Vulnerability and Violence: On the Poverty of the Remainder (or Beyond Kant)

Leonard Lawlor

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Leonard Lawlor

Department of Philosophy, Penn State University, University Park, USA

ABSTRACT

This article tries to show the irreducible connection between vulnerability and violence. This connection leads us back to the ethical level of experience. If vulnerability makes violence irreducible, then at least two reactions to violence are possible. On the one hand, a reaction is possible in which one attempts to negate vulnerability in order to close down the very thing within us that allows violence to enter. This negative reaction is actually the worst violence. On the other hand, a reaction is possible in which one attempts to affirm vulnerability, even though its affirmation opens us to the violence that will happen. Affirming vulnerability is the least-violent reaction. If the formula for the worst violence is apocalypse *without remainder*, then the least violence is *the maintenance of the remainder*. The maintenance would happen only by *not* possessing the remainders, which places us in a new situation of poverty.

Simply, vulnerability refers to the fact that human beings possess a body that can be damaged. Our bodies are porous and therefore we are not able close them. More precisely, vulnerability refers to the fact that experience contains a degree of passivity. Our senses are always open, even when we sleep, which means that we are always receiving sensations, stimuli and feelings. We can say that, instead of autonomy, vulnerability makes us persons. If vulnerability defines personhood, then to be a person is to be open to violence. This violence requires an ethical response. To stop acts of violence, we should, as Kant would say, "respect" others' vulnerability. We should be "mindful" of others' vulnerability; we should not "exacerbate" others' vulnerability.[1] We should not make others' lives, as Judith Butler would say, "precarious".[2] The idea of vulnerability, however, is not simple. Because we can imagine our senses being able to close themselves, and because we can imagine our bodies without pores – our ears could have lids and our bodies could be glass – we must go deeper in order to understand vulnerability's definitional status for personhood. We can go deeper by pursuing phenomenology vigorously. Phenomenology provides essential or eidetic insights; it shows us what cannot be imagined otherwise. Phenomenology shows that vulnerability is irreducible; it is transcendental.

CONTACT Leonard Lawlor ✉ lul19@psu.edu 🖃 Department of Philosophy, Penn State University, University Park, PA, 16801, USA

[1] Butler, *Precarious Life*, 28–29.
[2] Butler, *Precarious Life*; *Vulnerability in Resistance*. See also Mackenzie et al., *Vulnerability*.

Elevating Kant's transcendental aesthetics to the level of the transcendental itself, the phenomenological tradition has shown that the fundamental level of experience is temporal.[3] Temporal experience shows that the present does not essentially determine fundamental experience.[4] If we look solely at Husserl's lectures on internal time-consciousness, we see that retention (the immediate experience of the past) and protention (the immediate experience of the future) are irreducible dimensions of the living present.[5] We cannot imagine a present experience that does not include a kind of memory and a kind of anticipation. As irreducible, these dimensions of time – memory and anticipation – necessarily include non-presence. The irreducible non-presence opens experience to the forgotten and to the unexpected. As Heidegger has shown, these irreducible dimensions of memory and expectation imply that at the most fundamental level, humans are finite.[6] Although we cover this experience over in everyday life, human existence lives toward death. For Heidegger, even as we transcend the present by means of the dimensions of the past and the future, our transcendence limits us.[7] The limitation means that we cannot close ourselves off from what is coming in the future and we cannot close in what is slipping away into the past. Vulnerability therefore refers to this temporal non-closedness of human experience. Vulnerability is fundamental. If we cannot close ourselves in and if we cannot close ourselves out, then we cannot stop violence from coming upon us. This violence is not the everyday kind we see all too often. Following Derrida, we must call this violence "fundamental violence".[8] This is violence in the very heart of experience. This violence is not accidental; this violence is necessary. Thus, we can see now that there is an irreducible connection between fundamental vulnerability and fundamental violence. Both vulnerability and violence are transcendental.

