of time-keeping, and explore powerful force played by the clock – whether or not one hangs on the wall - in psychotherapy. Using Levinas’s philosophy of time as diachronic, I will argue for a particular disposition toward time, and its keeping, in therapy. Ultimately I argue this: By joining the client in the struggle against the clock, for understanding despite the diachrony of time,

therapists can participate in a responsive relation that is prior to and more fundamental than language itself.

### **5<sup>th</sup> session – Ryan Mest - *Feeling and Time***

This conference session intends to open a conversation regarding the unarticulated gaps and bridges between the philosophical and clinical articulation of temporality. The route followed towards this end will involve critically attending to feeling in Levinas' patriarchal philosophy of time, Lacan's patriarchal theory of development, and short term dynamic psychotherapy. Imminence, dyadic diachrony, and theory of language may feature.

### **6<sup>th</sup> session – Peter August - *Birds, Calders, and the Blink of an Eye***

These vignettes, like birds and the mobiles of Alexander Calder, dart and drift through an air of prose-poetic fragments that reflect mostly on time. The vignettes are clinical although not illustrations of concepts or ideas, but events contiguous and perhaps prior to the occurrence that is the session. The fragments are glimpses of what is too big or fast to match our apprehensions. They punctuate while holding, content or ideas, inevitably language itself, eventually ruling out any theory of time. Once there was a sequence of events - session prior to vignette following session - which is then gently upset by a format that floats and chases vignettes through a sky of thinking about time. In these flashes, that reveal a lingering world, in these tiniest of mercies, we are in play.

*A slurry of clay and water of no fixed ratio, slip is more the visiting of liquid by a solid than neither. They, mother and adult son, had taken a slip casting class together where he made a frog, she a bell pepper. But it was the tangible not the representational that mattered most to him and which should have been allowed to fade with time but was instead interrupted by a car's horn shattering the delicate form that was never made.*

*It is true that after he pushed his brother down the stairs something had to follow, but fifty years later as he tells me, nothing has changed. Orpheus, the writer, is required to tell a story while Eurydice's descent is endless. We speak, drawn forwards and back through our sentences, always in the two times. His son, two years younger than he was, severely disabled, he fears will never change, never move on. Almost impossible, in this moment, to separate the different terrors.*

### **7<sup>th</sup> session – Steen Halling - *Interpreting Emmanuel Levinas: Looking at where the finger is pointing***

No one has claimed that interpreting Emmanuel Levinas is straightforward. The task of understanding him is especially challenging for those of us who are not philosophers and are not engaged in or attuned to the multiple and often indirect conversations that philosophers have with their colleagues. Yet Levinas speaks to us. He speaks to us as persons as well as psychologists and psychotherapists because we live and practice in the realm of the interpersonal and because ethics are part of life. At the very least many of his discussions and interpretations, however

peculiar and enigmatic his language may seem to be, resonate with that which we have already been touched by or glimpsed.

This presentation addresses the question of what stance one should take in regard to Emmanuel Levinas' claim that ethics is rooted in interpersonal relations and, more generally, how one should "read" Levinas, in order to bring his philosophy to bear on everyday relationships and the practice of psychotherapy. The approach taken here follows David Fryer's interpretation that situates Levinas within the phenomenological tradition, broadly conceived. It follows from this interpretation that one should take Levinas's philosophy as attempts to articulate the fundamental structures of human existence and of intersubjectivity. Accordingly, I suggest that in reading and evaluating Levinas one should proceed from the evidence of everyday life. In other words, the evidence provided by concrete first-hand accounts of profound, even if subtle, coming face-to-face with other as Other provide the basis for a conversation and indeed a struggle with Levinas. This approach is exemplified through reflections on two descriptions of epiphanies in the context of interpersonal relationships.

