BEING OTHERWISE: GENERATING LEVINAS'S ETHICAL SUBJECT

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Abstract

Emmanuel Levinas shifts the grounds of metaphysics radically. Instead of placing being and the question of being at the base of all understanding *qua* existence, Levinas places ethics, goodness and responsibility prior to all. Levinas places the source of the meaning of ethical responsibility in the pre-ontological structure of human subjectivity. In educational theory, according to Guoping Zhao and Claire Katz, Levinas's ideas have been incompletely interpreted. Both theorists suggest that Levinas's ideas provide renewed ground for subjectification as an end of education, something almost all 'Levinasian' educational theorists have overlooked in the past. This research project aims to investigate the problem of producing Emmanuel Levinas's primordial ethical subject. We introduce Levinas and the metaphysics of production, explicate Levinas's ideas and develop a practical way forward in the project of 'Levinasian' ethical subjectification. In short, we concern ourselves here with the generation a good person and the metaphysical-ethical puzzles which arise in such an endeavour within the continental European tradition of philosophy from the 20th century.

Abbreviations

TI	**Levinas, E. 1979.** ***Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority.*** **Springer Science & Business Media.**
EI	Levinas, E. 1985. *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*. Translated by Richard A Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
DF	Levinas, E. 1990. *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*. Translated by Seán Hand. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
"Hitlerism"	Levinas, E. 1934. "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism." Translated by Seán Hand. *Critical Inquiry* 17 (17): 63–71
EP	Levinas, E. 1989. "Ethics as First Philosophy." In *The Levinas Reader*, 75. Blackwell Pub. Ltd.
OB	Levinas, E. 1998. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, Pa: Duquesne.
GDT	Levinas, E. 2000 *God, Death, and Time*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Russon	Russon, John. 2003. Human Experience: Philosophy, Neurosis, and the Elements of Everyday Life. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Zhao	Zhao, Guoping. 2012. "Levinas and the Mission of Education." Educational Theory 62 (6): 659–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12003.
Katz	Katz, Claire Elise. 2013. Levinas and the Crisis of Humanism. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press. http://ezproxy.questu.ca:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=512516&site=eds-live.
Todd	Todd, Sharon. 2003. Learning from the Other: Levinas, Psychoanalysis, and Ethical Possibilities in Education. State University of New York Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/4717.
Biesta	Biesta, Gert. 2010. Education after the Death of the Subject: Levinas and the Pedagogy of Interruption. Sense Publishers. http://orbilu.uni.lu/handle/10993/7089.

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the generation of ethical people. Such a subject requires significant deliberation first on the topic of generation and second on the topic of ethics. Only after discussing these terms can we approach the question of how the ethical subject described by Emmanuel Levinas--the 20th-century French philosopher who laid the grounds for Foucault, Derrida and many others—ought to be generated. We will find that such a question does not follow the familiar contours of ethical investigation in education. There will be no principles to follow, no teachings to accept and 'apply.' Rather, Levinas's writings restructure how we think about existing, and the arguments to presented here only follow *as a result* of this shift in grounds. It is the chief aim of this work to lead the reader through a series of thoughts, summary and argumentation to develop a clear understanding of the demands and paradoxes of both "being" ethical and engendering the good subject. The conceptual difficulties and fogginess of our discourse result from Levinas placing the site of his phenomenological and metaphysical investigation at the very goodness of goodness itself. His radical thinking is cause for shock and confusion, and it has been taken up by a host of theorists from a variety of disciplines. We hope to show that his writing and ideas give us cause to rethink the way in which we approach the role of the teacher in the subjectification of children and adults. By subjectification, we mean the creation of an embodied human subject, not just the I of *cogito* but also all the complexities of a living human being. Humans do not grow in isolation *Tabula ras;* there are structures of thinking and being, relations, ontologies and epistemologies which embed themselves in the way that the individual human makes meaning[1].

