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THE AWAKENING OF HUSSERLIAN EMPATHY AND LEVINASIAN ETHICS

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The Awakening of Husserlian Empathy and Levinasian Ethics

My paper interrogates Levinas's critique of Husserlian empathy by tracing the role of imagination from Husserl's description of basic empathy through his later account of motivational empathy. I argue that although Levinas remains critical of the representational function of imagination in Husserl's basic apperceptive empathy, the quasi-temporal displacement of imagination in Husserl's higher-level motivational empathy effectively anticipates Levinas's account of a diachronic ethics. I propose that by reading Levinas's account of maternal substitution as a transposition rather than as a rejection of Husserl's higher-level account of empathy, the difference between the Levinasian account of substitution and Husserlian account of empathy is attenuated. Although Levinas challenges the representative function of imagination in Husserl's basic empathy, the de-presencing function of imagination, as articulated by Husserl in his account of higher-level empathy, anticipates Levinas's own account of a diachronic ethics born of temporal vulnerability, figured otherwise by Levinas, as maternal substitution.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Empathy, Imagination, Awakening, Substitution

Prebujanje husserlovske empatije in Levinasove etike

Prispevek se ukvarja z Levinasovo kritiko husserlovske empatije, pri čemer sledi vlogi imaginacije od Husserlovih opisov osnovne empatije do pozneje razvitega prikaza pristne motivacijske empatije. Argumentiram, da Levinas sicer ostane kritičen do reprezentacijske funkcije imaginacije pri Husserlovi osnovni apercepcijski empatiji, vendar pa kvazitemporalna premestitev imaginacije pri Husserlovi višji motivacijski empatiji dejansko anticipira Levinasov prikaz diahrone etike. Predlagam, da lahko beremo Levinasov prikaz substitucije kot razširitev – in ne kot zavrnitev – Husserlovega prikaza višje empatije. S tem je razlika med Levinasovo substitucijo in Husserlovo empatijo ublažena. Reprezentacijska funkcija imaginacije, kot jo prikaže Husserl v svojem opisu osnovne empatije, ostaja odprta Levinasovi kritiki. »Razprisostvujoča« funkcija imaginacije, kot jo oriše Husserl v svojem prikazu višje empatije, pa anticipira Levinasov prikaz diahrone etike, porajane iz časovne ranljivosti, ki jo Levinas razume tudi skozi materinsko substitucijo.

Ključne besede: fenomenologija, empatija, imaginacija, prebujanje, substitucija

INTRODUCTION

My paper deals with Levinas's critique of Husserlian empathy by tracing the role of imagination from Husserl's description of "basic empathy" to his later developed account of "genuine motivational empathy." I argue that while the representational function of imagination in Husserl's basic apperceptive empathy is antithetical to Levinas' philosophy, the quasi-temporal displacement of imagination in Husserl's higher-level motivational empathy effectively anticipates Levinas's account of diachronic ethics. In order to make this claim, I argue that Husserl's sense of 'genuine awakening' moves beyond epistemic/causal claims, based on the apperception of another's spatio-temporal body, to quasi-ethical claims, according to which the personal nexus of another's subjectively lived experience is motivated by the passively constituting, modifying function of imagination. Accordingly, I offer a comparative analysis of the differing roles which imagination plays: first, the role of imaginative variation within the eidetic reduction, which seeks to isolate essential identities in relation to the apperceived subject, and second, the role that imagination plays within the personalist reduction where it coincides with the "de-presencing" and "de-positioning" of the self that awakens what Husserl refers to as "genuine empathy." Although Levinas acknowledges the significance of the Husserlian "awakening" of empathy, he nevertheless maintains that Husserl does not go far enough to free subjectivity from the reawakening of sameness within the intersubjective reduction. I propose that by reading Levinas's account of substitution as an extension – rather than as a rejection – of Husserl's higher-level account of empathy, the difference between the Levinasian account of substitution and the Husserlian account of empathy is attenuated. By reading Levinas in this way, I show that the "de-temporalizing" and disrupting function of imagination not only plays a crucial role in Husserl's higher-level empathy but that Levinas's account of the feminine has a similar structural function. As such, the de-temporalizing and the de-positioning of subjectivity in both Husserl's higher-level empathy and Levinas's feminine pave the way for Levinas's later account of "diachronic ethics." While the representative function of imagination as articulated in Husserl's account of basic empathy remains open to Levinas' criticism, the "de-presencing" function of imagination as

articulated by Husserl in his account of higher-level empathy anticipates Levinas's account of a diachronic ethics born of temporal vulnerability, which is also understood by Levinas in terms of maternal substitution.

HUSSERLIAN EMPATHETIC AWAKENING

> By means of empathy, all Ego-relations are ascribed to the subject of the other Body, and it is to be noted from the outset in this connection that empathetic apperception first grasps "from the outside" the other's Body as a body…. On the other hand…I am in empathy, directed to the other Ego and Ego-life and not to psychophysical reality, which is a double reality with physical reality as the founding level…[1]
>
> The genuine wakefulness of wakeful ego life, consists in the ego living in the lived-experiences, being awakened by affections in particular, and being wakefully occupied in actions. Nevertheless, this genuine wakefulness is nothing for itself; it is what it is on the background of non-wakefulness[2]

In order to develop my analysis of Husserl's description of the process of empathetic awakening, I turn to the distinction Husserl makes between the experience of basic empathy and that of higher-level empathy. In examining Husserl's distinction and his proposed transition from one form of empathy to the other, I argue that Husserl understands "genuine awakening" as that which potentially takes place between an ego's apperceptively perceived intentional experience of another person and an authentic experience of personalist empathy, which is motivated by perceptual imagination.

[1] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book, Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 358.

[2] "[I]m Ich als in ihnen (den Erlebnissen) lebendes, in den Affektionen in Sonderheit gewecktes, in den Aktionen wachtätiges, liegt das eigentlich Wache im wachen Ich-Dasein und Ich-Leben. Aber dieses eigentliche Wache ist nichts für sich, es ist, was es ist, auf dem Untergrund der Unwachheit. Im konkreten Ich liegt eine Grundschicht des ‚Schlafes'." Ibid., *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929–1934): Die C-Manuskripte, Husserliana Materialien VIII* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2006), 42.

