

***Levinas in Practice:  
Mental Health Treatment in a Community-Based Clinic***

David Flaxer  
Seattle University

**Abstract**

In a paper presented at the 8th Annual Psychology for the Other Seminar I speculated on the applicability of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophical concept of *interiority and exteriority* in psychological practice. This theoretical examination considered various implications of movement between these existentially lived states as a paradigm for treating the suffering patient. Now that I have begun a psychological practice I revisit this work reflecting on how Levinasian philosophy concretely applies to patients I am treating at a community-based clinic serving the underprivileged and disenfranchised.

**Paper**

This paper presents an evaluation of twelve patients, revealing multiple psychological conditions, which are then clustered to form three main existential themes. Within the general perspective of interiority and exteriority, I reflect on what Levinasian philosophy has to say about these themes and discuss their implications in psychological treatment. The theme of *trauma and abuse* consists of physical and psychic trauma, childhood abuse and the experience of alienation, to which the application of the Levinasian concepts of proximity and substitution are examined. The theme of *power, economy and society* groups together societal conditions that cause the psychic wounding of patients, which are then linked to the Levinasian notions of the Third and social justice. Finally, the theme of the *ineffable body*, is presented, which refers to the body that contains, as a vessel, the transcendent exaltation's of life but also experiences the states of human suffering that are anxiety, depression, hopelessness and existential angst.

*Keywords:* Levinas, exteriority, interiority, ethics, transcendence, embodiment, trauma, forgiveness, psychotherapy, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, existential angst.

**On the Formation of Interiority**

In a paper presented at the 8th Annual Psychology for the Other Seminar (Flaxer, 2010) I argued that suffering and the other vicissitudes of life draw us away from the world and into our own interiority until we are stuck in an internal prison unable to escape. I suggested that a significant portion of neurosis and psychoses is founded on an obsessive focus on the patient's own conditions of suffering, such that she remains fixed in her personal psychological interiority, unable to sense and break through the barrier that separates her from the world and places her infinitely distant from the fraternity of Others.

Levinas asserts the concept of *home* as a necessary place of refuge, respite and renewal from the responsibilities of the world, and thus introduces the notion of interiority and exteriority as a basic component in his philosophy. Psychological interiority provides us a place to dwell in comfort and to be at home within ourselves. However, while psychological interiority presents a protective shield from worldly demands, it cannot be so concrete as to prevent the world from reaching us. Interiority must be a permeable membrane, susceptible to penetration by the exterior world, and must permit our senses to feel and respond to its influence. Says Levinas: "In

the separated being the door to the outside must hence be at the same time both open and closed” (1969, p.149). Here is an example of a coexistence of antithetical metaphysical states, which is a common theme in Levinasian philosophy and is repeated in various forms and contexts.

In reflecting on my therapeutic practice, I realize that most patients acknowledge the “stuckness” of their psychological disposition. They cling to their distorted beliefs that drive them to interiority despite knowing that their terrifying grasp to dysfunction holds them back. For example, during a particularly meaningful session one patient stated “...it is more work to stay stuck than to take a risk...” and went on to say that “...it is madness to hold so tightly to an idea that serves me so poorly.” Another patient simply asserted that it would “be easier to take a leap off a bridge than to take a leap of faith toward a better life.” For these patients suffering is inexhaustible and hopelessness is implacable. What then is the goal of psychology from a Levinasian perspective? Simply put, it is not just to enable the patient to care for themselves but to be able to exercise the ethical call to responsibility: *to care for the Other*. As Steen Halling (1975) writes: “The therapy situation might then not just be a protective environment where one is relieved of distress, but a place where one is called from unreal obligation and false guilt to real responsibility and genuine guilt in the face of the Other” (p. 218).