### **8<sup>th</sup> session – Claire Chambers - *Seeking One's Own Face: Understanding Non-suicidal Self-Injury***

While no therapist wants to see their patient continue to self-injure and the most recent research shows that non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is indeed a risk factor for suicide, it is very important that therapists understand NSSI as an effective coping mechanism that might play a significant role in the patient's ability to continue living. How, then, might an existential-phenomenological therapist do that? I suggest that along with interventions focusing on emotion regulation, reality acceptance, and behavior modification (both individually and, especially for youth, within a family context), patients with sufficient self-insight may benefit from exploring NSSI as an embodied, ethical relationship with themselves. Levinasian understanding of the relationship between sensibility, wounding, and enjoyment can lend insight into not only the reasons that people might engage in NSSI, but offer pathways for the therapist to help the client orient themselves toward healing. For Levinas, sensation is not just an act of perception, and thereby objectification, but the immediacy of contact with the world. It is "savoring", by which one experiences pleasure as "concord" with the self. Sensibility is savoring, and this is no less true for an act of self-injury as it is with eating a fresh piece of bread. As Levinas lays out in *Otherwise than Being*, subjectivity is the savoring of the material world through our openness and vulnerability to both pleasure and pain, which allows us to respond to the command of the Other by substituting the Other's needs for our own. NSSI, then, may not be merely a coping mechanism, but an attempt to encounter the face of the Other that is one's own face, which may have been lost in experiences of abuse and shame. I ultimately argue that NSSI can be considered an act of Levinasian substitution, but one that has been forced off course by trauma; therefore, the cut or the hit of NSSI may be a "small mercy" that one offers to oneself.



**9<sup>th</sup> session (online) – Anna Samolej - *The experience of reconciliation in the context of identity narratives***

In my presentation, I am going to present the experience of the Other as a result of my own research on reconciliation. Reconciliation as an existential situation is analyzed in various theoretical contexts, mainly as a process. It is described in the philosophical literature, but there is no research in psychology. If the concept of "reconciliation" appears, it is in studies of social and intergroup conflict (Borris-Dunchunstang, 2006; Cavaliere, 2007; Boski, 2016; Bilewicz, 2008; Scheff 1996). That is why I use philosophical theory in my research. The current state of knowledge indicates that reconciliation is a subjective (subjective) quality, "acting on the meanings" (Ricoeur, 2006). In this situation, the narrative method seems appropriate. Ricoeur's model of reconciliation fits into identity narratives in psychology (McAdams, McLean, 2013). ; Dryll, 2008; Straś-Romanowska, 2010) In my presentation, I will present the phenomenon of reconciliation between individuals ("I-Other" and "Second-Other") In such a situation, the narrative method seems to be the most appropriate.

The experience of reconciliation cannot be explored in breakups where there was no harm or guilt and returns that did not create a new world and a different bond (Popper, 1977). The analysis of the interviews is inductive in the grounded theory model (Glaser, Strauss 1967). Its essence is discovering, not verifying (Konecki, 2000). The research process is interactive because data is coded and theoretical notes, the seeds of a theory, are created. In the last stage of the analysis, its results will be compared with the categories of theoretical description (deductive model). The purpose of the procedure is to identify themes of experiences and related experiences (D. Śleszyński, 1997; P. Dominice, 2006).

**10<sup>th</sup> session (online) – Karl Sen Gupta - *Reading Through the Lens of Judaism: Overcoming COVID's Crisis of Meaninglessness***

COVID has wrought a crisis unlike any other, resulting in atomization, malaise, and meaninglessness. One method of combating this crisis is the creation of discourse communities wherein serious texts are studied, discussed and debated, and *acted* upon.

Such a community necessarily entails a thoroughgoing Jewish approach to texts; specifically, (a.) Wiesel's notion of hearing God in the question; (b.) Buber's exhortation to embrace the I-Thou mode of being; (c.) Levinas' injunction to question the self's right to be; and Rosenzweig's call to engage in speaking-thinking, an approach to truth at once more dialogical than standard epistemologies.