The irreducible connection between "vulnerability and violence" – hence the title of the essay – leads us back to the ethical level of experience. If fundamental vulnerability makes violence irreducible, then at least two reactions to violence are possible. On the one hand, a reaction is possible in which one attempts to negate vulnerability in order to close down

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[3] Here Heidegger's Kant book has played an important role. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, paragraph 34, 129–33.

[4] Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, 60–64.

[5] Derrida's important *Voice and Phenomenon* has demonstrated that retention and protention are irreducible and therefore that the living present is "contaminated" by non-presence. Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, 51–59.

[6] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, paragraph 51, 242–45.

[7] Heidegger, 'What is Metaphysics?', 82–96.

[8] Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics', 128. The crucial quotation is: "Every reduction of the other to a *real* moment of *my* life, its reduction to the state of an empirical alter-ego, is a possibility, or rather an empirical eventuality, which is called violence; and violence [that is, empirical or real violence] presupposes … necessary eidetic [or ideal] relationships. [However,] there is a transcendental … violence, an (in general dissymmetry) whose *arche* is the same … . This transcendental violence institutes the relationship between two finite ipseities. In effect, the necessity of gaining access to the meaning of the other (in its irreducible alterity) … on the basis of an intentional modification of my ego (in general) … ; and the necessity of speaking of the other as other, or to the other as other, on the basis of its appearing-for me-as-what-it-is, that is, as other … – this necessity [of appearing or being a phenomenon] from which no discourse can escape, from its earliest origin – this necessity is violence itself, or rather the transcendental origin of an irreducible violence … " The central idea in this quotation is twofold. On the one hand, Derrida is arguing that empirical or real violence presupposes eidetic or ideal relations such as the other appearing as what it is, as other. On the other hand, and more importantly, Derrida is arguing that these eidetic necessities are themselves violent as they essentially force the other to be the same and no longer to be other: as he says, "there is a transcendental violence whose *arche* [or origin] is the same". In other words, what is most important about this quotation is that Derrida is arguing that violence is essentially irreducible. Because violence is essentially irreducible, we cannot, according to Derrida, speak of relations that are "absolutely peaceful".

the very thing within us that allows violence to enter. Negating vulnerability and therefore violence, this reaction amounts to suicide. This negative reaction is actually the worst violence. On the other hand, a reaction is possible in which one attempts to affirm vulnerability, even though its affirmation opens us to the violence that will happen. Affirming vulnerability and violence, this reaction amounts to life and perhaps more life. This affirmative reaction is actually the least violent. The two reactions are clearly opposites. One seems to be the active and powerful reaction: use as much power as possible to smother the irreducible violence. The other reaction seems to be the passive reaction: use as little power as possible to let the irreducible violence happen. However, as we shall see in what follows, what I am here calling the passive reaction is actually the true active and powerful reaction. To anticipate even more, I hope you can see already that, if the formula for the worst violence is apocalypse *without remainder*, then the least violence is *the maintenance of the remainder*. The maintenance would happen only by *not* possessing the remainders. This non-possession would place us in a new situation of poverty, hence the subtitle: "The Poverty of the Remainder".

The essay that follows will proceed in three steps. The first step outlines the three phenomenological insights that guide the investigation. Here we learn that auto-affection is actually hetero-affection and that auto-affection takes place at the fundamental level of experience. The second step amounts to a phenomenology of thinking, of interior monologue or hearing-oneself-speak. It is important to keep in mind that this phenomenology (following phenomenological methodology) takes place at the transcendental level of experience, at the level of what Derrida calls "the ultra-transcendental".[9] In this transcendental description, we find that interior monologue is really a dialogue (or even a polylogue). The division within thinking which discloses interior monologue as dialogue is transcendental violence. In other words, the division separates and unites two necessities, which are based in the temporal modalities of past and future. These are the necessity of universalization (from the past) and the necessity of singularization (from the future). Now, taking place at the "ultra-transcendental" level, the necessities precede all the regions of experience. The two necessities therefore allow us to move from the theoretical consideration of time to a practical or ethical consideration of reactions to transcendental violence. Then, third, we shall describe the two possible reactions to transcendental violence. As I mentioned a moment ago, these two reactions are the active reaction and the passive one. As we shall see, the active one is the evil reaction, while the passive is the good reaction. The passive reaction aims at dispossession and thus it amounts, as we were saying, to something like a new sense of poverty.[10] However, we shall go further than the new poverty. This extension explains the parenthetical part of my title. We shall reformulate Kant's second formula of the categorical imperative. We shall remove the adverb "merely" from the formula so that it says, "*Only* treat others as ends in themselves". We can come to this reformulation only through the essential insights given to us by phenomenology. We start with these insights since they orient the investigation that follows.