To make this claim, I argue that Husserl's sense of genuine awakening moves beyond epistemic/causal claims based on the apperception of another's psychophysical reality to a quasi-ethical motivational claim, according to which the personal nexus of another's subjectively lived experiences is available through the passively constituting, modifying function of imagination. Accordingly, I offer a comparative analysis of the differing roles which imagination plays: first, the role of imagination within the eidetic reduction, which seeks to isolate essential identities in relation to an apperceived subject, and, second, the role that imagination plays within the personalist reduction where it coincides with the "de-presencing" and "de-positioning" of the self that awakens what Husserl refers to as "genuine empathy."

Fundamental to Husserl's understanding of lower-level empathy is his understanding of perception. Although Husserl compares empathy to perception and notes that they are similar to each other insofar as they are both directed towards an other, he insists on distinguishing the perception of spatio-temporal objects from the empathetic relation to the subjectivity of the other person. While the perception of spatio-temporal objects has no sides or aspects and is *in principle* inaccessible to direct presentation, the target of basic empathy – the other's subjectivity – is *in principle* inaccessible through perception.[3] Because Husserl understood the other in terms of an external-internal duality[4] we can construe the lower-level empathetic experience as a twofold experience of appresentation. In the empathetic relation, the fulfillment of the appresentation of the absent "sides" of the other's physical body is possible, while the appresentation of the non-physical, experiential life of the other necessarily remains absent, and, as such, remains *in principle* unfulfillable. As a result, in basic empathy, I can empathize with a person who I perceive to be angry without sharing the personal experience of being angry myself, and I can empathize with a person writhing in pain without having to feel any pain myself. According

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3   Husserl, *Hua XIII, XIV, and XV: Husserliana – Edmund Husserl, Gesammelte Werke* (The Hague: Dordrecht, 1950), 84.

4   Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy,* 177.

to Husserl, "when I feel empathy with your anger, I am myself not angry, not at all. Just as I am not angry when I imagine anger or merely recall it – unless, in the latter case, I become angry once again."[5] Thus, in basic empathy, "I do not arrive at the phenomenon of foreign experience, but at an experience of my own ego that is aroused in me by the foreign gestures witnessed."[6]

Husserl's articulation of the higher version of empathy is a complex response to the criticism that the more basic version of empathy, which relies primarily on perceptual association of like subjects, does not adequately account for the experience of the uniqueness or singularity of the empathized subject. Husserl's basic account of empathy relies on an assumption of similarity between the self and other and therefore fails to account for that which marks the other as different from the self. Moreover, the dualistic account of lower-level empathy implies that causal relations obtain between the physical behavior we perceive of the other and the mental, private lived experiences that we ascribe to one's psychic being. Husserl's higher-level empathy addresses the problem of ascribing causality to relations of empathy by insisting on an inseparable body-spirit unity.

Rather than attempting to account for empathy through a static and dualistic lens of eidetic phenomenology, Husserl adopts a genetic, progressive perspective that opens the way for a "mixing" of the intuitive functions of perception and memory with imagination. He describes this mixing of originary and non-originary experiences in his analysis of motivation. Thus, instead of relying on causal explanations of associative empathetic behavior, which reflect a dualistically conceived static ego subject, Husserl introduces his concept of *motivation* – enriched by his theory of *imagination* – to describe a genetic process of higher-level empathetic behavior.

5   Husserl, *Hua XIII*, 188.

6   Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989), 23.

IMAGINATION: FROM LOWER-LEVEL EMPATHY TO HIGHER-LEVEL EMPATHY

With regard to the critical role that imagination plays with regard to empathy, I will first explore the function that imagination plays within the eidetic reduction of the natural attitude. Following this, I will investigate the role which imagination and motivation play in Husserl's personalist reduction, in which, as Husserl claims, a higher-level empathy is awakened.

The salient point which I develop below focuses on the fact that although the varying levels of empathy rely on imagination in different ways, imagination plays a consistent and critical role throughout Husserl's account of the awakening of empathy. I argue that the modifying fluidity of imagination is not only critical for both of Husserl's accounts of empathy but that it is what allows for the transition from one form of empathy to the other.

Furthermore, I show that in Husserl's account of higher-level empathy, imagination plays a temporally generative role. While Husserl attributes a static role to imagination in the eidetic reduction, he attributes a "quasi-temporal" status to imagination in the personalist reduction. Because of the "quasi-temporality" of imagination within the personalist reduction, the "spirituality" of higher-level empathy takes on a freely or "quasi" ambiguous status on account of the influence of perceptual fantasy.

In Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, Section 34,[7] Husserl states that in order to perform the eidetic reduction one can either start with the data of perception and memory or "it can equally well be exemplified in data of mere phantasy … which do not seize upon factual experience, but which are instead merely imaginative."[8] Husserl here makes a clear distinction between perception and memory on the one hand and fantasy or imagination on the other, thus highlighting the significant and independent role that imagination plays in the eidetic reduction in contrast to that of perception and memory.

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[7]   Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 69–72.

[8]   *Ibid.*, 70.

In order to clarify Husserl's understanding of the function of imagination, I will begin by presenting a brief account of Husserl's eidetic reduction and explaining how imagination functions separately from perception within the reduction. I will then argue that, for Husserl, imagination is not only independent of perception, but that it acquires a position of primacy in Husserl's phenomenological reduction. After establishing the primacy of imagination within the *eidetic* reduction and Husserl's correlative account of basic empathy, I will analyze the temporally different role that Husserl assigns to imagination in the awakening of authentic empathy within the *personalist* reduction. I will show how the awakening of authentic empathy requires a continuously generative, modifying function of imagination which accounts for the shared "quasi-temporal" status which Husserl attributes to the continuously intertwining temporality of authentic empathy.