To begin our paper, we will first approach the production of humans and education, with the hope that we may present a way of thinking about producing human subjects which are ethical in the way that Levinas describes. We will then attempt to execute an exegesis of Levinas's ideas through summary and engagement with theorists and thinkers who surround him. The aim of this section part is to conclude with an understanding of what Levinas's ethical subject is. Thirdly, I will present what it would mean to *generate* such a subject in theory by synthesizing and critiquing some contemporary discourse in education and Levinas scholarship. Finally, I will present conclusions as to how education might be pursued *in practice* to generate ethical subjectivity. The latter will involve a discussion and will illustrate the paradoxical nature of 'being' the ethical subject. Despite the complexity and ambiguity of the endeavour, there is a path forward and lessons to be learned by re-treading the grounds of 'Levinasian' education. Our conclusions invite teacher educators to produce engaged political subjects hyper-vigilant to injustice at the most fundamental level and whose minds are resistant to violent ways of being. In addition, curriculum designers will be challenged to employ tactics which introduce genuine difference and enrapturing learning experiences. Teachers will be asked to 'stay with the trouble' of their infinite responsibility. In the end, ethics in the highest sense does not exist in the mind of an autonomous rational agent willing a universal law and respecting human rights. It exists in

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[1] For an introduction to the theory of meaning-making presented here, see John Russon's collection with SUNY Press *Human Experience: Philosophy, Neurosis, and the Elements of Everyday Life* (2003)*, Bearing Witness to Epiphany: Persons, Things, and the Nature of Erotic Life* (2009) and *Adulthood* (forthcoming).

a peaceful relationship with the Other and an ongoing commitment to being otherwise, to open to the arrival of another which undercuts one's place in the sun.

Levinas states in the first line of the preface to the masterwork *Totality and Infinity*:

"Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality" (TI 21).

Whether through instruction, directed reading or service-learning moral education here takes its aim at producing moral agents. We ought to be concerned with whether we are tricked by the enframement of moral matters by 'the good' to enact violent relations. Historical examples abound. The SS thought that what they were doing was righteous when "exterminating" Jews and non-Aryans, European settlers who colonized Canada and other colonial nations believed it their right and duty to civilize and assimilate Indigenous peoples. Educators in all environments, from the home to the public school, have the opportunity and thus the responsibility to create a subject which does not commit or sit complicit to violence of all sorts. Moral education here conceived goes deeper than the modification of a student's knowledge, disposition or character such that they will not will the suffering of others. Moral education to someone who reads Levinas dives to the heart of the meaning of morality itself. Beginning the project of moral education at the foundation of subjectivity, where Levinas identifies the source of the meaning of ethics, should serve as a safeguard against being duped by morality. His own project, manifest in its earliest and most complete form in *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Levinas 1979), seeks to describe the source of the meaning of ethics by investigating the relationship between totality and infinity in subjectivity. To reduce, he finds this source in the breach of the totality of the I (the same) by the approach of the Other (infinity, the inability to reduce). In the language of Saussure, this breach is the very event of signification, the very signification of signification, a signification without a sign; it is:

"The possibility of a *signification without a context*…The experience of morality does not proceed from this vision—it *consummates* this vision; ethics is an optics. But it is a 'vision' without image, bereft of the synoptic and totalizing objectifying virtues of vision, a relation or an intentionality of a wholly different type— which this work seeks to describe." (TI, 23)

Ethics, as we will come to understand, finds its meaning buried in the structure of subjectivity itself. Before reason, language and conscious thought, which all exist in ontology, the face of the Other puts its foot in the proverbial door. This is all to say that, as we will see, one cannot escape ethical responsibility. If we ensure that a moral endeavour (say, the production of an ethical person) always sources its meaning from Levinas's actuality, we will not fall prey and be duped by morality.

If one has not gathered thus far, the task of generating people (read subjects) to whom the predicate "ethical" or "non-violent" would refer is a metaphysical one. The reader may expect an empirical investigation into the effectiveness of various classroom interventions on the rate of aggressive attitudes in pupils. You will not find such an investigation here. Although essential, it is our view that empirical investigations are First Aid to a wound which festers deep beneath the surface. Without excising the infection, the problem will remain. I find recourse in the thought of Emmanuel

Levinas and the educational theorists who have been working to apply his ideas in educational theory. We will introduce the thought of Emmanuel Levinas and develop his notion of ethical subjectivity. Before this can occur, we must address the problem of production.

Production

Our intention here is to show that one does not have to fear a project of subjectification. The word 'production' associated with a project of subjectification leaves a bad taste in any thinker's mouth. In a classic depiction of production, a smith hammers molten iron into tools. The smith possesses the form of the tool (let's say a horseshoe) in her mind (or active intellect in Aristotle) and works to actualize the form by producing a composite of matter and the idea. In this schema of production, the smith is exerting their will upon the independent object (iron) to turn it into something else. The lump of iron ceases to be, and a horseshoe is made. The iron was something before and was forced by the smith's hand and mind (operating through *tékʰnɛ*) to be something else. We are generally comfortable with willing the production of tools, but such a will does not extend to other human beings.