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[9] Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, 13.
[10] This essay expands on the work I have done over the last 10 years, which resulted in my latest book, *From Violence to Speaking Out*. Lawlor, *From Violence to Speaking Out*. The ideas presented here will also be the basis for my next book, tentatively entitled *Violence against Violence*.

1. Three Phenomenological Insights

First, there is the insight into temporalization. This is also an insight into auto-affection or interior monologue. Therefore, it is an insight into what most defines subjectivity. The insight is this: the inner experience of the movement of time necessarily includes a relation between the event of the now – different, singular, unique, unlike any other and unrepeatable – and the memory of the past – identical, universalable, common, like all the others and repeatable. The insight means that when I speak to myself – when, in a word, I think – there is a division, difference, or disparity at the centre of myself. Interior monologue then happens, not as a monologue, but as a dialogue, or even as a polylogue. It is this disparity that keeps the future open; the disparity always produces a remainder. If we need to imagine this disparity, we should think of an irrational ratio like pi, which never equalizes itself and produces a remainder. The *second* insight concerns the other. As Husserl has shown, our experience of others (or, I would say, of any sentient being) is always mediated.[11] Simply, I cannot think your thoughts because of the mediation of the forms through which you attempt to communicate your interior life. There is therefore a relation between the inward, invisible, incorporeal and informal life of others and the outward, visible, corporeal and formal appearance of others. Here too we can speak of a division, difference, or disparity. However, the main point with the insight into alterity is that I cannot *know*, in a strong sense, who or what you are because you are never fully present to me. And if my interior monologue is really a dialogue, then I can also say that there is an-other within me, speaking to me, but whom I cannot fully understand and know, since all alterity is mediated. *Finally*, there is the insight into foundations or into the transcendental level, and this insight is more a principle than an insight. We find this principle in Husserl when he argues against the circular reasoning of historicism and naturalism.[12] Husserl recognizes that one cannot use a region of experience as the foundation for all experience. This is circular reasoning because we are trying to explain all the regions of experience with one of the regions that we are trying to explain. We also find the insight in Heidegger when he speaks of the ontological difference. Being (*Sein*) cannot be defined by beings (*Seinde*).[13] Defining Being by one of the beings is also circular reasoning. However, I think the clearest expression of this principle appears in Deleuze. Here is the principle in *Difference and Repetition*: "The insufficiency of the foundation is to remain relative to what it grounds, to borrow the characteristics of what it grounds, and to be proved by these. It is in this sense that it creates a circle".[14] Here is the principle in *Logic of Sense*: "The foundation can never resemble what it founds".[15] When we combine the three insights, we derive two consequences. First, we learn that auto-affection is actually hetero-affection. We also locate the problem of auto-affection at the most fundamental level of experience, at what Derrida, as we indicated above, calls "the ultra-transcendental" level. We can now expand on these two consequences in a phenomenological investigation of auto-affection.

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[11] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 108–12.
[12] Husserl, 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science', 79–147.
[13] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, paragraph 1, 1–4.
[14] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 88.
[15] Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 99.