For many today, churches are no longer viable sources of respite from the crisis of COVID. Such individuals are exhorted to find and create a discourse community wherein texts are read through the aforementioned insights of Wiesel, Buber, Levinas, and Rosenzweig. Such communities may begin with as few as two and grow from there. Similarly, they may begin with small units of time—sixty, forty, even thirty minutes of time, even once a week, and progress



from there. It must be borne in mind all the while that the goal of such a community is *not* an echo chamber or mere diversion or pop-psychology; rather, the purpose is to create a genuine community wherein people may strive together to become what the Kabbalists call “menders of the world.”

At the root of this proposal lies the Levinasian idea that true freedom is grounded in an infinite obligation to the other.

### **11<sup>th</sup> session – Jen Hamann - *The Phenomenological Experience of Living with Terminal Cancer: A Case Study***

The present study was a phenomenological exploration of the experience of living with terminal cancer. The sole participant was Jen Severns, a 2002 alumna from Duquesne University’s clinical psychology doctoral program who reached out to her alma mater faculty in hope of finding a current student who would be interested in doing a case study of her experience. This study was unique in that both the researcher and the participant have experienced living with a terminal cancer diagnosis. Data collection included five semi-structured oral interviews and three personal narratives provided by the participant. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data was collected through a video conferencing platform and correspondence occurred over email. Data analysis utilized Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) outlined by Smith and Osborn (2008) which employs a hermeneutic interpretation and a focus on the participant’s idiographic experiences. Three major themes emerged from this study: the participant’s greater awareness of her embodiment, her “burgeoning sense of the sacred,” and her manifestations of what Yalom (1980) referred to as death anxiety. This study does not presume to represent all individual’s experiences of living with a terminal diagnosis. However, it will attempt to explicate the deep and illuminating experiences of Severns as she navigates her life and will potentially facilitate healing for others who are traversing a similar path.

### **12<sup>th</sup> session – Joanna Halverson - *Little Humble Wild Miracles***

Encounters with another being may initially seem commonplace or trivial but, unexpectedly, be the conduit of a minor miracle which grows in splendor. Encounters decenters us and opens us to the ungraspable revered other. Thus met, their presence dispels assumptions and labels for they transcend thought and languaging. In the western world, we perceive humans as separate and more evolved than other beings. Other cultures, such as the Coast Salish first people, do not hold this hierarchical framework of the nature of existence, for them humans are in a humble position in the life ecosystem. Their worldview aligns with the philosophy of Levinas. This presentation discloses a meeting and ongoing relationship with a mildly disabled wild creature and draws from the openly shared wisdom teachings of the first people of the northwest. The creature received safety and some sustenance from us while returning surprising gifts. During a dark time, his visits offered grace: grace and a decentered love, a love without conditionality. Tiny treasures, including teachings on the profound natural endowments of embodiment arose in moments within his presence and over time. His way of being present, instinctual, and thoughtful in the world served to ground and uplift us and others. His story and innate nature became an uplifting, therapeutic touchstone in support groups, retreats, and with certain individual psychotherapy

clients. A wild creature may be a teacher and healer who awakens the wonders of lingering wildness in us. They are another imminent yet transcendent other, worthy of reverence.

**13<sup>th</sup> session – James Hatley - *Etiquette beyond the Human: Home Making in the Company of Other Living Kinds through the Practice of Natural History***