We are not comfortable with the use of other human beings as tools, nor are we supportive of efforts to make individuals things which they are not or have chosen not to be. Take, for example, forced subjugation and assimilation of a native group by an invading nation, the emotional manipulation of an overbearing partner, or slavery. Education as assimilation or indoctrination falls into the category just described. We abhor indoctrination and propaganda as it infringes on the 'innate' dignity of the autonomous self-determining human. We have come to reason to this conclusion from Kant's a priori rational principles (Kant 2002). It is not 'common sense' or a general philosopher who would abhor subjectification as production, but Levinasian theorists in education as well. Gert Biesta and Sharon Todd both find subjectification as a part of education suspect. The former connects the idea of creating a human of a particular type with enlightenment ideas about a disembodied rational agent, which is not commensurate with Levinas (G. Biesta 2010). The latter sees discussions which set ideals for the Other (as does a project of subjectification) as participating in a 'view from nowhere' approach to thinking which reduces the Other in a totalized system (Todd, 20 & 28). I join theorists Claire Katz and Guoping Zhao in rebutting Todd and Biesta's blanket rejection of subjectification (Katz 2013; Zhao 2012). Responding to their rejection of subjectification is the underlying motivation of this work.

We do not like production. We do not think it is ethical to exert one's will over another being, at least another human being. However, there are numerous types of generation and production related to *tékʰnɛ* (craft, technology, artistry) (Aristotle, 2014). Take, for instance, the cultivation of a flower. One weeds the garden provides nutrition, prop up an early stem and waters regularly. With time, the flower comes forth *itself* in a manner otherwise impossible. The pedals bloom and flourish. We look at the flower and sigh, '*ah, that is a flower in the highest sense!*'. Indeed, flowers may bloom without an exerted human hand, and so do 'good' people. My point here is that not all forms of active generation are negative and unjustifiable. This paper will make the case that the generation of Levinas's ethical subject is a matter of cultivation; a project of weeding and fertilizing to let what lies within

grow and deepen. Such a mode of production shares more of a likeness with ποίησις (to make, bring to being) and φύσις (to grow, nature, to be) than *tékʰnɛ* (Schadewaldt 2014).

To make clear what kind subjectification our approach is *not*, we will provide a historical example of an educational endeavour of subjectification with grounds which did not find itself in ethical subjectivity. In ancient Egyptian and Sumerian scribal training paradigms aimed to produce scribes who could make maximal use of primitive communication and accounting technologies essential to both ancient economies (Delnero 2010; Westenholz 1974; Williams 1972). Below is reproduced a four-thousand-year-old practice clay tablet from the ancient Babylonian city of Nippur, upon which students (aged 9-12) copied the cuneiform script, humankind's earliest recorded written language. Cuneiform served as the primary means of recording, accounting and communication for the merchant and noble classes of Mesopotamia (Robson 2001). Cuneiform is produced by etching into wet clay with a reed. The following text, copied by young students to learn syntax, illustrates the power relationship in the classroom as well as the means by which the students were taught. We historicize this mode of production-as-teaching to indicate how deeply rooted subjectification is—that is, not merely the production of an autonomous rational subject as Biesta implies—and to illustrate a connection between what subject is produced and how, and the economy of the society responsible for the production. The latter connection will become important when we discuss the practicalities of engaging in 'Levinasian' subjectification in the contemporary world.

> "The door monitor (said), 'Why did you go out without my say-so?' He beat me. / The jug monitor, 'Why did you take [water or beer] without my say-so?' He beat me. / The Sumerian monitor, 'You spoke in Akkadian!' He beat me. / My teacher, 'Your handwriting is not at all good!' He beat me" (George, 2005, 127).

Fig. 1 An example of a teaching tablet from Ancient Sumer (Mesopotamia), left-hand column is teacher's script, right-hand column (left image) and backside (right) is believed to be practice space for students. These tablets pictured are from the Nippur dig site in which another 900 were found (Robson 2001).