Now that I have begun a psychological practice I revisit my past writings, reflecting on how Levinasian philosophy concretely applies to the patients I am treating. But this is no sterile scientific study, nor is it a scholars’ precise reporting. This paper reflects the process of a *fusing of horizons* (Gadamer, 2004) between that which I have experienced in my practice and my understanding of Levinas’s writings. What results is an interpretive understanding that is neither Levinas nor Flaxer, but a new formulation, the outcome of hermeneutic dialog between the two.

### **World of the Clinic**

I work at the YWCA Pathways Community Mental Health Clinic which serves the underprivileged and disenfranchised population of Snohomish County, Washington. Our psychological services are provided free or at significant subsidy, are available to men and women of all ages, and include individual, child, couple, family and group counseling activities.

### **A survey of patients**

A rudimentary evaluation of twelve patients that I worked with during my practicum at the clinic is represented in Table 1. The table highlights various psychological dispositions patients presented and evaluates the extent of their commonality amongst the group. This is not an exhaustive list in the least. However, these conditions are the ones that have been presented to me during my practicum within the small population of patients I am treating.

I assert that these dispositions reflect drives toward psychological interiority. In many cases it is the unjust or irrational circumstances of the world that torments the individual, which includes child abuse, trauma, societal pressures and poverty. These worldly factors cause an intrapersonal reaction that result in a dysfunctional focus on personality deficiencies, emotional suffering, spiritual alienation, and psychic annihilation. Patients are stuck clinging to their dysfunctional behavior, formed by their mistaken conclusions about their world, impressions created to explain, rationalize or disburse the affects of their suffering.

To build the table of psychological dispositions, patient files were examined to extract key psychological themes presented during therapy. A qualitative research method was applied

that involved a hermeneutical interaction, an interactive dialog of sorts, between myself as analyst and the patient's records. The result was an ever widening and deepening spiral of understanding and the emergence of the key psychological conditions of: child abuse, trauma, alienation, poverty, productive work, substance abuse, physical health, body image, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and existential angst.

Having identified twelve psychological conditions, these were then clustered into a higher level group of thematic meaning. The major theme of *trauma and abuse* consists of the sub-themes of childhood abuse and trauma, in addition to the experience of alienation, which is a closely linked effect of trauma. The major theme of *power, economy and society* groups together sub-themes that are experienced by patients as a consequence of the power of the world over the individual. The influence of power and economy bears directly on the patient's ability to find productive work and escape poverty. Substance abuse, body image and physical health are all influenced directly or indirectly by society's cultural, economic, political and moral messages that cause distortion and misinterpretation within the psychic structure of the patient. Finally, there is the *ineffable body*, which refers to the sacred and transcendent human being, too mysterious and resplendent to be expressed or captured in words. It is this body human that contains, as a vessel, the transcendent exaltations of life. However, this vessel also experiences the states of human suffering: anxiety, depression, hopelessness and existential angst. In the expression of these three major themes this paper looks to Levinasian philosophy to shed light on the psychologically therapeutic relation.

### **Trauma and Abuse**

Levinas asserts the concept of *proximity* as a foundational element in an intersubjective relation. Proximity is not a spatial position but an ethical one: "Proximity, difference which is non-indifference, is responsibility" (Levinas, 1981, p.139). Herein is found "*a traumatism of astonishment...*" (1969, p. 73), a seeming assault by the Other calling the Same to responsibility. That is to say, the very alterity of the Other, in her presentation of her Face, in her helpless and seemingly insatiable suffering, and in her passive call for assistance, incites an ethical trauma in the Same that can be overwhelming. "Astonishment is traumatic because it is occasioned by, and is itself the occasion of, the breakup of self-consciousness from within and without...[an] abstractness demanding a response" (Roesch-Marsh, 2003, p. 310). Simon Critchley (1999) drives to clarity this notion of trauma as a call to responsibility: "...it is this very trauma that serves an ethical purpose. The Levinasian subject is a traumatized self...but, this is a good thing. ...without trauma, there would be no ethics in Levinas's particular sense of the word" (p. 195).

