

# Writing as a man

## Levinas and the phenomenology of Eros

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In the philosophical works of Emmanuel Levinas's early career, it is in a phenomenology of Eros that he claims to have uncovered the site of what he calls 'transcendence'. This is no small claim. According to the argument of the later *Totality and Infinity* (1961),<sup>1</sup> the history of Western philosophy is to be thought as the history of the 'philosophy of the same'. Within this polemical generalization almost the whole of Western philosophy is characterized as a totalizing discourse which aims to reduce everything to the categories of a thematizing consciousness. Conceptual structures are employed (or presupposed) in order to make diverse phenomena commensurable within a system, and according to Levinas this operation always constitutes a reduction of what is 'other' to the order of the 'same'. In agreement with a certain transcendentalism which is itself implicated in Levinas's critique, these structures of thought are then equated with consciousness itself; the thematizing project is one of mastery in which *noemata* will of necessity conform to *noesis*, in which the object is constituted for and by the subject. The experience of transcendence, so rare in this version of philosophy's history, is the experience of whatever is and truly remains *other* than me,<sup>2</sup> recalcitrant to mastery through conceptualization and to the transcendental project of the subject to construe everything as originating from within itself.

If, then, it is first of all in the erotic relation that the possibility of the experience of transcendence is said to arise, Eros can in no sense be dismissed as an unimportant or peripheral theme for Levinas, and a full investigation is warranted, especially given the current interest in Levinas's work, interest which is not limited to the discipline of philosophy. Furthermore, as the notion of Eros is closely associated, textually and conceptually, with what Levinas calls 'the feminine', critical attention has been excited amongst feminist scholars of various persuasions, with claims – both positive and negative – being made for Levinas's

significance as a resource for feminist philosophy and feminist politics. If assertions of a 'Levinasian' feminism, no matter how qualified, tend to rest on the idea that Levinas's phenomenology of Eros, and analyses of 'the feminine' mark a break in or a new departure from a 'masculinist' tradition, this article seeks, in part, to argue to the contrary.

### Eating/loving

It is in *Existence and Existents* (1947)<sup>3</sup> that Eros first surfaces as a philosophical theme, described there by Levinas as the primordial relation with the Other (*Autrui*). It is the fact of this relation, the presence of the Other in this relation, that opens up the possibility of transcendence, because it is, primordially and paradigmatically, the experience of the other person, radically inaccessible to comprehension, that breaks the cycle of the return to self, the circle of the selfsame. In order to explain the specificity and the extraordinary potentiality of Eros, Levinas distinguishes between the two pleasures of eating and love (*amour*), where the latter is characterized by an essential and insatiable hunger. Unlike the desire to eat, amorous desire is not merely an agitation (*trouble*) that precedes the attempt at gratification, but is a desire *augmented* by such an attempt. Being mistaken about the nature of amorous desire, confusing it with a hunger able to be satisfied by the possession of an object, gives rise to what Levinas poignantly describes as 'the ridiculous and tragic simulation of devouring in kissing and biting'.<sup>4</sup> This misunderstanding also accounts for the tendency to see the impossibility of the full possession or incorporation of the beloved as a *failure* inherent in love. On the contrary, for Levinas the very positivity of love lies in its negativity:

Intersubjectivity ... is brought about by Eros, where in the proximity of another the distance is wholly maintained, a distance whose pathos is made up of this proximity and this duality of beings. What is

presented as the failure of communication in love in fact constitutes the positive character of the relationship; this absence of the other is precisely his presence qua other.<sup>5</sup>

It is important that in *Existence and Existents* the face-to-face relation, that which later is ethics, is explicitly thematized as Eros, that all relations of 'civilization' are said to refer back to this relation of Eros in which the Other is first encountered.<sup>6</sup> There is, however, another important structural dimension to Eros as thematized in *Existence and Existents*, and one which Levinas castigates his philosophical forebears for having overlooked. For Levinas, the experience of the otherness of the Other appears paradigmatically in love as a *sexed* otherness: 'the plane of *Eros* allows us to see that the other *par excellence* is the feminine.'<sup>7</sup> Levinas returns to these thoughts in a series of lectures given in 1946–7, published under the title of *Time and the Other*,<sup>8</sup> where Eros and the feminine function as *uniquely* paradigmatic for the possibility of thinking transcendence, and therefore as the very essence of the critique of the philosophy of the same. Echoing the philosophical investigations of *Existence and Existents*, Levinas describes the birth of the subject *qua* subject as 'hypostasis', the event of taking up a position in anonymous Being. What is new, however, is the language used to describe the subject or the self which thus appears. Hypostasis, an evanescent and solitary moment of beginning, a rupture in the infinite fabric of existence, actually constitutes a *mastery* of Being: 'The existent is *master* of existing. It exerts on its existence the *virile* [*viril*] power of the subject. It has something in its power.'<sup>9</sup> The key word is '*viril*'. Capable of being translated into English as both 'virile' and 'masculine', rooted in the Latin for 'man' (*vir*), the meaning of the French word retains its sexual origin explicitly. When, therefore, Levinas constructs the subject as 'a virility, a pride and a sovereignty',<sup>10</sup> he constructs the solitary subject as in some sense 'masculine', a tendency which persists throughout the whole of his career. Power (*pouvoir*), mastery, conquest, sovereignty, virility, activity and heroism are all attributes of the subject which also characterize the intellectual and practical processes proper to it and its economy of the same: knowledge, comprehension, possession, incorporation, seizure, and so on. The subject is the beginning and the end of all these operations, transforming everything that is other into itself by imposing its own thematizing categories and sucking the world back into itself as elements of its own perception or intellection. Physical incorporation

provides the model for these processes, analogously described, therefore, as 'alimentary'.<sup>11</sup>

Also familiar in *Time and the Other* is the counterpoint to the above, the assertion that any true transcendence can only be accomplished in an event which interrupts this circular return to the self, and the assertion that such an event is uniquely the face-to-face relation with the Other. In *Time and the Other* the phenomenon of death is also discussed as that which is in one way the most refractory for any knowledge, that which puts an end to the virility and heroism that constitute the subject. And yet death can tell us nothing about the event of transcendence, as death is an event of annihilation in which the subject is crushed, wiped out (*écrasé*). In the face-to-face relation with the Other the subject is similarly out of power, but its integrity as self is nevertheless maintained, and in *Time and the Other*, as in *Existence and Existents*, the erotic relation is prototypical. Furthermore, as it is also through the relation with the Other that the subject's relation with the future is made possible, this relation is the very accomplishment of time.<sup>12</sup> It is, then, all the more remarkable that for Levinas the erotic relation is the 'original form'<sup>13</sup> of the relation with the Other, as this gives to Eros an exalted philosophical importance not attempted since the time of Plato, and no less audacious. For Levinas, however, this does not mitigate the philosophical abyss between them. Elaborating on the earlier passages in *Existence and Existents*, he again suggests that the originality of Eros lies in the experience of the *sexed* alterity of the Other. The passages are worth quoting in full:

Does a situation exist where the alterity of the other appears in its purity? Does a situation exist where the other would not have alterity only as the reverse side of its identity, would not comply only with the Platonic law of participation where every term contains a sameness and through this sameness contains the other? Is there not a situation where alterity would be borne by a being in a positive sense, as essence? What is the alterity that does not purely and simply enter into the opposition of two species of the same genus? I think the absolutely contrary, whose contrareity is in no way affected by the relationship that can be established between it and its correlative, the contrareity that permits its terms to remain absolutely other, is the *feminine*.