We see in the text that young Sumerians were likely subjected to beatings if they did not adhere to the idea of a good student and scribe. Students must learn to obey orders, speak in the proper language, and replicate a standard script. The social utility of the scribal equipment (clay and a reed) firmly prescribe accurate and disciplined hands and a subservient attitude towards authority. In other words, society needed good scribes, and the vision of schooling clear in the text above was meant to produce them. The enforcement of rote memorization and adherence to authority with the threat of violent punishment seems to like hammering a lump of metal to make horseshoes. Students were forced to study in these schools by their families with the promise that "…it will provide [them] with wealth and abundance" in the future (Hurowitz 2000, 56). If we may borrow from the critical theory of technology, it seems a sociotechnical network of forces in reciprocal construction[2] work together to set up schooling as a violent mode of production. In other words, the economic conditions of Sumer necessitated the production of humans with particular capabilities and dispositions and played a deterministic role in justifying a violent mode of subjectification; the needs of the market dictated the end and means of schooling. Because the source of normative force with respect to the ends of this particular schooling endeavour was found in the market, there was no possibility for ethics in its structure.

It is time to present Levinas's philosophy in full. To do so, however, will require some background coverage of metaphysics in general and the framing of 19th and 20th-century continental philosophy.

The Philosophy

Meta-physics, or, 'above-physics' is the philosophical study of the essence of being or Being *qua* Being; it is to question being with respect to being. Above the study of the "first principles" of material being, metaphysics is concerned with fundamental first principles. That is, precisely that which cannot be deduced, but rather those principles or understandings which govern the structure of how things may be deduced. Or rather, what deduction would mean in the highest sense and most true sense. 'Most true' means a being closer to its essence and not subject to the being of another being. Let us consider a Gibbon, the lesser ape which dwells in southeast Asia. There is a lot we can say about what a Gibbon is. Perhaps you would say it is white; it has eyes, legs, arms, and so on. A metaphysician would try to understand the structure of these propositions and would try to determine what it means to be, say, a Gibbon, *qua* being in general. A metaphysician is not concerned with what a Gibbon *really is*, but rather what it means to say that a thing is something in the first place, and if there is a structure to how things are what they are. Let us consider our Gibbon.

Looking at a Gibbon, one could say that it is white. This is not what it means to be a Gibbon in general. There are other colours which a Gibbon could be. Even the set of colours that a Gibbon could be does not seem to exhaust *Gibbonness* in the highest sense. There is a way of being a Gibbon, which makes it separable and unique in the field of beings amongst which it lives. Aristotle calls colour, in the *Metaphysics*, secondary being (Z 1028a 27-28). That is, accidental with respect to the essence of

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[2] See (Akrich 1992, pp.222) for an investigation and discussion of sociotechnical forces.

the primary being to which colour is a predicate. The truth of this metaphysical observation is evident in the description of 'the white Gibbon.' Whiteness is separable from the gibbon. The gibbon is not what it happens to look like in materiality, but rather is something else. It is that which in virtue of itself is what it is. A Gibbon is, in the highest sense for the Greeks, *Gibbonness*. In Metaphysics, we categorize being itself, for Aristotle, the primary and fundamental structure of being is form or essence which must be separable, a 'this' and not depend on other beings for its being (ibid).

Metaphysical knowledge forms the basis of all understanding, all values and epistemologies. Historically Aristotle's knowledge was transmuted and integrated into Christianity through the work of Saint Augustine. From religion to science to our very self-perception is governed by metaphysical knowledge which has embedded itself in our systems of thought and institutions. It is not a neutral idea unsusceptible to criticism that there is an external world outside my body made up of discrete objects which I can come to know through my senses. The ancients posited this "external world" conception which is now so foundational to how we in the west and elsewhere make sense. Contemporary continental philosopher John Russon calls this the 'familiar view.' Our familiar and "common sense" view has inherited its contours from the ancients.

As a method, classical metaphysics privileges being *qua* being over what it considers to be the realm of particulars. That is actual material matters and the things which concern individual human beings. Like, say, ethics. Ethics to metaphysics is a matter of politics, and in the grand scheme of things is considered 'accidental' to being. The good is reduced to a quality, a predicate of behaviour or habits and institutions which actualize virtue or harmony. Even in Heidegger who claims to undertake the destruction of metaphysics itself maintains as a basic structure, according to Levinas, which posits being prior ethics. There are two critical elements of contextual knowledge required before diving into Levinas's ideas. We would hope that these foundations will help situate and understand Levinas's work.