2. The Phenomenology of Hearing-Oneself Speak

Following traditional phenomenological methodology, we must enact the epoché. Through the "suspension" of belief in the external world, we turn back from the objects of our experience to the experience itself. Following the basic trajectory of the phenomenological movement, we must not stop with the epoché. We must radicalize it with the universalization of the transcendental reduction.[16] Through its strict universalization, the reduction relates all beings, that is, all constituted things, including me as a psychological subject, back to an experience that is itself extra-psychological and even pre-ontic. The universalization of the reduction takes us therefore to a level of experience that is non-existent and ultra-transcendental. Through the universalization of the reduction, what we experience resembles nothing that we grasped in the natural experience of objects or subjects. The experience we discover is auto-affection. This auto-affection is pure because it is below the functioning of the natural experience of objects and subjects. At first glance, pure auto-affection looks to be interior monologue, hearing-oneself-speak. However, as we shall see now, it is not a monologue, and only when we have dispelled this appearance will we come upon fundamental experience.

Pure auto-affection *seems* to include two aspects. *First*, I seem to hear myself speak at the very moment that I speak; and, *second*, I seem to hear my own self speak. The question we must ask is clear: is it really the case that in hearing-oneself-speak, one hears oneself speak *at this very moment* and that one really hears *one's own* self? In other words, is auto-affection really that pure? What we are going to pay particular attention to in the investigation is these "seems". This is how auto-affection seems to take place. When I engage in interior monologue, when, in short, thinking takes place – it seems as though I hear myself speak at the very moment I speak. It seems as though my interior voice is not required to pass outside of myself, as though it is not required to traverse any space. So, my interior monologue seems to be immediate, immediately present and not to involve anyone else. Interior monologue seems therefore to be different from the experience of me speaking to another. However, are we really, truly able to distinguish and separate interior monologue from external dialogue? When I speak in general, that is, with or without the intention of communication, some moment always comes prior to the speaking. The prior moment could be silence or noise, but something like a context precedes all speaking. The prior context implies that the present speaking, whether it is internal or external, whether it has the purpose of communication or not, is in a secondary position. The present speaking is necessarily a "second". Whenever I start to speak – to myself, to others, for the sake of any phonation whatsoever – I find that some other speaking has already taken place and elapsed. There is always some elapsed moment that has expired, that has been lost and reduced to silence, even as something of that elapsed moment has been retained, even as something of it remains. Necessarily, my speaking is not a pure first time, even though it takes place right now. The secondary character of all speaking means that there is a delay between one speaking and another. This delay then functions as well in between speaking and hearing. Just as the apparent initiating speaking is in truth a "second", the hearing of the speaking is not immediate. In other

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[16] The discussion of epoché and the reduction is based on Husserl, 'Phenomenology' (Husserl 1997, pp. 159–79). It is also based on the presentation of the phenomenological method in *Ideas I* (Husserl 2002). For a lucid and exhaustive treatment of the "Encyclopedia Britannica" essay, see Kockelmans, *Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology*.

words, the delay in interior monologue means that interior monologue is always involved in something like a process of mediation. We must therefore conclude from this description that my interior monologue contains a delay, which separates me from myself. I cannot, it is impossible for me to hear myself *immediately*. Regardless of whether the action is hearing or speaking, the action is a response to the past. Similar to the first necessity of the delay in time, we encounter another necessity. In order to hear myself speak at this very moment, I must make use of the same phonemes as I use in communication (even if this monologue is not vocalized externally through my mouth, even if it does not have the purpose of communication). It is an irreducible or essential necessity that the silent words I form contain repeatable characteristics. This irreducible necessity means that, when I speak to myself, I speak with the sounds of others. In other words, it means that I find in myself other voices, which come from the past: the many voices are in me. I cannot, it is impossible for me to hear myself speak *all alone*. Others' voices contaminate the hearing of myself speaking.[17] Just as my present moment is never immediate, my interior monologue is never simply my own.