Sex is not some specific difference. It is situated beside the logical division into genera and species. This division certainly never manages to reunite an empirical content. But it is not in this sense that it does not permit one to account for the difference between the sexes. The difference between the sexes is a formal structure, but one that carves up reality in another sense and conditions the very possibil-

ity of reality as multiple, against the unity of being proclaimed by Parmenides.<sup>14</sup>

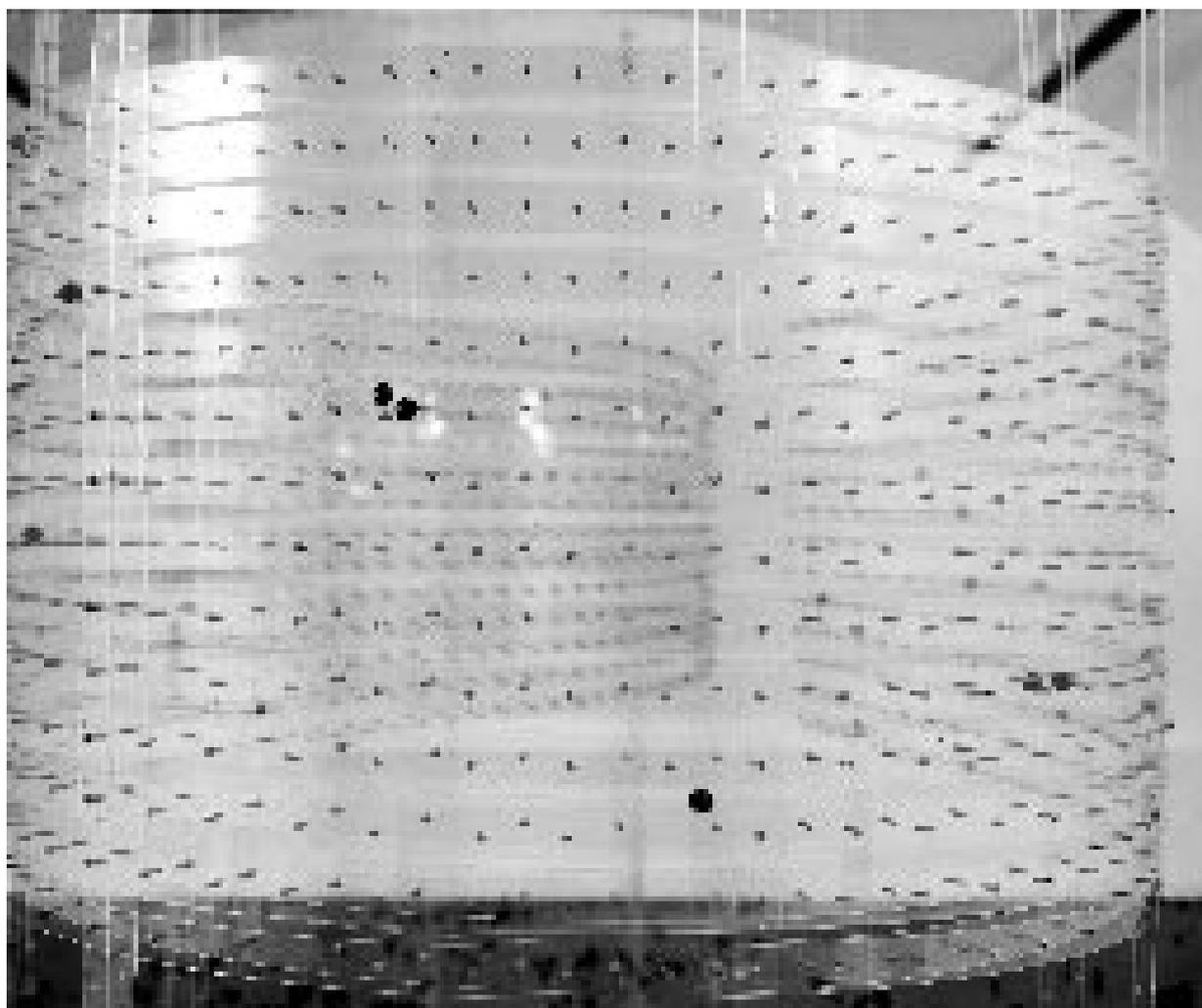
Searching for the possibility of transcendence, of a relation with the Other in which the subject is neither returned to itself nor annihilated, *the erotic relation is posited as primordial because the erotic relation is hetero-sexual*. The Levinasian subject, coded as masculine (or male; the Anglo-American sex/gender distinction is blurred in French), finds himself in the erotic relation face to face with alterity itself, the feminine. Any thinking of absolute alterity – of ‘difference’, one might be tempted to say – therefore owes its possibility to the recognition of an originary sexual difference.

According to another history of Western philosophy, this may be interpreted as a very radical move indeed; it is, most famously, Luce Irigaray who has pointed this out.<sup>15</sup> Very briefly, it is argued that it is precisely the alterity, or alternatively the specificity, of the feminine that has suffered most from a reduction to the economy of the same. The grammatical subsumption of the feminine gender into the allegedly universal generic masculine would be only one very obvious example in

a tradition full of very obvious examples. The apparent opposition of two equal terms – the masculine and the feminine – is revealed instead as the domination of a standard over one of its inferior (Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas), castrated (Freud) specifications. As the not-masculine, the copy of the original masculine, the pathologized masculine, the feminine, it is claimed, is not thought *qua* feminine at all. In this context, Levinas’s attempt to think the feminine, revealed in Eros, as alterity itself seems to be a wholly new and welcome departure.