For over a decade I have offered courses in environmental studies centered on the practice of natural history, particularly as this endeavor has come to be understood in the work of the new natural historians, in figures such as Terry Tempest Williams, Thomas Fleischner, or Robin Wall Kimmerer. In their respective approaches an emphasis is put on the cultivation of what Anthony Weston has termed a transhuman etiquette, a way of being around other living things that takes seriously how their diverse perspectives on the world we humans share with them impacts and alters the very manner in which we show up to witness that world. As opposed to the natural scientist, who shows up in meadow, swamp, or forest, already assured of the explicit question(s) she wishes to propose, the natural historian is curiously without competence in her preparations for entering into the field. She is not yet aware of the questions that one is to be called upon to ask. This studied incompetence in turn leads to moments of illumination, of new bits of insight and accommodation, that emerge as one cultivates being in the company of other living things. These moments, it will be argued, function as “little mercies,” which is to say, moments of intimate approach to another creature, in which one’s familiar and all-too-human hold on the world is interrupted and supplemented by how another living kind inhabits that world, makes itself at home in that world, sponsors meaning in that world. As a result, one is called upon to know another paranoetically, which is to say, to know them in a manner that takes seriously how the terms through which the other is to be known are altered in one’s very approach of that other as a living kind. The manner in which other living kinds alter our conceptual schemes for knowing them and making ourselves at home with them offers an approach to our thinking critically about the world and our own home making within it that is as much cataphatic as it is apophatic in its method. It also provides an important opening for healing during a moment in human history in which the dominant culture has become hyperbolically fixed on mastery of the living world, without a sense of how that world is permeated with anarchic differentiation via the living kinds inhabiting it.

**14<sup>th</sup> session – Cody Snyder - *Face-to-Face: Anti-hermeneutics in the Clinic***

The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas has ‘put into question’ and ‘challenged’ reductionary forms of clinical thinking and practice. However, much of the current literature has focused on viewing Levinas as a Hermeneut. In fact, most of the clinical literature published on Levinas forecloses (*verwerfung*) his wish, to allow the *other* to be truly enigmatic. This paper, following Laplanche and Strosberg, advances a critique of the monopolization of Levinasian theory by hermeneutics. By substituting anti-hermeneutics in place of hermeneutics as the fundamental clinical relationship, contra Orange, Ricoeur, et al., I maintain allegiance to both Levinas and Psychoanalysis while at the same time proposing a Post-Levinasian/Post-Psychoanalytic clinic. I contend that an Anti-hermeneutical ethics allows the enigmatic quality of the analysand to survive the onslaught of any homogenizing structure. For Levinas, this ethical move is realized in the

face-to-face encounter with the other. In the modern era of increased narcissism, a parallel disrespect and diminution of the other's enigmatic quality brings the face-to-face encounter to the brink of extinction. The psychoanalytic clinic becomes one of the few spaces left where the face-to-face relationship can be redeemed. Nowhere else in all of history has a subject been able to speak, be, and come face-to-face with the other to the degree that one has in the clinic.

**15<sup>th</sup> session (online) – Dan Mills - *An Other from another Other: Desire and the Ego in Levinas and Lacan***

Emmanuel Levinas' Other-focused ethics of the face-to-face encounter implies, or perhaps demands, an embrace of the death of the ego. For Jacques Lacan, the ego poses a similar barrier to successful treatment. While such critics as Sarah Harasym (1998) and David Fryer (2006) have lucidly explored intersections in the thought of Levinas and Lacan, the problem of the ego in Levinas and Lacan has not received comprehensive treatment. Lacan famously claimed that "Desire is the desire of the Other," and Lacan's most famous interlocutor, Slavoj Žižek, inverted this phrase to write, "The Other is the Other of desire." As Lacan and Žižek both acknowledge, recognition of the Other requires a death of the individual ego to enable psychoanalytical self-understanding for Lacan and psychoanalytic understanding of the Other in Žižek's Marxist/Hegelian reading of Lacan.

The purpose of this paper is to assess the role of desire and the ego in Levinas and Lacan, with the following specific goals: 1. To determine the relationship of desire to the thought of Levinas and Lacan; 2. To determine the role of the ego in Levinas and Lacan; and 3. To determine the matrices into which Levinas and Lacan place desire and the ego in their programmatic philosophies. Following Freud, Lacan distinguished between the ego ideal and the ideal ego; this essay will argue that Levinas makes a similar, implicit delineation between these two complementary understandings of ego psychology. Since the foundational writings of Edmund Husserl, phenomenology has established "psychology" and "psychologizing" as the straw man and nemesis that opposes pure phenomenology. Ultimately, we are all subsumed under the rubric of an ego that complicates the individual's receptivity to Levinasian transcendental ethics and the analyst's receptivity to Lacanian treatment.