However, what happens when we are overwhelmed by the infliction of the Other, not just their presence, and their Face, but by a deliberate and brutal violence promulgated on the Same? Bernet (2000) writes that there is a compellingly strong consistency between Levinas's view of trauma and "...in the psychoanalytic sense ...the event of the encounter of the subject with something totally foreign that nevertheless irremediably concerns it and does so right in its most intimate identity" (p. 162). So, the effect of experiencing the trauma that is the alterity of the Other is to neutralize the Same into diminishing their self into something disconnected from humanity, unable to recognize the Other in any sensible way, and to retreat into a protective interiority. Further, the more violent the imposition of the Other is on the Same, the deeper and more compelling is the drive to interiority. This interiority may involve a psychic and spiritual sense of fragmentation, separation and disconnection: "...the traumatized subject is thus submitted

to an excessive tension, because it remains torn between two contradictory imperatives: appropriating the foreign to itself and rejecting it in order to preserve that which is its own” (Bernet, 2000, p. 170). Bernet brings forward three lessons in the nature of trauma from the Levinasian perspective. First, trauma is by its nature shocking and there is no preparing for the experience. Second, alterity has no prerequisite in past experience. Finally, profound trauma strikes a “...bodily sensibility and not in its recognitions or cognitions” (p. 173). This last point is particularly meaningful, as illustrated by Patient K, who dissociated his lived experience of trauma into an abstracted embodied sensation, and reported: “It feels like there's a really bad storm inside [my stomach]...a lot of emotions all tied up together. I can't tell which emotion is which...I feel like I have to hold it or that it will all go crazy.”

### **Trauma and Forgiveness**

The previously cited observations lead to an approach for treating the traumatized patient in a manner that is consistent with Levinasian philosophy. First, the view that trauma is an embodied sensibility provides a path for the realization and reflection of the trauma done to the Same. Second, to come to see the Other, who inflicted pain upon the Same, as a human being suffering with all his flaws. While it seems impossible, that despite the very assault done to him, a patient would be able to find the humanity to understand his tormentor. Finally, the patient may enter into a process of reconciliation and forgiveness, exercising a metaphoric act of reversing time and neutralizing offenses.

How can the traumatized patient see the humanity of his tormentor? The Levinasian term *substitution* represents the idea of a drawing nearer such that the Same and the Other are both as one and as distinct, metaphysically coupled in time and space, but seemingly suspended in dual and complementary states. Such a relation transcends egology and selfhood, sacrifice and burden, and enters into the frame of the transcendent and immediate, where the assumption of responsibility for the caring of the suffering Other is coupled to the realization that the Same is the cause of it as well. Such a position may open the door to the unattainable: the implicit understanding of the humanity of the Other and the forgiveness of the persecutor by the tormented and traumatized Same.

Every accusation and persecution, as all interpersonal praise, recompense, and punishment presuppose the subjectivity of the ego, substitution, the possibility of putting oneself in the place of the other, which refers to the transference from the “by the other” into a “for the other,” and in persecution from the outrage inflicted by the other to the expiation for his fault by me. (Levinas, 1981, p. 117-118)

For Levinas, the act of *forgiveness* is a temporal event involving a revisiting of a past offence, but changing it in some re-presentation in which the existence of the offense and its reconciliation concurrently reside together. This is not a simple act of forgetting and letting go, as Allers (2010) states:

“Forgiveness is a ‘rigorously ethical event’... therefore, altering the ‘meaning of the past, the event of the past, while preserving the past offense.’ Historically the deed was done but ethically it is as if it had not been done.” (p. 30-31)

### **The complex nature of trauma**

The dynamics of a domestic abuse relationship is a complex one with multiple competing psychological forces at work, making the situation difficult to live with by both the perpetrator

and victim, and clouds the ability of the therapist to help map out an effective resolution. This relation is an all too common human condition: the pathos of two people, floundering like beached whales, moved by forces unrecognized by neither, in an act of mutual debasement. What then, for example, is the meaning of Patient E's perspective on her ongoing abusive relationship and her compelling need to stay within it? It may be too simplistic to say that she sustains the relationship solely in fear of the "terrifying loneliness" she says she is sure to feel should it come to an end. While she cannot explain her statement that "she loves him", it may very well be that what she feels, in the intensity of this dysfunctional relation, is a powerful connection to the idea of forgiveness: the redemption of the persecuting and predatory Other. However, it is also possible that in this case the patient is expressing a perverse twist in the ethical relation, one based on an internal and self-satisfying egology, a fantasy borne of her need for her own forgiveness, hope, restoration and peace.