The project of Husserl's phenomenological reduction is to provide a method for identifying the essence of a given intentional act apart from an object's empirical features. Accordingly, the phenomenological reduction is carried out in two stages. The first and most basic stage is what Husserl calls the "transcendental reduction," while the second stage is labeled the 'eidetic reduction,' or the 'intuition of essences.' In the transcendental reduction, Husserl lays out the method for transforming one's natural or everyday attitude into a phenomenological or reflective attitude in order to discover and refine one's intentional constitution of things in the world. Afterwards, in the eidetic reduction, Husserl presents a method for analyzing essences by theoretically changing and *imagining* different characteristics of the phenomena under consideration and by then observing whether or not the phenomenon changes. This second reduction allows us to ascertain which characteristics are fundamental or eidetically essential to an object's being.

For Husserl, the transcendental reduction involves a radical alteration of one's natural attitude and hence a readjustment of one's worldview. According to Husserl, in the natural attitude, one assumes that consciousness exists in the objective, spatio-temporal world and that this world is simply given to us as having an independent objective status. However, if we suspend this attitude, that is, if we bracket our belief in the primacy of the natural world, then we will discover that we are subjects for whom this

world has meaning and that we are subjects who invest this world with its meaning or sense through what Husserl refers to as intentional relations. By bracketing the natural standpoint, we shift our attention from the objectively given world to our intentional acts and the associated meanings and sense. According to Husserl's analysis, meanings and sense emerge in and survive the bracketing of the natural standpoint as does the subjective ego. The surviving meanings and sense constitute what Husserl call the phenomenal realm of the eidetic reduction.[9]

According to Husserl's eidetic reduction, imagination plays a critical role in freeing one from the perceptual world and thereby enabling one to isolate the essential properties of an object's meaning. In order to accomplish this, Husserl stipulates that we must suspend our epistemic commitments to the domain of the natural, perceptual world and allow ourselves to move into the realm of imagination so that we will be in the proper position to perform the process of what Husserl calls free variation[10] In free variation, we either start with an object from our perception or with an imaginary object. We then contrive a series of variants of our paradigm by modifying various characteristics of an object for others. Because our imagination has the ability to take us beyond the restrictions of actual experience,[11] we are able to arrive at examples which we would never encounter in the perceptual world. We stand in a pure fantasy world, a world of absolutely pure possibilities.[12] And because we are free to alternate new imaginary substitutions, the process of free variation allows us to become aware of an identity that persists in all the cases we can imagine. This invariant, or this basis of similarity, is what Husserl calls the sense's essence. Only because an essence persists throughout all of our contrived examples, does Husserl call these examples variants of a paradigm. If, however, in the process of free variation, we make certain substitutions which result in the destruction of the variant, then we realize that we have somehow interfered with that which

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9   *Ibid*., 18–21.

10   Husserl, *Experience and Judgement: Investigations in a Geneology of Logic* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 171–74.

11   *Ibid.*

12   Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 642.

holds the object intact. For example, if we try to imagine a non-temporal melody, our attempt necessarily fails. And this failure is due to the fact that temporality is essential to all melodies. Thus, our inability to make certain substitutions indicates for us what is essential to the meaning content of the object of our attention.

Those aspects remaining constant throughout all the imaginative variations are those which are essential to the meaning content of the object under consideration. And if the distinction between essential features and non-essential features is to emerge, that which varies (i.e., fantasy) must be completely independent of any determination (i.e., perception). This explains why the disclosure of an essence must operate within the imagination, that is, within an imagination which is free of the facticity and the contingency of perception.

Husserl further claims that "free phantasies acquire a position of primacy over perceptions and do so even in the phenomenology of perception…"[13] In support of this claim, he considers the case of the geometer, whom he compares to the similar case of the phenomenologist. According to Husserl, the geometer has incomparably more freedom in imagination than in the actual world for "reshaping at will the figures feigned … [In fantasy] a freedom opens up to him … the expanses of essential possibilities with their infinite horizons of eidetic cognitions."[14] Likewise, the phenomenologist "can use the resource of originary givenness (i.e., perception) only to a limited extent. He does not have examples for all possible particular formations any more than the geometer has sketches." Accordingly, Husserl states that "the world of imagination 'is' …b y grace of the imagination which has imagined it"[15] and that "it does not matter whether anything of the sort has ever been given in actual experience or not. If, by some psychological miracle or other, free phantasy should lead to the imagination

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13   Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1962), 158–59.

14   *Ibid.*

15   Husserl, *Experience and Judgement,* 173.

of data (sensuous data, for example) of an essentially novel sort […],"[16] namely, that of eidetic knowledge.

Hence, not only does Husserl make a clear distinction between imagination and perception within the eidetic reduction, but he also assigns imagination a position of primacy within the eidetic reduction. On account of the free nature of imagination, which is at work in free variation, we are free to move beyond the mere generalizations of the perceptual world to uncover the essential features of the phenomenally meant world. Husserl summarizes his discussion of the role of imagination within the eidetic reduction with a note on the relation between imagination, memory, and other egos. Although "reflecting in fantasy" is "applicable to all mental processes," including memory processes,[17] Husserl claims that imagination does not *constitute* memory; nor does is apply directly to other egos. While imagination might *modify* memory or be *applied* to memory in the eidetic reduction, Husserl maintains a strict distinction between intuitive experiences such as originary memory and imagination. It follows that for Husserl, imagination is neither derived from memory nor determined by memory. Likewise, " in the transition from my ego to an ego as such, neither the actuality nor the possibility of other egos is presupposed. I phantasy only myself as if I were otherwise; I do not phantasy others."[18] Husserl thus limits the role of the imagination in the case of other egos to one of modifying one's own past memories and self-perception.

THE AWAKENING OF HIGHER-LEVEL EMPATHY

Let us now direct our attention to the critical yet different role that imagination plays in the personalist reduction. I argue below that imagination,

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16   Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (The Hague/Boston/Lancaster: M. Nijhoff, 1982), 11.

17   Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology,* 260–61.