This phenomenological description shows, fundamentally, that auto-affection is based on a structure, which consists of two contradictory forces. On the one hand, there is always an event, a point or a singularization coming from the future into the present. Each thought I have, as I come to speak it, has a kind of novelty to it. Beside the singularizing force of novelty, there is the universalizing force of repetition. As the description shows, the singularity of a thought, my present interior speech, is always connected to some other thoughts in the past. Because of this necessary inseparability of the present thought to past thoughts, the present thought is necessarily composed of characteristics already used in the past. These characteristics are necessarily repeatable to infinity. The structure we have discovered therefore consists of the force of singularization and the force of universalization. The inner experience of the movement of time necessarily includes a relation between the event coming from the future – different, singular, unique, unlike any other and unrepeatable – and the memory of the past – identical, universalable, common, like all the others and repeatable. These two forces of universalization and singularization are irreducibly connected to one another but without unification. In other words, these two forces are necessarily bound to one another and necessarily dis-unified. While the two forces are contradictory, other to one another, they refer to necessities. Could we imagine a force that did not build up and demand or better command its discharge? It is as if the forces are saying to one another: "Singularize!" "No, universalize!" and "Universalize!" "No, singularize!" These two commandments must be obeyed, and yet their contradiction blocks perfect obedience. In other words, the two commandments cannot be reconciled. The impossibility of reconciliation tells us how to characterize the experience we have entered into. It is the experience of injustice. It is the experience of fundamental violence.

3. Two Possible Reactions to Fundamental Violence (or to Violence Itself)

The relation between singularization and universalization is necessary. Temporalization necessitates both universalization and singularization. However, because these two

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[17] Fred Evans has developed an important conception of the voice in *The Multivoiced Body*, see especially 144–68 and 280–82.

necessities appear at the ultra-transcendental level, at the most fundamental level – here I am referring to the third phenomenological insight outlined above – the necessities are *at once* theoretical or essential *and* practical or ethical. Taking place at the most fundamental level, the double necessity is prior to all regional and founded areas of experience like theory versus practice, or knowledge versus ethics. We can say, therefore, that not only does universalization and singularization take place essentially, but also we *must or should* universalize and singularize. Not only are universalization and singularization processes that we powerless to stop, they are also imperatives. They are laws that must be obeyed. If the necessities demand obedience, we can speak about reactions – *ethical reactions* – to fundamental injustice and violence. There are (at least) two reactions, the active reaction and the passive reaction. Before we turn to the two ethical reactions, we must recognize that, because of the necessities being essential or theoretical, any reaction must universalize and singularize. Any reaction is violent. The irreducibility of violence implies therefore that any reaction that aims at peace and non-violence is impossible to carry out. If any reaction aims at reconciliation of the two forces, that reconciliation is impossible – or it is the impossible. This impossibility explains why in the descriptions I am about to provide, I use the verb "attempt". The attempt always fails. In addition, the two reactions, which I am about to describe, are conscious reactions, while the movement of time in the two forces is virtually unconscious. These are then intentional reactions. And finally, in order to understand the reactions, we need to think about the use of memory and repetition for universalization, and anticipation and event for singularization. As we shall see in a moment, the easiest way to thing about these two reactions is through language.

Thus, as I said, there are two possible ethical reactions to transcendental violence – and perhaps to empirical or real violence, reactions to violence itself, we might say. On the one hand, there is the *active* reaction. The reaction looks to be the powerful reaction. It attempts to settle the struggle within temporalization or to reduce the voices in my head to silence. The active response attempts to take possession of one or the other force. It uses the force of universalization to destroy all possible events or it uses the force of singularization to destroy all possible repetitions. Going either way, using singularization or using universalization toward this end, the active response destroys itself. It destroys itself since there is no experience without both the forces. In other words, as this reaction becomes more and more extreme, it aims at extinguishing *all* the movement of time and silencing *all* interior dialogue. Following Derrida again, we can call the active reaction "the worst violence".[18] The worst violence leaves no remainder. Because this reaction always violates one of the two imperatives, because it uses one force against the other, because it only obeys one of the imperatives, it is, we could say, the evil reaction. It aims at death, suicide; it aims at "rest in peace".