The first is what Heidegger lays out in the introduction to Being and Time (Heidegger 1996). He writes in direct conversation with Aristotle and the pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece. Heidegger argues that you cannot, in fact, separate the being who questions being (here we may call that being the metaphysician, as Levinas does) and being *qua* being. In other words, we must consider the metaphysician, what he calls *Dasein*, as involved in the unfolding of being. Trees are no longer entities whose forms are separate from me and whose essence I am merely describing with my special powers as a human being. Instead, I am participating in the disclosure of the tree's essence; I am a constituting agent in the process of the production of beings. The movement just described lays the foundation for understanding the second piece of context before shifting to Levinas. The second piece here is a way of understanding the relationship between the metaphysician—read as a human being, hereafter named *the subject*, you, the 'I,' and what can only be described at this stage as the world. We will come to understand this outward direction of the being of the subject as *exteriority*.

The second contextual understanding is an employment of the thought of Heidegger and Husserl synthesized well by John Russon in *Human Experience* and *Bearing Witness to Epiphany*. Our daily lives are full of meaning, from the fact that I am sipping from an "object" that "is" a cup to my place

here in front of my computer feeling happy to have spoken to my partner over the phone. We can call these meanings interpretations, as they are called in the field of hermeneutics. In phenomenology, structures of meaning-making are described as horizons which place limits on the being of something. In experience, limits on beings are set in place through me and beings which appear outside of me place limits on me. Russon uses language he attributes to James Gibson through his concept of *affordances* to describe these limits placed on us as "I cans" (Russon, 31-32). I experience this room as a set of affordances in addition to the various forms—door, table, persons—which have been built from prior experience and cultural knowledge. I can leave this room; I can walk in various directions. I can choose never to finish this paper. What I can do in this room is, of course, limited by what is here. I cannot move through the wall; I cannot scream and maintain a happy relationship with my apartment neighbours. Similarly, the "objects" in this room are generated in part on their own and in part by what I impose on them through prior experience, expectation and will. This cup here in front of me is such because, in some sense, I have made it so through my use of it as such. In this view what it means for a thing to exist is not flat like in classical metaphysics (Aristotle 1966) but is brought forth into what Heidegger calls "presencing" (*anwesen*) (Hernández 2011; Heidegger 1977). Things take on meaning by entering a horizon which demarcates limits and sets expectations for what a thing can be (Russon, 17; EP, 80-81). As subjects, we are the type of thing that through which other things can matter (Russon, 19 & 33).

However, the cup has its own being, seemingly outside of that which we have determined for it. Imagine what would occur if the cup breaks. The cup reveals itself to be something which can escape our grasp. Even as a cup, there is that which can never be grasped; there will always be an infinitude, an unknowable nature to particulars[3]. There will always be exteriority, that which is outside of our systems of understanding, outside the horizons of our experience. We may, as Levinas does, call this otherness alterity. Alterity is that which is other than that which comes from me, from the I. The metaphysician is always trying to understand something, question something other than themselves. All of that which comes from the I, from the self (you) we call 'the same,' following Levinas. Meanings which come from interpretations accomplished by the I in the field of being, allow the I to find itself in the external world. That is to say; when I intend to use the computer mouse, I am finding my own intention *in,* as it were, the mouse.

Only when the mouse breaks, as per the classical Heideggerian analysis, do we get a glimpse of its reality; that is, its resistance to our thematizing powers, its otherness. Immediately after that moment of a glimpse of the unthematizable, the broken mouse becomes a broken mouse, thematized; the mouse becomes junk or the object of a desire to fix or tinker. There is no genuine difference, no alterity which escapes our meaning-making way of being. It is 'the same' as 'me.' This ought to be troubling. We are ready to begin discussing Levinas.