18   Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology,* 72.

rather than acting as a modification of perception, takes on an equally significant, yet different, role within the personalist reduction by providing a continuous source of motivation, and that it is thus critical to the awakening of what Husserl refers to as a higher level of empathetic experience. While the functional separation between imagination and perception within the eidetic reduction is key to the ego's confirmation or verification of the essential qualities of real perceptual objects, imagination, or fantasy, has a constitutive role in Husserl's account of the higher level of empathetic experience:

> How do I come to know (the different powers and the substrata of motivation)? I do so as the one I am, by means of *phantasizing* presentifications of possible situations, in which I "reflect" on what kind of sensuous or spiritual stimuli would affect me, what power they would have, how I would therefore decide in such a case, in which direction the pull would be greater, which power would prevail. It can be that I am actually "indisposed" toward action, having slept poorly, and thus am feeling listless and weak, whereas I now *phantasize* myself into a freshness to which would correspond an actual freshness as my present *habitus*…[19]

For Husserl, the connection between imagination and higher-level empathy involves two non-sequential steps: first, in order to understand one's *own motivations*, Husserl suggests that one fantasize and reflect on how one might respond to any given stimuli which could potentially affect one. Interestingly, not only can one fantasize how one might act under certain circumstances, Husserl makes the stronger claim that through imagination or fantasy, one can transform one's own behavior constitutively by strengthening one's powers of motivation. And furthermore, when attempting to empathetically understand another person's motivations, I put myself in the place of the other subject, and by empathy, I grasp what motivates him and how strongly it does so, with what power. And I learn to understand inwardly how he behaves, and how he would behave, under the influence of such and such motives, I grasp what he is capable of and what is beyond

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[19]   Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy,* 279.

him. I can understand many inner correlations, having fathomed him so I secure these motivations by placing myself in his situation, his level of education, his development as a youth, etc., and to do so I must needs share in that situation; I not only empathize with his thinking, his feeling, and his action, but I must also follow him in them, his motives *becoming* my quasi-motives, ones which, however, motivate with insight in the mode of intuitively fulfilling empathy. I *co-share* in his temptations, I *co-participate* in his fallacies; in the "co" there lies an inner *co-living* of motivating factors, ones which carry their necessity with them.[20]

Yet what is it that, according to Husserl, accounts for the awakening of the ego's "spirit"? How does Husserl account for the source of one's empathetic motivation? To answer these questions, I will explore Husserl's description of the role of "motivation" within higher-level empathy and the significance of Husserl's focus on "depresentation" within the process of motivation.[21]

> The Ego-subject is dependent itself on its … sense of being affected … (through) motivation. But in this respect the dependence is not a causal one …. It does not make sense to consider it as caused or as itself causing in the natural sense. Cause is an inductive and associative notion. Subjects, on the other hand, affect one another by way of *motivation*.[22]

Unlike causal explanations which can be applied within a dualistic naturalist framework, intersubjective relations require a different sort of explanation, namely, that which Husserl refers to as motivational While both causal explanations and motivational explanations are determinate in practice, motivations have two exceptional qualities: first, they function within a bilateral framework, and second, they can be determined by and reciprocally determine both real and imaginary perceptions.[23] According to the personalist empathetic attitude,

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20   *Ibid.*, 287.

21   Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 185–86.

22   Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy,* 367 (my emphasis).

23   *Ibid.*, 244.

> [t]he mien of the other determines me (this is already a kind of motiva-
> tion) to join to it a sense within the others' consciousness. And this mien
> is precisely the one I see. The empathetic consciousness of this will then
> motivates my counter-willing. There is no question here of causal relation.
> It is not at all that we are just grasping the causality deficiently, superficially.
> Rather, we are altogether *outside the attitude required for grasping natural
> causality.* In (higher level) empathy, consciousness is posited in relation to
> consciousness, and my will and that of the other are posited in a determinate
> milieu of consciousness, and in a somewhat modified way.[24]

For Husserl, human subjectivity must be conceived as a bilateral, continuous
process, not as something happening in a unitary act of synthesis: "I hear
the other speaking, see his facial expressions, attribute to him such and
such conscious lived experiences and acts, and let myself be determined by
them in this or that way."[25] Accordingly, Husserl argues that the passively
experienced *law of motivation* is necessary to account for the investigation of
the interrelation between motivation and perceptual imagination of human
subjectivity. Because we perceive various appearances as belonging to one
and the same subjectivity, we are implicitly aware of our own motivations
which influence our own perceptions and behavioral tendencies. And it is
through the flow of our lived experience and unified sensations that "[w]e
find unitary human beings [in whose] facial expressions, gestures, spoken
"words," intonation, is expressed the spiritual life of persons, their thinking,
feeling, desiring, what they do and what they omit to do. The facial expres-
sions are immediately bearers of sense indicating the other's consciousness,
e.g. – his will, which in empathy addresses me in communication."[26]

In contrast to Husserl's account of causal/apperceptive relations within basic
empathy, according to which we look upon the other's physical behavior
as "the outside" or exterior of a "natural unity," in higher-level personalist
empathy we do not understand behavior as caused by the inner experi-
ence, as we might regard smoke as *caused* by fire. Rather, according to

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24   *Ibid.*, 247.
25   *Ibid.*
26   *Ibid.*, 246–47.

higher-level empathy, Husserl claims that internal interests, which include personal dispositions, position-taking, and habitual properties of others, passively *motivate* others' external behavior or expressions. Husserl further stipulates that my past lived life, beliefs, judgements, and propensities are aspects of my motivational nexus, which help define my sense of personal self. Although I cannot predict with certainty "what I would do in the future under circumstances of this or that kind,"[27] I can tell what I might do in the future on account of my lived motivational experiences. I rely on my memory and imagination of past personal motivations in order to anticipate one's future actions:

> Can I not think myself into *motivational situations in which I have never yet been* and the likes of which I have never yet experienced? And can I not see, or discover in a quasi-seeing, how I would then behave, although I might behave differently? This is the decisive point I am precisely not a thing, a thing that always reacts the same way in the same circumstances; … things in the same causal circumstances can have the same effects. The motivation, the effective motives, might be the same, but the power of the strength of sensuality is quite different.[28]

Through my sensual relations and memories of my own past experiences of the world, I can potentially anticipate another's motivational nexus. In order to empathetically understand another's motivational nexus, Husserl claims that one must investigate the genesis of the subject.[29] To explore or anticipate another's motivational nexus, it is not enough to try to grasp another in their present modality; rather, the subject must be investigated according to their developing context, that is, in terms of their lived contextual experience, including both one's own past experiences and one's shared experiences.