### **Power, Economy and Society**

There is a paradox implicit in the nature of power and economy within society. That is to say, the powerful and affluent are directly connected to, and cannot escape from, the impotent and poor. The empowered and the disenfranchised are coupled together in a dance that neither can break from. Both conspire together in a dysfunctional codependent relationship. These paradoxes, set in context in Levinasian philosophy, are best illustrated by George Kunz in his 1998 book, *The Paradox of Power and Weakness*.

### **The Third, power and economy**

In reflecting on society, Levinas introduces the idea of the *Third*, which is a reference to all Others aggregated together into a societal whole. But while the Other has a face, and his call is immediate and personal, the Third is anonymous and distant. How can the Third be called to recognize justice and be heard by the Same as he would hear an Other? Such an answer comes of the exteriority of ethics, which is to say that justice, ethics and moral character are transcendent to life itself and affects the Third as it would any Same or Other. "In this way, the idea of ethics, coming from outside the manageable world [i.e. all societal organizations] with other Others, causes an awareness of, and an interest in, the concept of justice and how this can be managed" (Aasland, 2007, p. 224). So, the idea of an ethical stance in business or in politics, that is to say, the institutions of the Third, may not be implicitly inconsistent with Levinasian philosophy or ethics, but rather, be shaped by it.

A measure of evaluating the exertion of power, such as political or economic power, is the intentionality of its use. In a society where its constituency practices the notion of for-oneself-above-Others, the result is a dominance of one class over another, in an atmosphere of *moral disengagement* (Bandura, 1996). Levinas holds a suspicion of the State having the power to eradicate the face of the Other through anonymous third-party interactions. Likewise, for Levinas, the transactions of money have the ability to diminish the human encounter and enable the hiding of the face of the Other. This anonymity makes accessible contempt for the Other, and he states: "Expressed in monetary units – in numbers, prices – these values give rise to homogeneity, letting themselves be compared and totalized..." (Levinas, 2007, p. 204). But this is not to say that Levinas is opposed to politics, or the orderly systems in which society is managed. What he does expect of the societal Third is stated by Critchley (2001) as follows:

He wants to indicate how the order of the *state* rests upon the irreducible ethical responsibility of the face-to-face relation. Levinas's critique of totalizing politics leads to

the deduction of an ethical structure that is irreducible to totality: the face-to-face, infinite responsibility, proximity, the other within the same, peace. (p. 24)

### **On the question of social justice**

For Levinas, the heart of social justice is expressed in the encounter between the Same and the Other. While the Third is a group, a social organization dedicated to some achievement, social justice is made in the relation between two people. However, the intersubjective relationship this is not at all private "...everything that takes place here between us concerns everyone.....the third-party looks at me in the eyes of the other" (Levinas, 1969, p. 212).

Patients live within a societal power structure that exerts its influence toward the conformity of culture, the vapid promotion of wealth and possessions, and the myth of individualism and identity. As clinical therapists we are asked to assist our patients in meeting objectives that implicitly reflect a social expectation of what a contributing individual is, within the context of a nominal view of societal life: productive and repeatable accomplishments, consumable relations, and a contribution to the standards and values of the society that are defined within its hidden framework and power structure. This may be one overarching lesson that psychological counseling can bring to the distressed patient in the clinical setting: that their emotional state is a natural consequence of existence within a social structure and cultural environment that they do not fit into, either because of personal psychologically-based predispositions, or as more often the case, because of race, class and gender exclusions that are primarily economic or power based.