### The ambiguity of love

Levinas’s phenomenology of Eros is, however, most fully elaborated in *Totality and Infinity* (1961), and this text begins to tell a different story. In accordance with his method of declarative renaming (speculative assertion or provocation as the beginning of philosophical discussion), the face-to-face relation – ‘ethics’ – is now referred to as ‘metaphysical desire’, ‘discourse’ (‘language’), or ‘religion’, and the way is opened for a more complex and ambivalent account of love which becomes progressively less positive. For Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* erotic love is profoundly and



Leila Galloway, Limbo, 1997

essentially *ambiguous*.<sup>16</sup> The French noun ‘*ambigu(ë)*’ has two main senses, the second of which is less evident in the English usage of ‘ambiguous’, but is probably the most important here. In both languages it refers chiefly to linguistic expression and means the possibility of having more than one interpretation, or uncertainty in interpretation. In French the word also means that in which two opposing qualities are united, or that which participates of two different natures. For Levinas, the ambiguity of love lies not in the possibility of more than one interpretation, but in the necessity of simultaneous and contradictory ones which are not, however, synthesized or united. ‘The metaphysical event of transcendence’, he says, ‘is not accomplished as love. But the transcendence of discourse is bound to love. We shall show how in love transcendence goes both further and less far than language.’ True, love is directed towards the Other, but there is also the inevitability that love ‘throws us back this side of immanence itself’; love is thus an event situated at the limit of transcendence and immanence.<sup>17</sup>

The aspect of immanence is attributed to the fact that in love, now characterized as voluptuousness (*la volupté*) and Eros, ‘Voluptuousness ... aims not at the Other but at his voluptuousness: it is voluptuousness of voluptuousness, love of the love of the other.... If to love is to love the love the Beloved [*l’Aimée*] bears me, to love is also to love oneself in love, and thus to return to oneself.’<sup>18</sup> In love both desire and need, metaphysical desire and erotic desire, transcendence and concupiscence, coexist. Furthermore, the suggestion is not that now one, now the other, prevails but that both prevail and that this ambiguity and simultaneity is the very essence of love, ‘constitutes the originality of the erotic which, in this sense, is *the equivocal par excellence*’. The aspect of transcendence, on the other hand, is attributed to the fact that love is a relation which also goes beyond the Other to ‘the infinitely future, which is to be engendered’,<sup>19</sup> fulfilling itself in fecundity, the sense and implications of which remain to be explicated.

This story is also told in another way. The ambiguity of love is also the ambiguity of the love object, *l’aimé*, or rather ‘[e]piphanies of the Beloved, the feminine’: *l’Aimée*. Love, Levinas says, is directed at the Other ‘in his frailty.... To love is to fear for another, to come to the assistance of his frailty.... The epiphany of the Beloved [*l’Aimée*] is but one with her *regime* of tenderness. The way of the tender consists in an extreme fragility, a vulnerability.’ The Beloved manifests herself ‘at the limit of being and non-being, as a soft warmth where being dissipates

into radiance...’<sup>20</sup> But at the same time, *L’aimée*, or the feminine, is something gross, an ‘exorbitant ultra-materiality’, or non-signifying raw being.<sup>21</sup> She is at once too frail for this world and yet too much (a part) of it. She is a mystery, hidden, modesty itself, but also openly displayed in ‘the exhibitionist nudity of an exorbitant presence ... profaning and wholly profaned’,<sup>22</sup> immodesty and indecency *par excellence*. The erotic caress also reveals the ambiguity of love, or reveals *l’aimée* in her ambiguity. Never catching hold of anything, the caress has its correlate in the carnality of femininity:

The Beloved, at once graspable but intact in her nudity, beyond object and face and thus beyond the existent, abides in virginity. The feminine essentially violable and inviolable, the ‘Eternal Feminine’, is the virgin or an incessant recommencement of virginity, the very contact of voluptuousness, future in the present.... The virgin remains ungraspable, dying without murder.... The caress aims at neither a person nor a thing. It loses itself in a being that dissipates as though into an impersonal dream without will and even without resistance, a passivity, an already animal or infantile anonymity, already entirely at death.<sup>23</sup>

These descriptions appear in section IV of *Totality and Infinity*, ‘Beyond the Face’, and it is not always easy to grasp where the erotic relation is situated *vis-à-vis* ethics or religiosity. But beyond the face is effectively, in Eros, a movement beyond *l’aimée*, one in which the face of the beloved gets lost or shadows over: ‘In the feminine face the purity of expression is already troubled by the equivocation of the voluptuous. Expression is inverted into indecency, already close to the equivocal which says less than nothing, already laughter and raillery.’ Elsewhere, the feminine is described as effecting an ‘inversion of the face’, a ‘disfigurement’.<sup>24</sup> Because the feminine does not signify as face, the relation of the lover towards her is then not, apparently, one towards an adult human being at all. This is made particularly clear in the following extraordinary passage:

The beloved is opposed to me not as a will struggling with my own or subject to my own, but on the contrary as an irresponsible animality which does not speak true words. The beloved, returned to the stage of infancy without responsibility – this coquettish head, this youth, this pure life ‘a bit silly’ – has quit her status as a person. The face fades, and in its impersonal and inexpressive neutrality is prolonged, in ambiguity, into animality. The relations with the Other are enacted in play; one plays with the Other as with a young animal.<sup>25</sup>

Now for some, it is clearly tempting to dismiss these particularly unpalatable passages as philosophically unimportant, an embarrassing intrusion, say, of Levinas's sexual fantasies into an otherwise respectable philosophical text. Yet this is precisely a *phenomenology of Eros*, a philosophical elaboration of what Levinas takes to be the everyday experience of a heterosexual erotic encounter. The phenomenology of Eros is nothing without its details, and the role and character of 'the feminine' are surely amongst the most important of these. Furthermore, the role of Eros, the character of the feminine and the theme of sexual difference more generally are not secondary aspects in Levinas's philosophical schema. The erotic relation was first introduced as the originary relation with the Other in which the subject remains intact whilst also being afforded an experience of transcendence. As such, the erotic relation is the answer to the leading question not only of *Existence and Existents* and *Time and the Other*, but of *Totality and Infinity* too. Sexual difference is also explicitly signalled as the originary difference that 'conditions the very possibility of reality as multiple';<sup>26</sup> in so far as Levinas's project is pitted against a supposedly Parmenidean ontology of totality, sexual difference is the difference that makes ethical resistance possible. Even if in *Totality and Infinity* the interruption of the totality or 'oneness' of Being is ultimately tied to the analyses of fecundity and paternity – elaborated according to a masculine metaphoric – these latter are crucially dependent on the phenomenology of Eros and the role of the feminine that appear in close textual and conceptual proximity.

The phenomenology of Eros and the role and character of the feminine are, then, amongst the most philosophically important aspects of Levinas's work up to and including *Totality and Infinity*. Accordingly, it ought not to be ignored that here Levinas endorses some very reactionary themes indeed, in particular the familiar characterization of woman as virgin/woman as sexual object or whore; in Levinas's words, woman as inviolate, woman as violated.<sup>27</sup> In a sense, as a purely descriptive psychology or sociology there may be some truth in this dichotomy; it is, after all, consonant with the representation of women behind the two 'currents' (affectionate and sensual) described in Freud's 1912 essay 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love'.<sup>28</sup> Still, the question of the consequences of this wholly uncritical reproduction of certain ideological assumptions needs to be investigated.