In Nuce, Husserl explains:

> There belongs also a past "I" of that present, whereas the actual original "I" is that of immediate presence; to this presence, recollection belongs

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27 *Ibid.*, 310.

28 *Ibid.*, 278–79.

29 *Ibid.*, 367

as a present experience, in addition to what appears as the present sphere of facts. Thus the immediate "I" performs an accomplishment through which it constitutes a *variational mode of itself* as existing (in the mode of having passed). Starting from this we can trace how the immediate "I," flowingly-statically present, constitutes itself in self-temporalization as enduring through "its" pasts. In the same way, the immediate "I," constitutes in itself another *as other*. Self-temporalization through *depresentation*, so to speak (through recollection), has its analogue in my self–alienation (empathy as a depresentation of a higher level – depresentation of my primal presence into a merely presentified primal presence). Thus, in me "another I" achieves ontic validity as *copresent* with his own ways of being self-evidently verified, which are obviously quite different from those of a [static] "sense"-perception.[30]

In the above extended quote, we see that Husserl draws a distinction between the past "I" of a recollected experience – which has its own "presence" – and the factual "I" of immediate presence which effects the recollecting. Because the immediately present "I" constitutes itself as enduring through its past memories and experiences, the immediate "I" is both past and present to itself at the same time. Husserl observes accordingly that on account of the self's ability to "presentify" itself to itself, it "constitutes in itself another ("I") as other," as a form of self-alienation. Thus, on account of the "presentified" past or "alien I" within the self, "another I" achieves ontic validity, or, as Husserl says, "copresence." Husserl concludes that on account of the *depresentation* of the self, or the "self-alienation" of the self, "copresence" between human beings can take hold and thereby facilitate a higher-level empathy between persons. By imagining "pure fiction, in no place and no time, free from all weight of actuality"; our imagination provides us access to a non-empirical 'pure' alterity – an "*unconditional arbitrariness.*"[31] It is this unconditional arbitrariness of imagination that is key to the function of imagination within motivation. To generate a motivation, Husserl says that we need to merely remain in a pure imaginative attitude and allow no actuality to intermingle. In this way, we grant the imagination the capacity

30   *Ibid.*, 185 (my emphasis).
31   Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, 642.

to represent any possible system of motivations, including ones that are entirely *alien* to our own self-notion. By taking on this attitude, by passively depositioning ourselves, we open ourselves to the possibility of encountering the alterity of ourselves as well as the presence of others.

Husserl refers to cases in which my self-experience and my empathetic experience of another subject who empathizes with me coincide as cases of higher-order empathy. He further claims that it is through this process of mediated self-experience, through self-modification by indirectly imagining myself 'as if' viewed by others and thereby as depositioned, that I come to experience myself as human.[32] As Husserl points out, I am not what I am for myself independently of the other nor is the other independent of me. Everybody is for himself and at the same time for the other in an inseparable being-for-one-another. Husserl ultimately concludes in his later manuscripts that he is not advocating for a self-mirroring form of empathy, but for an empathetic relation in which self and other are constitutively intertwined.[33]

To fully appreciate Husserl's understanding of the relation between self-temporalization through depresentation and the motivation of high-level empathy, Husserl's passing comment about the performance of the "I" which constitutes a "variational mode of itself" must be further explicated. Although Husserl merely mentions and does not elaborate on the ego's performance or ability to vary or switch from one mode of past recollections to another mode of present or further past recollections, Husserl's language in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*[34] suggests that such an ability is similar to the function of imagination in the theory of free variation that we find operative in his earlier descriptions of the eidetic reduction.[35]

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32   Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, 621.

33   Dan Zahavi, *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 140–141.

34   Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.

35   Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 185.

In Husserl's later writings, however, he presents both perception and imagination as co-constituting processes of duration and not as being indispensable to a unitary act of synthesis. Accordingly, it is the law of motivation, rather than that of causality, that governs the process of presentification in which the perceiving subject becomes aware of something present in her surroundings or, similarly, imagines an object "that is not present."[36] In this process of presentification, Husserl conceives of the relationship between imagining and perceiving as a complementary relationship. And it is for this reason that Husserl comes to assert the quasi-perceptual status of imagination. In Husserl's later works, imagination is characterized as a perception that produces an 'as if' mode when functioning within a genitive process. For Husserl, while image consciousness can result in a "perceptual-imaginative apprehension,"[37] the role of imagination is neither synthetic nor transcendental; rather, the image subject is "blended" in what is perceived through imagination.[38] Only in this specific way does Husserl claim that imagination merges with perceptual experience.[39]

The most significant feature concerning the function of imagination in higher-level empathy is that Husserl no longer insists on the absolute separation between the role of imagination and the role of perception as he did in his causal explanations of the basic form of empathy. Especially in his later writings – *The Ideas: Second Book, The Crisis of the European Sciences*, and *Experience and Judgement* – Husserl makes the case for the "mixing" of perception and imagination as perceptual imagination to which he attributes the quasi status and the "de-positioning" of one's position-taking. "Contrary to pure fantasies, which come about in free variation "without admixture of actual experiences,"[40] experiences of what Husserl names perceptual fantasies "involve the figment's having a relation to reality."[41] "The phantasy worlds are infinitely many each of which presents the idea

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36   Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory,* 93.

37   *Ibid.*, 85.

38   Husserl, *Experience and Judgement,* 74–75.

39   Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory,* 89.

40   *Ibid.*, 605.

41   *Ibid.*, 610.

of the correlate of a harmonious and determined order of fictions that are combined into a unity *analogously* to the way which actual things are combined in the real world."[42]

What makes perceptual fantasies unique are the way both kinds of acts, that is, perception and fantasy, co-exist as mutual forms of intuition. Husserl further stipulates, however, that perceptual fantasies can be experienced as producing a conflict between the actual and the non-actual moments of what is intuited. The figment presents itself "by means of [a] conflict,"[43] but unlike illusory experiences, the conflict is enduring and "there from the beginning."[44] Unlike the conflict between illusions and hallucinations, in perceptual fantasies, the possible sites of conflict endure as long as the perception does. Accordingly, Husserl understands perceptual fantasies to be bound – not purely free – fantasies.