On the other hand, there is the passive reaction, and here, being opposite to the active reaction, there is always a remainder. Again, if we can speak this way, we would have to say that this is the good reaction. It aims at life and more life. This reaction is passive because, instead of using the forces as a means to an end, it lets the forces happen. It affirms our powerlessness in the face of the necessities. It attempts to let repetitions go out; it

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[18] Derrida, 'Violence and Metaphysics', 117.

attempt to let events come in.[19] Through this "letting happen", it attempts to obey both imperatives at once. Through the imperative of universalization, I can let others escape from me; and through the imperative of singularization, I can let others enter into me. To put this idea in linguistic terms, we can let the forms of my words and sentences become other than what I intended with them and I can let new expressions enter into my head. Because this reaction does not attempt to force the struggle to end, because it does not attempt to reduce the multiple voices into silence, it is the least violent. Like the active reaction, which is hyperbolic, aiming at completely destroying itself, the passive reaction is also hyperbolic. It aims at completely letting all the others out and all the others in – without exception. There is one more point to make about the passive reaction. Although this reaction is passive insofar as it lets happen, one should not think that it amounts to leaving things alone. It does not mean just let others alone; don't care about what others are doing; just release them. The question for this reaction is: how can one know whether one has *truly* released the forces? How does one *truly* know how to release others? How does one *truly* maintain the remainder? To let the forces happen therefore requires the greatest effort and the most thought; it requires the most power. Therefore, the passive reaction is the true powerful reaction.

The two possible reactions we just described are based on Nietzsche's dialectic of the desire for revenge in *The Genealogy of Morals*.[20] In short, what I am calling the active reaction is vengeful, while the passive one is forgiving.[21] As is well known, Nietzsche's dialectic of revenge starts with the desire for revenge against others who have done harm to me; but then, when I am unable to get revenge, the desire is reversed into revenge against myself. The revenge against myself results in bad conscience, or more precisely, in self-hatred. Although Nietzsche does not say this, the motor of the dialectic is pain. We have first pain from another; then pain internal to oneself, which must be abolished. The person with bad conscience therefore has a specific kind of sensibility, a sensibility that wants only to negate pain actively, but again, we can see that this sensibility is powerful only in appearance; it cannot tolerate pain. The passive reaction consists in a different sensibility to pain. This sensibility is strong enough to withstand the pain. It can withstand the pain of entry and it can withstand the pain of exit. The so-called passive reaction is in fact the strong reaction. It is strong enough to allow an injury to happen without seeking vengeance. And if it seeks anything, the passive reaction seeks to give itself over to those others who enter in and those others who escape.[22] It seeks generosity.

We can compare transcendental violence to language, because language possesses the same structure as temporalization: universal and singular. All languages include both universalizable or iterable phonemes and meanings, and singular utterances of these general phonemes and meanings. These two necessities of language are irreducible. In order to speak at all, one must conform to the forms of language; and in order to speak at all, one must make those forms happen here and now, like an event coming from the future. These two necessities of language are always struggling with one another,

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[19] This description is based on Heidegger's idea of *Gelassenheit*. Heidegger, *Country Path Conversations*, 76–80.
[20] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 35–67.
[21] For an important account of forgiveness, see Jankelevitch, *Forgiveness*.
[22] This small paragraph is the beginning of a research project on pain. The research on pain in which I will engage is inspired by the unfinished work of Penn State philosophy doctoral student, Daniel Palumbo (1987–2017).

producing a kind of violence internal to all speech acts. Within language, we can also see the two possible reactions to the irreducible linguistic violence we just described.