In *Ethics as First Philosophy*, an early essay, Levinas critiques the standard phenomenological understanding of meaning-making. For Levinas to thematize means to reduce the being in question

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[3] Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) is concerned with the being of objects in themselves. See (Bogost 2012, 1-34) for a summary and discussion of this movement. Graham Harman has a provocative take on objects 'independent' of human subjects, in addition the ontology of contact with an object (Harman 2013, 16-19).

to an object. The creation of objects, the thematizing disposition inherent to understanding, is a violent grasp; it is the appropriation of another's being to one's ends (EF, 99*). Levinas expands on this critique in *Totality and Infinity* when he writes:

> "Thematization and conceptualization, which moreover are inseparable, are not peace with the other but suppression or possession of the other. For possession affirms the other but within a negation of its independence. 'I think' comes down to 'I can'— to an appropriation of what is, to an exploitation of reality. Ontology as first philosophy, is a philosophy of power." (TI, 46)

If Levinas is right about the structure of thematization, then living life with any semblance of meaning is inescapably violent. But, do we care about appropriating the being of stones, hammers and teacups? Well, not really. What Levinas is concerned with is how our metaphysics is structured. He is attempting to unravel and identify systems of thinking which inescapably set up the relation between Otherness and Sameness (read as the structure of one's subjectivity) as that of war, exploitation and violence. Sure, we should not be too concerned about the construction of tools from inanimate objects—although indigenous perspectives may say otherwise—but we ought to be concerned with how metaphysics may condition humans to engage in the violent reduction of other human subjects. Violence, actualized in its highest form in murder, is perpetrated by a subject which in malice, ignorance and audacity, reduces the Other and attempts to snuff out their alterity. In short, a violent subject reduces human others to objects. Before getting into the weeds of Levinas's metaphysical argument for the position of ethics prior to ontology and its implications for understanding the subject and education, a short introduction to the man and the work we are attempting to summarize.

Emmanuel Levinas, a Lithuanian Jewish French philosopher, was born in January of 1906 and died in December of 1995. Levinas spent four years in a Nazi prisoner of war camp after being captured as a French military translator (Huxley 2002). He lost his father and brothers to the SS while his wife and daughter were saved held in secret by fellow philosopher and theorist Maurice Blanchot (ibid). Levinas was deeply disturbed as should we all, by humanity's capacity for violence demonstrated in the Holocaust. He was shocked that such a tremendous evil could manifest in a country so advanced and sophisticated in its philosophy. A student of Husserl and impressed by Heidegger's philosophy, Levinas was confused by how, after possessing all the knowledge of the philosophers, a society would allow the mass murder of millions (ibid). To Levinas, as he, unfortunately, predicted in an article published in 1934 entitled "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism," a system of thought which has at its foundation egoism will always produce violence. Later, he would come to identify and unravel the egoism he sees as being embedded in western philosophy's very metaphysical structure. The fullest deliberation of Levinas's position with respect to metaphysics is found in *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (1961). The entire monograph, which Levinas published at the age of 55, could be summarized as a clarification of the true meaning of the outward movement of metaphysics. The argument supplants the position of being in the metaphysical hierarchy of priority by positioning ethics prior to being.

Levinas

For Emmanuel Levinas, a fundamental and inescapable relation exists between the subject and otherness which runs underneath all of metaphysics and thus all of the matters concerning the being of beings. What Levinas terms *Desire*, is the problematic notion of a relation between two things, sameness (the I) and Otherness, in which a relation is maintained yet at the same time both absolve themselves of the relation. Desire not as a need for something that fills something the I does not have, but a lack is the manifestation of this relation; a seeking to recover that which one has lost and can never have. Levinas describes "Desire as the 'measure' of the Infinite which no term, no satisfaction arrests" (TI, 304). The subject is Other-directed. Heidegger argues that we are 'thrown,' we find ourselves alive and are being towards death. In our understanding, to Levinas we are thrown, but thrown off from our fixed identity and questioned by the approach of unthematizable irreducible alterity; we are thrown towards the Other. Between the totality of the same of the I and the Infinity of the Other, an impossible relation is achieved by Desire.

> "The alterity, the radical heterogeneity of the other, is possible only if the other is other with respect to a term whose essence is to remain at the point of departure, to serve as *entry* into the relation, to be the same not relatively but absolutely. **A term can remain absolutely at the point of departure of relationship only as I**… Dwelling is the very mode of *maintaining oneself [se tenir]*, not as the famous serpent grasping itself by biting onto its tail, but as the body that, **<u>on</u> the earth exterior to it**, holds *itself* up *[se tient]* and *can*." (TI, 36-37)

The I holds itself up in a bodily fashion. Levinas calls this the I of Enjoyment (TI, 127-130). We nourish ourselves from the elements, appropriating the being of the air, earth and other life to sustain ourselves and dwell (152 &163). It is from this I of enjoyment that the phenomenon of 'I can' emerges. I can eat this fruit, and I can bathe in the sun, I can go for a run and so on. This separated being fixed in its identity is required, according to Levinas, by absolute alterity. The I must be absolutely separate, in order for there to be absolute alterity, which there is. This incredibly strange relation where two terms simultaneously enter the relation and absolve themselves is accomplished in a mode similar to the idea of infinity and infinition (the infinity of infinity) in Descartes third meditation. Levinas uses this analogy to explain how Desire comes to pass.