## De Beauvoir and the masculine standpoint

Possibly the first and certainly the most famous feminist criticism of Levinas appears as a footnote to the Introduction of Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 text *The Second Sex*.<sup>29</sup> Early on, the frank assertion that 'He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the other'<sup>30</sup> is justified and illustrated with reference to Levinas, quoting those passages from *Time and the Other* in which the prototypical alterity of the feminine is affirmed.<sup>31</sup> Now at first sight this would seem to be a criticism easily dismissed by pointing out that de Beauvoir has made a gross error of interpretation in failing to see that what Levinas means by the term 'Other' is not at all what de Beauvoir or Sartre mean by it. But the resonances of her quarrel do not end here, and these seemingly naive complaints in fact touch at the very heart of the most convincing and devastating feminist critique that it is possible to make of Levinas. De Beauvoir's criticism is in fact twofold. First, she takes issue with Levinas for writing from an explicitly masculine standpoint, 'deliberately taking a man's point of view', such that his description, which is intended to be objective, is in fact an assertion of masculine privilege. Second, and which she also takes to be 'an assertion of masculine privilege', she thinks that the role into which he has cast 'the feminine' denies 'woman' a full subjectivity. A slightly later passage from *Time and the Other*, also quoted in *The Second Sex*, is de Beauvoir's evidence for this second argument: 'The existent is accomplished in the "subjective" and in "consciousness"; alterity is accomplished in the feminine. This term is on the same level as, but in meaning opposed to, consciousness.'<sup>32</sup>

What de Beauvoir means by Levinas's 'masculine standpoint' is perhaps not immediately clear. For some critics – and this would include Levinas's advocates on this point – de Beauvoir was mistaken in assuming that Levinas could have done anything other than 'speak from a masculine standpoint', or 'take a man's point of view'. For has not the phantasmic ideal of a pure stance of objectivity, uncontaminated by history, personality or prejudice, itself been revealed as perhaps the greatest of the prejudices of the philosophers? Yet while history, context and tradition, to name but a few, are readily avowed as essential to any understanding of any given philosophy, it is not therefore the case that philosophical discourse today is willing and eager to consider the gender of a text's author as a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for understanding – that is, when that author is not a

woman. That much philosophy has been written from 'a masculine standpoint' has been covered over by the tendency of the masculine to represent the absolute human type from which the feminine is thought to be a deviation or upon which she is parasitic. Of course, de Beauvoir herself was not slow in recognizing this:

A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man. The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral ... it is understood that the fact of being a man is no peculiarity.<sup>33</sup>

Masculinity is allowed to remain largely unmarked precisely because 'he' represents an alleged neutrality or universality. A woman philosopher, on the other hand, is a different thing (as is a feminist one). Thus François Mauriac, on reading *The Second Sex*, was apparently able to remark to an author from *Les Temps Modernes*, 'I have learned all about your boss's vagina',<sup>34</sup> while Sartre's misogyny and/or gynophobia in *Being and Nothingness* presumably did not warrant remark. Sartre's 'masculine point of view' is rarely mentioned (not even by de Beauvoir) as it is presumed to be everyone's point of view, whereas de Beauvoir's 'feminine point of view' is evidence enough of the partiality (non-universality) of her text.

These comments, then, point to a double fault: both the failure to remark on the specificity of the masculine, and the failure (shared by de Beauvoir) to see specificity as anything other than a regrettable failure of objectivity. De Beauvoir performs a necessary service when she points out the masculine specificity of Levinas's text (would that she had also turned her critical eye on Sartre), but for some she is not on strong ground in supposing that it could have been otherwise. Indeed, *contra* de Beauvoir, it has been argued that the obviousness of this specificity in Levinas's work (and not just in *Time and the Other*) marks him out as an honourable exception in a dishonourable and dishonest tradition. Jacques Derrida, for example, in his

first and most famous essay on Levinas ('Violence and Metaphysics', 1964), asks the reader to note, 'in passing', that

*Totality and Infinity* pushes the respect for dissymmetry so far that it seems to us impossible, essentially impossible, that it could have been written by a woman. Its philosophical subject is man (vir)... Is not this principled impossibility for a book to have been written by a woman unique in the history of metaphysical writing?<sup>35</sup>

This and other questions, held in abeyance in 'Violence and Metaphysics', were to be taken up again by Derrida in his second essay on Levinas, 'At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am' (1980).<sup>36</sup> For if this later piece is much more critical of Levinas *vis-à-vis* 'the feminine', the comments in the last footnote of 'Violence and Metaphysics' could be read as praise. If it was possible that any other book in the history of metaphysical writing could have been written by a woman, that would be because those books appear to be written from the objective, that is 'neutral', standpoint that de Beauvoir apparently demands. But this would be deceptive; the appearance of neutrality would in fact be the elision of the 'masculine standpoint' and



Leila Galloway, Under the belly and between the dots, 1997

the assumption of a false sexual neutrality. Because of the treatment of the feminine as a mystery to him, Levinas, however, leaves us in no doubt that these books were written by a man, from a masculine standpoint, which is altogether more honest.

On the other hand, perhaps that is not what Derrida meant at all. It is hard to attribute such an unpersuasive argument to the author of the sophisticated and critical 'At This Very Moment'. It would have taken a profoundly inattentive reader not to have noticed, until 1964, any other single text in the history of metaphysical writing that bore the stamp of its masculine provenance. To persist with a 'positive' reading of Derrida's last footnote, the best that one could say is that Levinas is not concerned to dissimulate the position from which he writes, to hide the fact that he is writing from 'a masculine standpoint'. But this would be an unreservedly positive move in only two scenarios: either if 'a masculine standpoint' was in itself a good thing, or if it was as well that the reader be warned about this 'masculine standpoint' because there was something further to say about it.

On balance, then, if it is impossible that either *Time and the Other* or *Totality and Infinity* could have been written by a woman, this is a matter deserving fuller investigation rather than congratulation. The obviousness of Levinas's masculine specificity in his philosophical writing would then indeed make him something of an exception (though by no means as unique as Derrida suggests), but not necessarily an honourable one. Accordingly, de Beauvoir's first criticism of Levinas still remains to be explored. Granted that he could not have written as if in a social-sexual vacuum, granted that he does write (amongst other things) as a man (this man), what is it that he says 'as a man'? Are there different ways to write 'as a man'? And what is the significance of his 'writing as a man' to his philosophy quite generally?