Would not Levinas argue that to break from this confinement, this willful interiority, the Same would look toward the Face of the Other? That is to ask, though the Same may appear powerless, in service to the Other would the Same find her power? Herein lies another lesson that the therapist can share with his patient: that the way out of their suffering, their interiority, is through the recognition and service to the Other.

### **Society and the Same**

The uneasy relation between the individual and the Third, in this case the Welfare State, was exemplified by Patient L, a female in her 40's, who described her life experience of living on public assistance as a world where her possibilities were restrained and circumscribed by the Third, in this case, by the totalizing servants of the Welfare State. Rather than hold to the limited view that the Third pressed on her, Patient L might have served herself better were she able to look at the Welfare State and its overwhelmed and insensitive representatives as being inured to her suffering. That is to say, that Patient L could see that her own humanity, in this case her very life and aspirations, had been subjugated to the expediency of the political relation and that this was anonymously totalizing and violent. Through the clear understanding of her world, limited to scraps and minimal nourishment by those who have not the resources to serve the Other in respectful commitment, Patient L could have reframed her situation from that of the victim to that of an advocate. Such advocacy is not a belligerent counterforce to the political. Rather, it is a statement of a caring for the Other, and by extension the Third, such that the suffering of society caused by its inability and failure to meet the poor and disenfranchised face-to-face can be ameliorated. In doing this, through service to the Other, Patient L could find psychic freedom and empowerment.

## **The Ineffable Body**

Levinas asserts the role of the body in his philosophy in two distinct ways. First, that of the apparition of the Other, the Face that beckons to and disarms the Same into acting in goodness and ethicality. Second, the body as the container of the ethical relation, preverbal and implicit, as reflected in our sensations and exalted transcendent desires. In the first case, the image of the body, as represented in the Face and in nudity, is the catalyst for the ethical relation between the Other and the Same (Crignon, 2004). However, it is within ourselves, our very bodies that the clarity of ethics is to be found, through profound reflection, based on the implicit commandment towards goodness that is built into our very nature. It is this perspective, the need for moral and ethical reflection, is most appropriate in psychological treatment as this addresses the most critical psychological dispositions that are presented in the therapeutic theater. These include the presentation of existential angst, hopelessness, anxiety and depression of feelings by the patient.

### **The body as an ethical compass**

The sense of the body plays a significant role in the writings of Levinas and appears in his earliest papers, including his prophetic article entitled “Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism” published in 1934. While this article was primarily based on the major social and political movements of that era, such as National Socialism, Marxism and Liberalism, Levinas presents his perspective on the body: its meaning to our self, our spirituality, our ethics and our psychology.

But the body is not only something eternally foreign.... Not only is it the case that the body is closer and more familiar to us than the rest of the world, and controls our psychological life, our temperament, and our activities. ... Do we not affirm ourselves in the unique warmth of our bodies long before any blossoming of the Self that claims to be separate from the body? (Levinas, 1990, p. 69)

The context of this discussion is wrapped around the idea of racism and the perverted view that the body was the “object of spiritual worth” reflected in the “science” of Eugenics, held so highly at the time. What Levinas finds so objectionable in the philosophy of National Socialism and its distorted perspective on the body, in the alternative, opens the door to his view of the body as an indicator of integrity, truth, humanity and ethics. Thus, “...by rooting his conception of our humanity, of what makes us fully human, in the bodily experiences of Self and Other, he offers a conception of humanity that he hopes can be taken seriously by a society that affirms the identity between our bodies and ourselves” (Manning, 1998, p. 135). Going still further in this vein, that the embodied self is a source of moral self-disclosure, Zimmermann (2009) states, “Such a placing of the body as the nexus point of our engagement with a moral universe demonstrates further Levinas’ own thinking on the relationality of the subject – in ‘one’s own skin’ – in that it exercises an en-fleshed moral responsibility for the other” (p. 989).