While Husserl makes room for the possibility of perception and imagination being united within higher level empathy as perceptual fantasies, such a form of intersubjectivity potentially entails both conflict as well as a unified quasi-common experience of the other within the imaginary perceptual intersubjective experience. As such, imagination functions as necessarily neutral; imagination does not judge or take sides.[45] Furthermore, it is significant that Husserl suggests that such a possibility for an intersubjective common place is not the result of a transcendental or synthetic function, but one based on a bilateral, passive relation between two motivationally available persons within the experience of everyday life. It is on account of the possibility of higher-level authentic empathy of an ego subject, who undergoes a "re-imagining" of the other and who is motivated through the displacement and the de-positioning of the self, that the other is empathetically experienced. And it is on account of the re-imagination of the ego subject in relation to another that the "copresence" of a "depositioned" space and the original experience of a "depresenced" time breaks through and

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42   *Ibid.*, 624.
43   *Ibid.*, 620.
44   *Ibid.*, 618.
45   *Ibid.*, 622.

bears what Husserl refers to as the exceptional "quasi-status" of authentic empathy.

In a late text from 1935, Husserl offers the following example of the "first (authentic) empathy of the child."[46] In this example, Husserl underscores the mother's reimagining, depositioning, and depresencing of herself in order to teach her child the basics of verbal communication. Not only does the mother mirror her child's spoken sounds, but by doing so, she empathetically helps her child to genetically develop her own language and ability to communicate. Noteworthy are the mother's use of iteration and the pedagogical reinforcement of naming *from the child's perspective*. By re-imagining herself from the child's perspective and by adopting the stance of her child, the mother effectively depositions and depresences herself to awaken a relationship of higher-level empathy:

> The child learns from the mother to understand spoken sounds as indications, signs […].The child involuntarily expresses sounds […], the mother in turn expresses similar sounds […], the child repeats, so too the mother. What role could this play? […] The child learns first to say "mama," "papa' as names. The mother does not say, 'I am coming immediately,' 'I will bring that,' but 'mama comes,' 'mama brings.' [47]

Husserl demonstrates that the mother's empathetic response is motivated – rather than caused – by the unified psycho-spiritual reality of the child. He attributes the potential genetic growth and modification of the child's psyche to the willingness of the mother to engage with the child on the child's own terms. In doing so, the mother shows that she is open to displacing her own positionality and her own sense of temporal progression as a response to her child's verbal initiatives. The mother in this example does not merely mirror the language of the child, but rather demonstrates a motivational generosity insofar as she is willing to take her child's perspective. By doing

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46 Husserl, *Hua XV*, 606.

47 *Ibid*. It is noteworthy that the mother takes on the personification of an actor within a dramatic setting. It is 'as if' she is referring to herself as a director might do, or 'as if' she is reading from stage directions. In both cases, she refers to herself 'as if' another might. See also Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory,* 616–622.

so, the mother encourages the growth of her child's ability to communicate not only by resisting a potential power-struggle dynamic but also by awakening and enriching her child's experience.

LEVINAS'S DIACHRONIC AWAKENING

The concept of "wakefulness" likewise plays a pivotal role in Levinas's later philosophical thought.[48] I argue below that Levinas extends Husserl's concept of wakefulness in order to challenge and move beyond Husserl's account of the intersubjective higher-level empathetic relation and to lay the foundation for a new diachronic ethics of substitution. Critical to the use of this concept are Husserl's and Levinas's differing interpretations of the constitution of heterogeneous temporality as foregrounded in their differing philosophical understandings of wakefulness. While Husserl presents higher-level empathy as a *continually co-constitutive, intertwining* event of heterogeneous awakening, Levinas presents ethical substitution as the event of intersubjective *diachronic interruption* by the other which bears the radical imperative of ethical, non-indifferent awakening. Accordingly, for Husserl, the self's experience of the continuously unifying temporality of the "single streaming living presence" acts as the foundation for the freely imagined awakening of the empathetic and instinctive affects within the mother-child relation, whereas, for Levinas, the maternal relation of substitution is paradigmatic of the diachronous interruption of time, which awakens an imperative modality of ethical non-indifference.

Just as Husserl attributes an anticipatory wakefulness to the higher-level empathetic relation, Levinas in his earlier works articulates an awakening to the future in terms of feminine alterity and sensibility. However, in his later works, Levinas argues that neither feminine alterity nor Husserl's

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48   Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death, and Time* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Levinas, *Discovering Existentence with Husserl* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998); Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (Stanford: Standford University Press, 1998); Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981).

account of maternal empathy adequately accounts for a definitive sense of ethical awakening, since, according to Levinas, authentic ethical awakening requires being elicited by and originating from the other in an event of absolute temporal disruption which Levinas names "diachrony." Rather than temporality being constituted by or between the intentional experience of individuated subjects and rather than the future protention of the present being understood as a feat – or projection - of an ego subject, temporality for Levinas is accomplished first and foremost by the diachronic interruption of the self by the other, wherein the ineradicable difference between "my" subjective time, lived as an intentional "I," and the ethical temporality lived from the perspective of an accused or accusative "me" is traced.[49] For Levinas, it takes the time of "substitution," according to which the other unsettles and fully awakens subjectivity, to disrupt the "bourgeois" empathetic lassitude of an intentionally lived relation. For Levinas, it is only on account of the diachrony of time that the ethical "we" can be awakened, according to which the self and the other – while in deepest proximity – maintain their own singularity and unique difference.

While Levinas's account of the feminine functions in much the same way as Husserl's account of higher-level empathy, neither of these accounts achieves the absolutely wakeful and "lively" status that Levinas wishes to achieve in his more fully developed account of the imperative ethics of substitution. For Husserl, the higher-level empathetic relation strives to "put oneself in the place of the other" through a quasi imaginative displacement of the self – and in Levinas's account of the feminine, erotic sensibility achieves a similar end by loosening the "enchainment of the ego,"[50] and by "withdrawing elsewhere (in) a movement opposed to the movement of consciousness."[51] Just as Husserl describes higher level empathy as continuously motivated through the displacement of perceptual imagination and thus as neither entirely present nor entirely absent, the early Levinas describes the feminine

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49 Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, 190.