On the one hand, there is the phenomenon of hate speech. Hate speech is a judgement; it always speaks of someone. It attempts to categorize the person (or the people) mentioned in the statement under a general concept. Because of the general concept's presuppositions or prejudices, because of its content, the utterance also does something or performs something. It effectuates a change in the social status of the person categorized. It thereby violates what the person is as a singular individual through its generality. Similarly, going in the opposite direction, hate speech can attempt to dis-categorize another person (or people) from a general concept, negating that person (or people) into an excluded singularity. In contrast, what we might call "love speech" – this is the passive reaction – attempts to unravel judgements made about others. It always speaks to someone, not of someone. Its basic structure is the address or the call. We can start with the force of universalization. In a discourse, one could impoverish the idea of goodness, for instance, down to its most unrestricted form. One could empty it of content and thereby make it strictly universal. Then, being strictly universal, like a vacuum, the formal idea of goodness would call for determinations to fill it. The form of goodness would proliferate to include more and more acts and people. As it calls for more and more determinations, the form of goodness would be the possession of no one. Now we turn to singularization. This description is more complicated. It returns to the question of the great effort required so that others are truly free. One addresses oneself to someone. Instead of transforming that person into an "it" that can be categorized and judged, the call would singularize the person called with a "you". Using this second-person designation is a sign of love or friendship because it calls the person to come close. Yet, by calling the person close, I am able to possess the person. The address transforms the person into an object of love. It transforms you into an object I possess for the purpose of satisfying my desire. By calling the other close, the address itself transforms the "you" into an "it". Thus, to treat the other person *truly* as a "you" – there really seems no other way to do this – I must *negate* the call at the same time as I call you. I must call you as a friend, out of love, and yet, in order not to violate you as a person, I must tell you that I am not your friend. Then, I let you be; then I let you be free; then, I let you be an end in itself.[23]

4. Conclusion: The Poverty of the Remainder (or Beyond Kant)

We started from a simple description of vulnerability. Now, we see more completely its complexity. The non-closedness that makes us vulnerable is based on the fact that experience at the most fundamental level consists of two irreducible forces. We are always and necessarily open to singularization and open to universalization. The singularity of an event enters into experience, and the universality of repetition escapes from experience. In other words, these two forces struggle with one another, singularization violating universalization with its event, and universalization violating singularization with its

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[23] These two strategies for reducing linguistic violence are based, respectively, on Deleuze and Guattari's idea of a minor discourse (glossolalia) in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Derrida's idea of teleiopoesis in *Politics of Friendship*. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 106–10. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 42–43, 129.

repetition. Because we are fundamentally open in this way, we are fundamentally unjust. Because we are vulnerable, we are violent. We cannot imagine, I think, vulnerability without violence. The relation between them is necessary. We saw that there are two possible reactions to the violence necessarily connected to vulnerability. The good reaction (the passive reaction) differs from the evil reaction (the active reaction) by means of its affirmation (not negation) of vulnerability. Insofar as it affirms vulnerability, the good reaction is not nihilistic. It does not reduce the world to nothing. The good reaction always leaves a remainder. In fact, through its affirmation, the good reaction lets others be free. It even says, "let others be ends in themselves".

This phrase – "let others be ends in themselves" – indicates that behind the description of the passive reaction to transcendental violence, or to violence itself, I am placing Kantian moral philosophy. All the thinking, in which we have been engaged here, revolves around the treatment of others in a non-economic or non-useful way.[24] What is usually called "the second formula" for the categorical imperative is its centre. Everyone knows the formula for this categorical imperative: never treat others merely as means to an end. As far as I can tell, any ethical theory, if it wants to be genuine or meaningful, must take its inspiration from the "ends in itself" formula. The end in itself formula implies that each person, and I would say each living thing, is incommensurable. However, what makes each living being incommensurable and valuable in itself? I think we can find the answer to this question through the phenomenological insight into the experience of others. The logic would seem to be this. I can *accurately* measure any living being only by knowing *exactly* what this living being is. Yet, I cannot know, in the strong sense of "accurately" and "exactly", the interior life of another because of the irreducible mediation. I have no direct knowledge of the interior life of others. Then, lacking this strong sense of knowledge, I also will not know how to compare this living being to any other living being or standard. If I do not know what this other living being *really is*, then I cannot really measure that being in relation, for instance, to the value of money. The "beyond" of the experience of alterity means that the other is "beyond", as Kant would say, any "market price".[25] Whatever value we assign to others, this value is not enough. We might say that the other is worth a certain amount but, because we do not really know the other, we also cannot know if the value assigned is enough. The other is always worth more than I think.