### **The body memory**

Returning now to the psychological presentation of existential angst, hopelessness, anxiety and depression of feelings, all of these conditions reflect a disposition of the body, announced by an uncanny set of embodied sensations whose cause is generally neither known nor manageable by the suffering patient. More than that, these bodily sensations are rooted in a form of unawareness, that is to say, patients have no language to describe them

and are thus stuck in a pre-verbal and disturbing umbra. These conditions represent issues of ethical ambiguity, so confusing and primal that they cannot bear to be reflected on by the suffering patient. But only through reflection can the patient uncover ethical conflict sufficiently so that the unity of the body and the mind is achieved, not only to identify the psychological issues involved but to choose an ethical path toward resolution. It is in this sense that a Levinasian perspective is employed in psychological treatment: not just the compelling pull from exteriority, the Face of the Other, but the push toward ethical conduct as reflected in the embodiment of our very being.

### **The encased body**

There is a different point of view that maybe taken with regard to the body: that embedded in its very structure and musculature, its sinews and ligaments, a physical memory and bodily familiarity exists that result in a paralysis of emotional state. Such is the case with patients who cling to a self-destructive emotional affect that is reinforced by their physical stature.

Many of my patients suffer from a lacking of the ineffable body, that is to say, their inability to process sensations and open up to feelings that bridge toward the transcendent. Instead, they seem stuck in an emotional gridlock, a confused and unclear set of feelings, or an atomized or sometimes even repressed set of sensations. Such are the conditions of the suffering patient. They suffer from deep distress and anxiety that can barely be controlled. When presented with a cascade of complex and contradictory feelings they lock themselves in a state of depression and anxiety, a form of hiding. They convince themselves that their feelings are facts, that facts are immutable, and that their circumstances will never change.

Here now is an example of a patient who was dissuaded from her ineffable body by the will of her own intention. Patient F. was a woman in her 50s who described herself as spiritual with high morals and ethical standards. She grew up in a dysfunctional and alcoholic family. She was married for several decades to a man who was verbally abusive and who continually diminished her abilities and self-esteem. In reflecting on her life, Patient F reported that she felt the following effects: a general depression, a lack of joy, a feeling of worthiness and the uncanny sense that some greater part of her was missing. For many sessions Patient F and I explored her feelings. It was apparent that feelings were hard for Patient F to experience and she often stated “my feelings are not my friends.” She remained determined to resist the experience of embodied sensations and their subsequent generation of emotions. These were just too much for her to bear. However, without feelings she had no compass by which to evaluate her desires. What she did possess was a synthesized view of emotion and ethics driven by intellect and accomplishment, but devoid of embodied feeling. Thus, the notion of the ineffable body was beyond her ability to experience and was separated from the ethical relation and transcendent goodness that is a basis of Levinasian philosophy.

### **Conclusion: Reflections on Ethics and Psychology**

In the therapeutic encounter the therapist is called into an ethical practice to establish a non-totalizing relation where the patient is recognized and honored for her infinite Otherness yet is helped with the passivity that the gifts of discourse and teaching enable. Levinasian philosophy, with its clear perspective of for-the-Other provides a foundation for psychological healing that *facilitates* transcendence into the state of the ethical relation, which binds all living things into an emergent stream, a living force.

My own heritage extends well beyond my Yiddish speaking grandparents and reaches past each preceding generation, past Australopithecus and Neanderthals, past the birth of mammals and reptiles, into the creation of single celled life, headlong toward the first strands of proteins that were able to replicate themselves at the beginning of biology. This is my DNA, and I feel it in my body, the influence it has over me as I am propelled to live each day in the best measure I can, toward some unknown and never to be discovered end, with the faith that there is a manifest-destiny to life but one that I can never even begin to conceive of, for in my current state of evolutionary being that awareness is an impossibility, just as an ant cannot conceive the beauty of a Shakespearean sonnet. Yet, even with these limitations, I know the transcendent and the resplendent ethical relation, because they are embodied in me, feelings before words, and ethics before ontology.