### **Sex/sexual difference: a simple reversal of terms?**

One structural or formalistic response to these questions would be to ask whether Levinas's 'masculine standpoint' and textual heterosexuality are essential or simply expedient. Suggestions that a simple reversal of terms would suffice to make this philosophy universally applicable, rather than descriptive of only a masculine, heterosexual subjectivity,<sup>37</sup> take inspiration from the horse's mouth. In the Preface added to the 1979 edition of *Time and the Other*, Levinas reflects on his own work and emphasizes the importance

given to the notion of the feminine in this early text. In a passage perhaps containing a veiled nod in the direction of his feminist critics (perhaps even a nod to Simone de Beauvoir?), Levinas says of *Time and the Other*:

The notion of a transcendent alterity – one which would open time – is first of all sought starting with an *alterity-content*, starting with femininity. Femininity – *and one would have to see in what sense this can be said of masculinity or of virility; that is, of the differences between the sexes in general* – appeared to me as a difference contrasting strongly with other differences, not merely as a quality, different from all others, but as the very quality of difference.<sup>38</sup>

Here Levinas himself suggests that the possibility of a reversal of terms would universalize his phenomenology of Eros. But even overlooking the surely not minor detail that this would be to ascribe to the relation with the Other a symmetry and a reciprocity that Levinas again and again denied, the strategy of reversal simply will not work. In the first place it will not work because of the very specific role and character of 'the feminine' within the bounds of Levinas's philosophy. The textual proximity of the notions of 'Eros', 'sexual difference' and the 'feminine' itself suggests that they are intimately, even essentially, connected, particularly in *Totality and Infinity* where the discussion of the ambiguity of love slides ineluctably into a discussion of the feminine as the epiphany of the equivocal. Similarly, the discussion of Eros in *Time and the Other* glides from alterity to the feminine to sexual difference and back to the feminine with no change of register. The whole account of the phenomenology of Eros in *Totality and Infinity* depends on the description of the ambiguity of love, and this ambiguity is crucially manifested in the ambiguity/equivocality of the feminine said to be the epiphany of the beloved. The particular details of the account of the feminine cannot be excised, whether through embarrassment or dishonesty, as they are indispensable to the argument. Unless everything pertaining to the description of the feminine ('essentially violable and inviolable') could be transferred to a description of the masculine from a (heterosexual) 'feminine point of view', there would be no account of Eros left. But the feminine is not a separable element that can be taken out and replaced by something else. What is ascribed to the feminine, both its role and its attributes, is ascribed precisely *to the feminine*, and it would clearly be artificial and awkward to replace all references to the feminine with, say, the masculine ('The masculine essentially violable

and inviolable, the “Eternal Masculine” is the virgin or an incessant recommencement of virginity...’). Alterity is attached to the feminine as an essential attribute, and as such (in her alterity) she is given an ontological status. In ‘Judaism and the Feminine Element’ (1960) a similarly uncompromising language is used: ‘Woman is *complete* immodesty, down to the nakedness of her little finger. She is the one who, *par excellence*, displays herself, the *essentially* turbulent, the *essentially* impure. Satan, says an extremist text, was created with her.’<sup>39</sup>

The effect of this and other texts is also the figuring of the feminine or of woman as sexual difference.<sup>40</sup> But like the various other characteristics assigned to the feminine, ‘essentially violable and inviolable’, this is not Levinas’s innovation. The notion of ‘the feminine’ with its attendant qualities is already available for Levinas and his phenomenology of Eros. The association of the feminine with sexual difference is one already in circulation, and one which makes the argument of *Time and the Other* possible. This coils back to a point that has been made before. If ‘the feminine’ is here marked as sexual difference, ‘the masculine’ must be sexually unmarked – that is, neuter; ‘man’ can lay claim to the universal representation of the human, while ‘woman’ is marked as a particularity. Thus it is not only ‘the feminine’ which carries with it the weight of accumulated associations, but ‘the masculine’ as well, and when it is said that, bravo, Levinas ‘writes like a man’, this does not necessarily mean, as Derrida suggests it could, that ‘[h]is signature thus assumes the sexual mark, a remarkable phenomenon in the history of philosophical writing, if the latter has always been interested in occupying that position without re-marking upon it or assuming it on, without signing its mark.’<sup>41</sup> In writing like a man in *Time and the Other* Levinas takes his cue from the history of philosophical writing and, in sliding together the feminine and sexual difference, in fact assumes the position of the unmarked, allegedly neuter ‘man’, in which there is no peculiarity. Man or the masculine, which bears the burden of the association with the universal, could never play the role of the sexual Other in a Levinasian account of Eros precisely because for Levinas man or the masculine is sexually unmarked.

The second part of de Beauvoir’s complaint, that Levinas denies ‘woman’ a position of subjectivity, is also pertinent to his phenomenological description of the self and its being in the world *before* the irruption of the Other in the ethical relation. In the discussion of the dwelling in Section II of *Totality and*

*Infinity* Levinas describes a self happy to exist in a dependent relation with the world because of its own needs, but also compelled to provide for an uncertain future through its labour, through the gathering of possessions. At the same time, this engages the self in relations with the world that afford it the opportunity to rise from the condition of the beasts.<sup>42</sup> In order to labour, however, the self ‘must be able to recollect itself [*se recueillir*] and have representations’ and ‘recollection and representation are produced concretely as *habitation in a dwelling* [*une demeure*] or a Home’,<sup>43</sup> which is a dwelling or a home precisely because it is the site of the welcome of the Other. In allowing for what Levinas calls the ‘separation’ of the self,<sup>44</sup> the dwelling and the welcome of the Other are what make the constitution of the self as a self-reflecting human being possible.

Now this appears to be something of a contradiction, because elsewhere in *Totality and Infinity* the presence of the Other is, on the contrary, that which *disrupts* the self-reflecting self with the demand constitutive of the ethical relation. The apparent contradiction is resolved, however, with the description of a welcoming Other whose presence is qualified with a certain absence, whose face is discreetly hidden:

And the other whose presence is discreetly an absence is the Woman. The woman is the condition for recollection, the interiority of the Home, and inhabitation. The Other who welcomes in intimacy is not the you [*vous*] of the face that reveals itself in a dimension of height, but precisely the *thou* [*tu*] of familiarity: a language without teaching, a silent language, an understanding without words.... [T]he discretion of this presence includes all the possibilities of the transcendent relationship with the Other. It is comprehensible and exercises its function of interiorization only on the ground of a full human personality, which, however, in the woman, can be reserved so as to open up the dimension of interiority.<sup>45</sup>

The woman (*la Femme*, also therefore the wife) is thus peculiarly able to forgo her full human subjectivity in order to function as the condition for man, presumably, to accede to his – and de Beauvoir’s twofold critique rings in the ears.