50 Levinas, *Time and the Other* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 92.

51 *Ibid.*, 88. In response to intentional consciousness, the feminine retains an intentional structure and is, therefore, subject to Levinas's later critique of intentionality.

as refusing to enter into oppositional relations and instead describes it as withdrawing from such relations, thereby highlighting a displacement or "slipping away".[52] I believe that although both Husserl's account of empathy and Levinas's account of the feminine allow for a certain slippage of identity and, hence, an ethical ambiguity of subjectivity, Levinas's account of substitution resists any ethical ambiguity obtaining between the self and the other by critically *re-positioning* the originary claim of the Other as situated *within* the self and yet as discontinuous with the self.

> In order to explain the notion of substitution, it is necessary that I say more, that I use hyperbole: the individuation of the I, that by which the I is not simply an identical being, or some sort of substance, but rather that by which it is ipseity; that by which it is unique without drawing its uniqueness from any exclusive quality, all this is the fact of being designated, or assigned, or elected to substitute itself without being able to *slip away*.[53]

To elaborate on the above claim, I present an in-depth analysis of Levinas's account of feminine expression, voluptuosity, and the caress,[54] and compare this extended analysis to my earlier description of Husserl's account of authentic higher-level empathy. After this, I argue that Levinas's fully awakened authentic ethics subverts Husserl's account of higher-level empathy through its account of substitution, which Levinas highlights in his figure of the maternal. I first draw out the central similarities between Levinas's depiction of the feminine and Husserl's account of higher-level empathy, namely, the experience of de-positioned subjectivity, the *quasi*-temporality of imagination, and the freely modifying status of subjectivity. After describing this commonality between the two thinkers, I argue that Husserl's account of higher-level empathy indirectly anticipates Levinas's later diachronic ethics, especially with regard to the quasi-temporal status of motivational empathy that results from the de-positioning of subjectivity, which can be viewed as a pre-figuration of Levinas's account of diachrony. Finally,

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52   Levinas, *Time and the Other;* Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

53   Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind,* 91 (my emphasis).

54   Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 251–85.

I interrogate Levinas's mature account of maternal substitution, which provides us with a temporal – diachronic – structure that, as "pre-intentional", awakens a non-indifferent – patient – ethics of maternal substitution.

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas describes the feminine as manifesting itself at the limit of being and non-being; accordingly, the feminine has the potential of de-individualizing itself, relieving itself of its own weight of being.[55] Levinas identifies the epiphany of the beloved with the feminine, which he describes as a "flight into self in the very midst of its manifestation,"[56] or again as a "slipping away from the light…a flight before the light… (whose) mystery constitutes its alterity."[57] In this flight, the beloved (feminine)'de-presentifies itself, much in the same way as the Ego-subject in Husserl's account of higher level-empathy de-positions herself through perceptual imagination.

According to Levinas, the fragility of the feminine likewise designates a presence that appears to come from "beyond the face" – not from nothingness – but from what is *not yet*. For Levinas, "being not yet" refers to that which is clandestine or secret, that which seeks to be exposed yet not overcome. It is an exhibitionism that feels the weight of its non-significance, its being. "The secret appears without appearing. It refers to the modesty it has profaned without overcoming." While the feminine at once indicates an evanescence of being, it also bears witness to "being not yet." Hence, Levinas understands the feminine as bearing the weight of its own being while simultaneously dissipating this very weight. Finally, it is the equivocation of an evanescent fragility and the weight of a non-signifying ultra-materiality that Levinas identifies as "feminine voluptuosity."

Much like Husserl in his theory of the *quasi*-temporality of perceptual imagination, Levinas attributes the transformation of the subjective intention to its embodied encounter with an other; in Levinasian theory, such a transformation is attributed to what he terms "the caress." The caress

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55   *Ibid.*, 256.

56   *Ibid.*

57   Levinas, *Time and the Other,* 86.

for Levinas consists in searching for the (feminine) beloved and in soliciting what ceaselessly slips away as though it "were not yet." In the caress, the beloved denudes itself of its form, thus quitting its status as a solitary existent in a motivational desire to share a *quasi* or "blended perception" with that of an other. Likewise, the beloved, which Levinas identifies with the feminine, hovers between being and not yet being. It is the "incessant recommencement of virginity, the untouchable in the very contact of voluptuosity, future in the present."[58]

For Levinas, the feminine is not preeminently a freedom refusing its objectification, but is a fragility wherein we find not only what is no longer, but what is not yet, that which is "inviolable coupled with what is essentially violable." The not-yet-being of the beloved overwhelms the intention of the caress, sweeping it away into an absolute future where its subjectivity is dislodged. The intention of the lover is thus transformed into a passion – or compassion – for the passivity of the beloved through the caress. "The desire that animates [the caress] is reborn in its satisfaction, fed somehow by what 'is not yet'…."[59] Thus, according to Levinas, the experience of the erotic caress, the contact with the limit of non-being transforms the intention of the subject into a compassion for the evanescence, for the frailty and, hence for the suffering of the beloved. Yet according to Levinas, this compassion of the caress, this being empathetically moved, is nevertheless complacent in its suffering. According to Levinas, it is suffering without suffering and it, therefore, entails a form of pleasure – or in Levinas's words, "voluptuosity."

Voluptuosity begins in and remains erotic desire. Rather than gratifying desire, it prolongs desire in its impatience. Because the face of the beloved fails to express the secret of feminine Eros, the clandestine uncovered through voluptuosity does not acquire the status of the ethical. Rather the feminine presents a face that goes beyond the face and returns to a mysterious self. In "refusing to express" itself, the feminine, according to Levinas, reaches the end of discourse and of decency. Because the experience of

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58 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity,* 258.

59 *Ibid.*

feminine empathy runs the risk of returning to its own self-interest, it does not constitute, for Levinas, a fully ethical relation.