Now when Kant formulates the end-in-itself version of the categorical imperative, he says, of course, that we should never treat others "merely" as means to an end. However, if our outline of a phenomenological grounding is correct, we can see that Kant did not understand the nature of his own insight. The experience of alterity requires that, because others cannot be valued enough, we must hyperbolize and intensify the idea that all the others are *only, and never merely*, ends in themselves. We must say again: "Let others, all the others, be ends in themselves!" However, and despite this formula that I have uttered three times, I think the phenomenological grounding of the second formula of the categorical imperative takes us far beyond Kant's moral philosophy. As others are beyond any market pricing, we have to say that others always produce a kind of inequality which contests the measurements of exchange; others cannot be

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[24] Derrida has discussed this very imperative in *Negotiations* (Derrida 2002a, 324–26). However, in a roundtable discussion, Derrida says, "So I am ultra-Kantian. I am Kantian, but I am more than Kantian" (Derrida 2001, 66). On Derrida's relation to Kant, see Miller, *Kantian Transpositions*.

[25] Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, 84.

exchanged for one another. And even if we attempt a kind of measurement for exchange, a kind of leftover always remains, or a kind of remainder appears. If, in other words, we say "Let others be ends in themselves", we signify that others are never obliterated as means to an end. Never being obliterated means that others always remain. We now seem to be farther away from Kant's moral philosophy because the moral value – if we can call it that – would not be rightness or goodness, but the remainder. The categorical imperative must be reformulated in the following way: "*Only* treat others as ends in themselves!" We can describe this "value" in another way. If the other always remains, then we do not completely possess them. And if we do not completely possess them, then we have to see ourselves as being in a kind of poverty. We should always be poor in this way, and there should always be a remainder.

Being so far from Kant, we will find it difficult to live according to the ethical value of poverty. What seems obvious about the value of poverty conceived in this way is its extreme selflessness. Hyperbolic selflessness implies that we should never want reciprocation for whatever we do for another or give to another. If the other is allowed to reciprocate, then the other turns into a means to an end. The transformation of the other into a means clearly violates our reformulated categorical imperative. In his 1991 *Given Time*, Derrida provides an image of hyperbolic selflessness through a short story written by Baudelaire called "Counterfeit Money".[26] The story describes two men, emerging from a tobacco shop; they encounter a beggar. One man, the one not narrating the story, gives the beggar a silver two franc piece. When the other man praises the first for his generosity, the man who gave the two franc piece says simply, "It was a counterfeit coin". By giving the counterfeit coin to the beggar, the man of largesse is strategizing that the beggar will never be able to reciprocate. The counterfeit coin might land the beggar in jail. Or, because there is no guarantee and as all we can do is strategize, the counterfeit coin might not be detected, allowing the beggar to improve his life. Nevertheless, here we see a human action that seems, at least, to approximate the reformulated categorical imperative.

We can go one more step in our investigation into the new categorical imperative of "*Never* allow others to be treated as a means to an end". If we really want our actions to approximate the reformulated categorical imperative, and therefore if we really want others never to reciprocate, if in short we want to be good, then we should always want others to die. This is a horrible consequence of the reasoning in which we have engaged. Horrible indeed, yet it seems that others cannot reciprocate from the grave. We can moderate the consequence, and reduce its horror. At the least, if we want to ensure that others cannot reciprocate, we should treat others *as if* they are dead. This moderation of the consequence tells us that we experience extreme selflessness as mourning. However, the experience of mourning tells us that, while the other as dead seems to place the other as far as possible away from me, mourning the other places the other as far as possible within me. Being placed as far inside of me as possible, the memory of the dead commands of me to continue to increase my selflessness.

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[26] Derrida, *Given Time*, 71–172; the Baudelaire story is reproduced in the final pages of this volume.

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