In an attempted defence of Levinas on this point, some commentators have focused on the first half of his assertion that the feminine ‘is comprehensible and exercises its function of interiorization *only on the ground of a full human personality*, which, however, in the woman, can be reserved so as to open the dimension of interiority.’<sup>46</sup> Edith Wyschogrod, for example, tries to insist on a reading in which the feminine would



appear as both feminine and human being, but in fact points to what makes this reading fail:

Levinas's intention, in my view, is not to divide humanity so that one sex retains human status while the other fades into the infra-human which is neither expression nor reason. His effort is directed not to reducing the human status of woman, but to separating the feminine element from the pure humanity of women in order to bring to light the meaning of the erotic. Woman can be 'interlocutor' and teacher; but in her feminine role she is disingenuous, elusive, seductive and dangerous. The failure is not hers but belongs to the infra-ethical status of the erotic itself.<sup>47</sup>

In fact, I agree with Wyschogrod in so far as it would be ludicrous to ascribe to Levinas, the man, the view that he does not believe women to have human status. Neither is this what de Beauvoir meant to imply in *The Second Sex*, where she makes a point of saying, 'I suppose that Levinas does not forget that woman, too, is aware of her own consciousness or ego.'<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, and perhaps despite himself, the implication of Levinas's philosophical writings is indeed that the feminine is opposed to the human in a way that the masculine is not.<sup>49</sup> 'The human' in Levinas is ostensibly sexually neuter, and is separated out from the being of the human in his or her sexuete incarnation or from the human being under the mark of sexual difference. However, it is the case that it is only the feminine being which appears in her sexuete incarnation or under the mark of sexual difference.

As a consequence 'the human' and the masculine are conjoined in such a way that the former actually loses all claim to neutrality; it is the mask of the masculine. I think Wyschogrod's remarks actually underscore rather than refute this.<sup>50</sup> The attempted defence of Levinas on this point, the idea that the feminine only performs her function on the basis of a full human personality (a face, in Levinas's sense), is repeatedly gainsaid in the Levinasian texts themselves. In her capacity as feminine, signifier of sexual difference, woman is opposed, in some sense, to the human, in a way that man, *qua* masculine, is not. Once again, the impossibility of any reversal of terms is tied to details of the text itself, and while this *may* be an effect – contingent and historical – of his 'speaking as a man', it is by no means a necessary consequence of it.

### Engendering fecundity

Despite the shift to a masculine metaphoric, these conclusions are affirmed in the themes of fecundity and paternity. In *Time and the Other* it becomes clear that the true solution to the problem of transcendence does not lie with the feminine at all: 'I am going to return to the consideration that led me from death to the alterity of the feminine.... How, in the alterity of a you, can I remain I, without being absorbed or losing myself in that you? ... This can only happen in one way: through paternity.'<sup>51</sup> This is confirmed in *Totality and Infinity*. Transcendence is not achieved

in the ambiguous erotic relation with the feminine because of its compromising aspect of immanence, but Eros functions as *the way to fecundity* in which transcendence is achieved.

The idea of transcendence is connected to the need to abandon a certain thinking of Being which Levinas calls 'Parmenidean'.<sup>52</sup> According to the logic of this thinking, Levinas says, 'we always imagine existing in an existent, one existent. Being *qua* being is for us monadic. Pluralism appears in Western philosophy only as a plurality of subjects that exist. Never has it appeared in the existing of these existents.... Unity alone is ontologically privileged.'<sup>53</sup> In other words, unity and multiplicity are always thought as logically incompatible, hence the opposition dramatized in antiquity as the feud between the schools of Parmenides and Heraclitus. The radicality of fecundity, or the relation of paternity – for Levinas quite explicitly the engendering of a son<sup>54</sup> – lies not in an overcoming of this opposition, nor in a simple refusal of it. Rather, paternity introduces a plurality into being that cuts across this opposition: fecundity 'evinces a unity that is not opposed to multiplicity, but, in the precise sense of the term engenders it'.<sup>55</sup> The son is other than the father and yet he *is* the father, or is of the father. In the son the father both remains himself and becomes other than himself: 'I do not *have* my child, I *am* in some way my child.'<sup>56</sup>

In the text of *Totality and Infinity* it is not always easy to distinguish between fecundity and Eros. The trajectory of the analyses makes it clear, however, that Eros without issue is fatally infected with the threat of immanence which is only overcome in a fecund resolution,<sup>57</sup> when the father has a son. This limitation is one side – the negative side – of the ambiguity of love. The positive aspect of Eros, its relation to transcendence, is precisely its relation to fecundity. Even in *Existence and Existents* and *Time and the Other*, where the possibility of transcendence in the erotic relation is spoken of most warmly, as it were, Levinas always has an eye on the future of Eros in fecundity. As one consequence of this, Levinas's Eros is a rather tame animal. Eros as pure gratuitous expenditure, exhaustion, that which does not produce (engender) but rather uses up, is never really considered. Even that which is most carnal in erotic nudity – voluptuousness, the caress – always transcends the flesh and ends not in physical gratification but in a future possibility for ethics. This is a curiously 'moral' and law-abiding Eros, which would in part explain its trenchant heterosexuality. Tina Chanter rightly speaks

of the eclipse of Eros in Levinas's last major work (*Otherwise Than Being*, 1974),<sup>58</sup> but in a sense Eros – mucky, perverse, unruly, amoral Eros as an end in itself – was already banished from *Time and the Other* to make way for the teleology of reproduction inherent in its better-behaved cousin.<sup>59</sup>

In later years, love (*amour*) is dissociated from Eros, and remarks on the latter become more and more negative. Eros comes to mean sexual or romantic love, while the word 'love' itself begins to take on a whole new role. 'Love' becomes a new way of describing the ethical relation, or religion, to which 'Eros' is progressively contrasted, almost to the point of opposition.<sup>60</sup> Even if this linguistic distinction is not made in the earlier texts – and it is certainly not consistent even in the very latest<sup>61</sup> – the effect that it later describes is already visible. In 1953, for example, in an essay entitled 'Freedom and Command',<sup>62</sup> two crucial aspects of 'love' are emphasized: first that the duality of the lover and the beloved is a closed couple, admitting no third party; and second that love obeys its own laws, not those universal or logical laws that for Levinas make up the realm of political sociality. This is echoed in 'The Ego and the Totality',<sup>63</sup> published in 1954, where it is said that in love all my relation is exhausted in the beloved; nothing is 'left over' for anyone else.