Thus, according to Levinas, the equivocal nature of the feminine potentially transforms the intention of the lover into compassionate empathy for the evanescent suffering of the beloved. The feminine teeters between being and not-yet-being; it takes one beyond being, yet not far enough for Levinas. It transforms the lover, makes one compassionate, yet remains undisclosed, a secret "dark island." The feminine gets one past the dangers of impersonal language, yet lands one in the obscure, menacing realm of clandestine voluptuosity. Accordingly, the feminine experience, for Levinas, is marked by a temporal vulnerability which creates the possibility for an empathetic ethics in much the same way that the fluidity of imagination, for Husserl, facilitates intersubjective empathy through the displacement and de-presencing of the Ego-subject, which, on account of its intentional structure, inevitably returns to the self. Accordingly, Levinas's account of the feminine, which is intentionally structured, can be viewed as an extension of Husserl's account of the higher-level, quasi-temporal empathetic relation which relies on his theory of intentional motivation.

While Husserl's account of authentic empathy relies on a unified account of internal time consciousness which informs the subject's experience of time and memory of the past, Levinas argues that the breakup of time due to the diachronic experience of temporality is necessary for a concrete, authentic ethical imperative. According to Levinas,

> Dia-chrony is a structure that no thematizing and interested movement of consciousness – memory or hope – can either resolve or recuperate in the simultaneities it constitutes. Devotion, in its dis-interestedness, does not lack any end, but is turned around…toward the other person to and for whom I have to respond.[60]
> This diachrony of time … is a disjunction of identity where the same does not rejoin the same. The identity of the same in the ego comes to it despite itself from the outside, as an election or an inspiration, in the form of the uniqueness of someone assigned. The subject is for another; its own

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60   Levinas, *Time and the Other,* 137.

being turns into for another. It signifies in the form of the proximity of the neighbor and the duty of an unpayable debt, the form of a finite condition.[61]

For Levinas, the diachrony of time is inextricably tied to his theory of substitution and ethics. According to Levinas, subjectivity is the place of non-coincidence. Because the subject finds itself temporally out-of-sync with itself, the subject can never fully be present to itself. Therefore, the "ipseity" of the subject "comes to it despite itself from the outside" as an election or as an inspiration. The subject is therefore indebted to and held "hostage" by the other. Levinas describes subjectivity as being a "hostage," where "[h]ostage means substitution."[62] Yet what does Levinas mean by substitution in relation to being held hostage? Levinas explains that "substitution does not come to pass as though 'I put myself in the place of someone,' such that I sympathize with him; (rather) substitution signifies a suffering for another in the form of expiation which alone can permit of any compassion."[63] "It is through the condition of being hostage that there can be in the world pity, compassion, pardon and proximity…."[64] The notion of subjectivity – as hostage – thus appears as a *reversal* of the intentional description of a subject who freely transforms themselves "co-constitutively" through their powers of motivation.

According to Levinas, because the position of the subject is *already* his deposition, it follows that the subject "is responsible *before* freedom through an untransferable responsibility that makes it unique. Freedom can here be thought as the possibility of doing what no one can do in my place; freedom is thus the uniqueness of that responsibility."[65] "The idea of substitution thus signifies that I substitute myself for another, but that no one can substitute himself for me as me." According to Levinas, this is the true source of freedom. However, "[w]hen one begins to say that someone can substitute

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61   Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, 52.

62   Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, 180.

63   *Ibid.*

64   Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, 117.

65   Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, 181, my emphasis.

himself for me, immorality begins."[66] Thus, while Levinas's description of the feminine and Husserl's account of motivational empathy rely on a de-positioning of subjectivity as necessary for forming empathetic relations between identifiable subjects, Levinas insists that a de-positioning of the self has already taken place in advance of the formation of subjectivity, and that because the self is unable to 'stabilize' itself by itself, it is dependent and in debt to the other from which it draws its singularity and ethical uniqueness.

The maternal relation exemplifies the diachronic tension of Levinas's mature account of substitution: "In maternity what signifies is a responsibility for others, to the point of substitution for others …. Maternity, which is bearing par excellence, bears even responsibility for the persecuting by the persecutor."[67] For Levinas, it is through a radical alienation of the self and a temporal disruption that one can figuratively make room for the generation of the other and thereby achieve an ethics based on complete disinterest, that is, complete non-indifference. Because Husserl's account of higher-level empathy and Levinas's account of the feminine rely on a *quasi*, freely modified volitional status where subjectivities are intentionally related to each other, and because both allow for a possible return to self-interest, Levinas rejects such figurations of empathy and instead presents the maternal as exemplifying a mode of vulnerability to which "this maternity, the pre-birth … belongs."[68] Although the early Levinas attributes to the feminine a sensible ambiguity reminiscent of Husserl's description of the embodied interface between the mother and child, Levinas inverts this intentional model and develops a radical sense of the non-indifference of ethical maternal awakening.[69] And while Levinas argues that the feminine opens up the possibility of "hope" for affirming those relations which exceed virile relations of power, Levinas's account of a phenomenological ethics, based on an embodied non-indifference, reimagines the temporal

66   Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind,* 84.
67   Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, 75.
68   *Ibid.*, 75–76.
69   *Ibid.*, 67.

transfiguration of the maternal in terms of a responsibility which is fully and sensibly awakened by the other.

For Levinas, the imperative of ethical substitution is that which is required to successfully effect the breakup of intentional conscious experience, resulting in a self that goes beyond striving "to put oneself in the shoes of the other" and is rather unequivocally "held hostage "by the other. In other words, for Levinas, maternal substitution demands that I put myself in the other's place *despite myself*: "The identity of the same in the ego [*je*] comes to it despite itself from the outside, as an election or an inspiration, in the form of the uniqueness of someone assigned."[70] By arguing for a concept of authentic sensibility born not from an intertwining continuity of time, but from an experience of the diachrony of time, Levinas develops a highly innovative account of ethical substitution in response to Husserl's notion of motivational empathy, thereby creating a new phenomenological ethical paradigm according to which diachronic temporality accomplishes the moral awakening of the maternal as "the ethical *par excellence*."[71]

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70   *Ibid*., 52.

71   Due to limitations of space, I leave the reader with the suggestion that the unresolved lived tension between the co-constituting, iterative empathetic response and the imperative, disruptive ethical response of subjectivity directs us to a new form of ethical "at-tention," which potentially avails itself of a form of "compassionate, ethical imagination," and which also facilitates the attunement and responsible improvisation belonging to a new maternal ethics.

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