## References

- Aasland, D. (2007). The Exteriority of Ethics in Management and Its Transition into Justice. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 16(3), 220-226
- Bandura, A. (1996). Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in Exercise of Moral Agency. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 71(2), 364-374.
- Bernet, R. (2000). The Traumatized Subject. *Research in Phenomenology*, 30160.
- Christopher R. (2010). Undoing What Has Been Done. In Christopher R. and Smit M. (Eds.), *Forgiveness in perspective*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Crignon, P., Simek, N., & Zalloua, Z. (2004). Figuration: Emmanuel Levinas and the Image. *Yale French Studies*, 104100-125.
- Critchley, S. (1999) *Ethics, politics, subjectivity: essays on Derrida, Levinas and contemporary French thought*. London: Verso Publishing.
- Critchley S. & Bernasconi R. (eds.), (2002) *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2002),
- Flaxer, D. (2010). *Interiority and Exteriority: Levinas and Psychological Practice*, presented at the 8th Annual Psychology for the Other Seminar, Seattle WA, October 22-24, 2010. Paper available at: <http://tinyurl.com/3abwqsy>
- Gadamer, H. G. (2004). *Truth and Method*. Translated by Weinsheimer, J. and Donald G. Marshall, D.G., London: Continuum.
- Halling, S. (1975). The Implications of Emmanuel Levinas' Totality and Infinity for Therapy. In A. Giorgi, C.T. Fischer, and E.L. Murray (Eds.), *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology, Volume II*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- Kunz, G. (1998). *The paradox of power and weakness: Levinas and an alternative paradigm for psychology*. Albany, NY US: State University of New York Press.
- Lévinas, E. (1969). *Totality and infinity: an essay on exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Publisher Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press
- Lévinas, E. (1981). Otherwise than being or beyond essence. (Alphonso Lingis, Trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nihhoff Publishers. (Original work published in 1974)
- Lévinas, E. (1990) "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism," *Esprit*.. Translated by Sean Hand in *Critical Inquiry* 17, 62-71. (Original work published in (1934.)
- Lévinas, E., Bouchetoux, F., & Jones, C. (2007). Sociality and Money. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 16(3), 203-207.
- Manning, R. J. S. (1998). Serious Ideas Rooted in Blood: Emmanuel Levinas's Analysis of the Philosophy of Hitlerism. In *Postmodernism and the Holocaust*, Amsterdam: Rodopi,
- Roesch-Marsh, E. (2003). Sobering Up with Levinas: Trauma, 'Étonnement'. *Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology*, 44(3), 305-327.
- Zimmermann, N. (2009). Karol Wojtyla and Emmanuel Levinas on the Embodied Self. *Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology*, 50(6), 982-995.



## **Appendix II**

### **About the author**

David Flaxer is a therapist practicing at the YWCA Pathways Community Mental Health Clinic, serving low income residents of Snohomish County, Washington. He is a 2011 graduate of the Master's of Psychology program at Seattle University. Prior to his turn to psychology, David was a research scientist at the IBM Corporation focusing on the interaction between technology and social systems. While at IBM he produced numerous patents, papers, and presentations in addition to directing the development of software applications. In 2006 he culminated his career with a long-term international assignment in Beijing China, where he had the opportunity to mentor a new generation of technology researchers. His undergraduate degree embraced architecture and energy efficient building technology. In the 1980's he employed these skills while serving as Executive Director of a non-profit housing organization serving low-income households in rural New York. When he is not practicing at the clinic you may find him sailing his historic wooden boats in the great waters of the Puget Sound. Correspondence can be sent to: [david@flaxer.org](mailto:david@flaxer.org).

### **About the paper**

This paper was presented at the 9th Annual Psychology for the Other Seminar hosted by Seattle University's Graduate Program in Existential-Phenomenological Therapeutic Psychology, October 21-23, 2011.