The worst that can be said of the lovers of these early texts, however, is that they are asocial or amoral, creatures lost in voluptuousness and carnality – lost in themselves – precisely because they are lost in love. By 1974, on the other hand, there is a suggestion of Eros as almost evil. Ethics, now more commonly called 'responsibility', is explicitly aligned with 'non-erotic proximity': 'It is outside of concupiscence, which for its part does not cease to seduce by the appearance of the Good. In a Luciferian way it takes on this appearance and thus claims to belong to the Good, gives itself out to be its equal, but in this very pretention which is an admission it remains subordinated.'<sup>64</sup> No doubt the reference to Lucifer is hyperbolic, but one takes the point whilst being reminded of another such comment, on woman, in 'Judaism and the Feminine Element': 'Satan, says an extremist text, was created with her.'<sup>65</sup> Despite these diabolic references, however, Levinas's main point is, once again, not that Eros is *bad* in itself, but that it is, contrary to 'the simplicity of contemporary pan-eroticism',<sup>66</sup> not primary. Such remarks are consistent with the trajectory of Levinas's entire oeuvre, in which Eros, associated with the

feminine, is subordinated to the various terms, either overtly masculine or masculine by association, which characterize ethics, the most-high, the humanity of the human.

It is possible to build a structural picture of the place and the role of the feminine and Eros in Levinas's work because, despite changes of emphasis and vocabulary, the configuration of these themes is remarkably consistent over many years of writing. In Levinas's later work, the subordination of Eros or sexual difference (marked as feminine) to the human or ethical relation becomes plain, but from the very first introduction of these themes in *Existence and Existents* there is a progressive subordination of Eros to fecundity in which the former, tainted with immanence, functions only as a conduit to the transcendence of the latter. As Eros is associated with the feminine it is no surprise to find that fecundity is elaborated in explicitly masculine terms. Furthermore, as the feminine bears the ideological mark of sexual difference, it is no surprise to find the masculine account of fecundity associated with the supposedly sexually neutral ethical space of fraternity, and social space of the nation.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps the only thing that is surprising is the failure of most commentators to acknowledge this. Perhaps, on the other hand, that is the least surprising thing, for what would it mean to acknowledge this? If the supposedly gender-neutral relation of ethics as described by Levinas is, in some sense, masculine, and has only been possible, *structurally*, because of a philosophical subordination of the feminine; if these words – 'masculine' and 'feminine' – are not discrete and interchangeable linguistic elements but ideological signs with a history and which exert an influence; if these things are true, what must one say about Levinas's philosophy? If it is significant that Levinas 'writes as a man', this fact can now appear divested of any essentialism; that is, can now appear as an ideological question connected very intimately with Levinas's philosophical project, rather than with his sex. What is important is not *that* it is written 'as a man', but *what it is* that this man writes, although defenders of Levinas have tended to wash over the latter by diverting attention to the obvious textual fact of the former.<sup>68</sup> Regrettably, and of more general significance, the same must also be said of those 'Levinasian' feminisms which laud the position of alterity that Levinas affords 'the feminine' in relation to his own position. English-speaking readers need to understand that the metaphysics of the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' – the assumption of the fixity of sexual difference and its determining role – is perhaps a move more easily made in French where *le féminin*, for

example, is both feminine and female. Nevertheless, such a metaphysics ought not to go unchallenged or uninvestigated, and its role in Levinas's phenomenology of Eros might serve as a salutary warning.

## Notes

1. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority [TI]*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1992; *Totalité et infini: essai sur l'extériorité [TeI]*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971.
2. 'Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity', trans. Alphonso Lingis, in E. Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, Nijhoff, Dordrecht, 1987, p. 47; 'La philosophie et l'idée de l'infini', in *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, Vrin, Paris, 1994, p. 165.
3. *Existence and Existents [EE]*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1988; *De l'existence à l'existant [DEE]*, Vrin, Paris, 1993.
4. *EE*, p. 43; *DEE*, p. 66.
5. *EE*, p. 95; *DEE*, p. 163.
6. *EE*, p. 96; *DEE*, p. 164.
7. *EE*, p. 85; *DEE*, p. 145.
8. *Time and the Other [TO]*, trans. Richard A. Cohen, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1987; *Le temps et l'autre [TA]*, Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1994.
9. *TO*, p. 54; *TA*, p. 34, my emphasis.
10. *TO*, p. 55; *TA*, p. 35.
11. See, for example, *TI*, p. 111; *TeI*, p. 113.
12. *TO*, p. 78; *TA*, p. 67. *TO*, p. 79; *TA*, p. 69.
13. *TO*, pp. 85–6, 87–8; *TA*, pp. 77, 80.
14. *TO*, p. 85; *TA*, pp. 77–8. See also *EE*, pp. 85, 96; *DEE*, pp. 145, 164.
15. Luce Irigaray, 'The Fecundity of the Caress', trans. Carolyn Burke, in Richard A. Cohen, ed., *Face To Face with Levinas*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1986; 'La fécondité de la caresse', in *Éthique de la différence sexuelle*, Minuit, Paris, 1984. See also 'Questions to Emmanuel Levinas', trans. Margaret Whitford, in R. Bernasconi and S. Critchley, eds, *Re-Reading Levinas*, Athlone, London, 1991.
16. Subsection A, section IV is called 'The Ambiguity of Love', *TI*, pp. 254 ff.; *TeI*, pp. 284 ff.
17. *TI*, p. 254; *TeI*, pp. 284, 285.
18. *TI*, p. 266; *TeI*, p. 298.
19. *TI*, p. 255; *TeI*, p. 286. *TI*, p. 266; *TeI*, p. 298.
20. *TI*, p. 256; *TeI*, p. 286. Lingis's translation of this passage begins with masculine pronouns, which is a perfectly proper rendering of the French (for example, '*L'amour vise Autrui* [masculine pronoun]; *il le vise dans sa faiblesse.*' 'Love aims at the Other; it aims at him in his frailty.') It is after the introduction of 'the feminine' and of the feminine form of the Beloved [*l'Aimée*] that the equally correct feminine pronoun is used.
21. *TI*, p. 258; *TeI*, p. 289.
22. *TI*, p. 256; *TeI*, pp. 286–7.
23. *TI*, pp. 258–9; *TeI*, p. 289.
24. *TI*, p. 260; *TeI*, p. 291. *TI*, p. 262; *TeI*, p. 294.
25. *TI*, p. 263; *TeI*, p. 295.
26. *TO*, p. 85; *TA*, pp. 77–8.
27. In *Totality and Infinity* 'the feminine' and 'Woman' [*la Femme*] are often used interchangeably; for example, *TI*, pp. 154–6, *TeI*, pp. 164–7.
28. S. Freud, 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love' (1912), in *On Sexuality*, trans. J. Strachey et al., Pelican Freud Library, vol. 7, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977, pp. 247 ff.

29. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley, London, Picador, 1988; *Le deuxième sexe*, Gallimard, Paris, 1949.
30. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 15; *Le deuxième sexe*, p. 16.
31. *TO*, p. 85; *TA*, p. 77.
32. *TO*, p. 88; *TA*, p. 81.
33. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 14; *Le deuxième sexe*, p. 15.
34. Quoted in Michèle le Doeuff, *Hipparchia's Choice*, trans. Trista Selous, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, p. 98.
35. 'Violence and Metaphysics', trans. Alan Bass, in J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 315; 'Violence et métaphysique', *L'écriture et la différence*, Éditions de Seuil, Paris, 1967, p. 228.
36. 'At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am', trans. Ruben Berezdivin, in Bernasconi and Critchey, eds, *Re-Reading Levinas*; 'En ce moment même dans cet ouvrage me voici', in François Laruelle, ed., *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas*, Éditions Jean-Michel Place, Paris, 1980. With regard to the relationship between 'Violence and Metaphysics' and 'At This Very Moment', see Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, pp. 132–3.
37. See, for example, Tina Chanter, 'Feminism and the Other', in R. Bernasconi and D. Wood, eds, *The Provocation of Levinas*, Routledge, London, 1988, p. 46; and R.J.S. Manning, 'Thinking the Other without Violence? An Analysis of the Relation between the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas and Feminism', *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. V, no. 2, 1991, who cites Chanter's essay on this point.
38. *TO*, p. 36; *TA*, p. 14, my emphasis.
39. 'Judaism and the Feminine Element', trans. Edith Wyschogrod, *Judaism*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1969, p. 37, my emphasis; 'Le judaïsme et le féminin', *Difficile liberté*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1976, p. 61.
40. See especially 'And God Created Woman', trans. Annette Aronowicz, in *Nine Talmudic Readings*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1990; 'Et Dieu créa la femme', in *Du sacré au saint: cinq nouvelles lectures talmudiques*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1977.
41. Derrida, 'At This Very Moment', p. 40; 'En ce moment même', p. 52.
42. *TI*, p. 149; *TeI*, p. 159.
43. *TI*, p. 150; *TeI*, p. 161.
44. *TI*, p. 151; *TeI*, p. 161.
45. *TI*, p. 155; *TeI*, p. 166.
46. *TI*, p. 155; *TeI*, p. 166, my emphasis. Similar avowals are also to be found in section IV; for example, 'The non-signifyingness of erotic nudity does not precede the signifyingness of the face.... Only the being that has the frankness of the face can be 'discovered' in the non-signifyingness of the wanton' (*TI*, p. 261; *TeI*, p. 292); 'It is necessary that the face has been apperceived for nudity to be able to acquire the non-signifyingness of the lustful' (*TI*, p. 262; *TeI*, p. 294).
47. *Emmanuel Levinas: The Problem of Ethical Metaphysics*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1974, p. 120. See also Alphonso Lingis, 'Emmanuel Levinas and the Intentional Analysis of the Libido', *Philosophy in Context*, vol. 8, 1978; and Chanter, 'Feminism and the Other', p. 46.
48. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 16; *Le deuxième sexe*, p. 15.
49. This is one of the conclusions in Catherine Chalièr's *Figures du féminin*, La nuit surveillée, Paris, 1982; for example, p. 93.
50. The same argument can be made with regard to two of Levinas's religious texts written around the time of *Totality and Infinity*. In 'Judaism and the Feminine Element' Levinas again ostensibly affirms the humanity of the feminine, this time speaking particularly of the Jewish tradition: 'In one sense, woman in Judaism will have the destiny of human being, in which her femininity will merely figure as an attribute.... The femininity of woman can neither deform nor absorb her human essence' (p. 34; 'Le judaïsme', pp. 56–7). However, Levinas's explanation of this is explicit in aligning 'human essence' with the masculine and the arrival on the scene of sexual difference (the creation of Eve) with the feminine. In 'And God Created Woman' he makes a similar point: 'The meaning of the feminine will ... become clear against the background of a human essence, the *Isha* [woman] from the *Ish* [man]. The feminine does not derive from the masculine; rather, the division into feminine and masculine – the dichotomy – derives from what is human' (p. 170; 'Et Dieu', p. 137). This would only be right, however, if it were indeed the case that *Ish*, man, really did refer to the neutrality of the human, and was not compromised by the rather obvious fact that, being also the designation of the masculine man, it did not attest to a certain priority of the masculine.
51. *TO*, pp. 90–91; *TA*, p. 85. See also *EE*, p. 96; *DEE*, p. 165.
52. *TI*, p. 269; *TeI*, p. 301.
53. *TI*, p. 274, translation modified; *TeI*, pp. 306–7.
54. See, for example, *EE*, p. 96; *DEE*, p. 165; *TI*, p. 278; *TeI*, p. 310.
55. *TI*, p. 273; *TeI*, p. 306.
56. *TO*, p. 91; *TA*, pp. 85–6.
57. *TI*, p. 271; *TeI*, p. 304.
58. *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence [OB]*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1981; *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence [AE]*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1974. Tina Chanter, *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Rewriting of the Philosophers*, Routledge, London, 1995, pp. 198–9.
59. This is the essence of Irigaray's critique of Levinas in her 'The Fecundity of the Caress'.
60. See, for example, *OB*, pp. 89, 177; *AE*, pp. 143, 273; E. Levinas, 'God and Philosophy', trans. A. Lingis, in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, pp. 164–5; 'Dieu et la philosophie', *Le nouveau commerce*, Spring 1975, vol. 30–31, pp. 115–17; E. Levinas, with Guy Petitdémange and Jacques Rolland, *Autrement que savoir*, Éditions Osiris, Paris, 1988, p. 64.
61. See, for example, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, Grasset, Paris, 1993, p. 252, where concupiscence is spoken of as love.
62. 'Freedom and Command', trans. Alphonso Lingis, in *Collected Philosophical Papers*; 'Liberté et commandement', *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, July–September 1953.
63. E. Levinas, 'The Ego and the Totality', trans. Alphonso Lingis, *Collected Philosophical Papers*; 'Le moi et le totalité', in *Entre Nous: essais sur le penser-à-l'autre*, Grasset et Fasquelle, Paris, 1991.
64. *OB*, p. 123; *AE*, pp. 195–6.
65. 'Judaism and the Feminine Element', p. 37; 'Le Judaïsme', p. 61.
66. *TO*, p. 36; *TA*, p. 15.
67. See, for example, *TI*, pp. 214–15; *TeI*, pp. 235–6.
68. Even then, however, *contra* 'Violence and Metaphysics', there is no impossibility that women should write such things, as Derrida well knows, even trying to demonstrate the principle of its possibility in 'At This Very Moment', dividing the text between a masculine and a feminine 'voice'.