> "The idea of infinity is not an incidental notion forged by a subjectivity to reflect the case of an entity encountering on the outside nothing that limits it, overflowing every limit, and thereby infinite… The idea of infinity is the mode of being, the *infinition*, of infinity. Infinity does not first exist, and *then* reveal itself. Its infinition is produced as revelation, as a positing of its idea in me… It is produced in the improbable feat whereby a **separated being fixed in its identity**, the same, the I, nonetheless contains in itself what it can neither contain nor receive solely by virtue of its own identity." (TI, 26-27)

Akin to a container schema, Levinas is using Descartes' understanding of infinity to try and describe the unique relationship between the Same and the Other which exists in metaphysics. The idea of infinity is a useful analogy as it sustains who is having the idea while also maintaining the *infinition* (the essence) of infinity. In addition, the structure of the idea of infinity as it appeared in the

quote is a helpful scaffold to understand how something whose distance from me is absolute can be reached in any capacity while maintaining the distance; the idea, the very transcendence of the Other is posited in me, like the infinition of infinity. This appears as Desire. There is more to Desire than the positing of absolute Otherness in the same. There is an actual relationship between this Otherness and the same. This relationship is ethics; in short, something we will attempt to describe. Goodness is accomplished in conversation.

> "Conversation, from the very fact, that it maintains the distance between me and the Other, the radical separation asserted in transcendence which prevents the reconstitution of totality, cannot renounce the egoism of its existence; but the very fact of being in a conversation consists in recognizing in the Other a *right* over this egoism, and hence in justifying one-self. Apology, in which the I at the same time asserts itself and inclines before the transcendent, belongs to the essence of conversation." (TI, 40)

The I of enjoyment is interrupted by the approach of the Other. When the Other is posited in the I, the I finds itself and its freedom arbitrary and violent. Guilt passes. The I finds itself in a position of having to justify its freedom.

> "One has to respond to one's right to be, not by referring to some abstract and anonymous law, or judicial entity, but because of one's fear for the Other. My being-in-the-world or my 'place in the sun', my being at home, have these not also been the usurpation of spaces belonging to the other man who I have already oppressed or starved, or driven out into a third world; are they not acts of repulsing, excluding, exiling, stripping, killing?" (EI, 82)

One cannot frame the relationship between sameness and otherness, the I and the Other, from a position outside of this relation. This relation is only accessible via phenomenological investigation. The movement which accomplishes ethics is not something which can be reflected up, weighed and decided upon from rational principles. For 'universal' rational principles come from outside of this relation and totalize the terms whose actuality and obscurity are prior to being.

> "One cannot interact with the movement from me to the Other from the gaze of a third party as this will unite the other and the same under the same concept. In this way, one can not reflect upon the move from me to the Other, but rather confront the Other out of my egoism." (TI, 121)

To confront the Other out of my egoism means to accomplish ethics, to consummate the idea of infinity, to allow Otherness to come to pass after being posited in me (TI, 27). This is not a choice. One always stands in the presence of the face of the Other, from which one is called into being. The meaning of ethics founds itself in the structure of subjectivity, always intersubjective.

> "Morality begins when freedom, instead of being justified by itself, feels itself to be arbitrary and violent. The search for the intelligible and the manifestation of the *critical* essence of knowing, the movement of a being back to what precedes its condition, begin together…The sense of our whole effort lies in affirming not that the Other forever escapes knowing, but that there is no meaning in speaking here of knowledge or ignorance, for justice, the

preeminent transcendence and the condition for knowing, is nowise, as one would like, a noesis correlative of a noema." (TI, 84, 89-90)

Remember that Levinas is affirming that the meaning of ethics is prior to ontology and epistemology. In the previous passage, he is reminding us that the morality which concerns him is not the morality which comes from the apprehension of an apprehended (a noesis of a noema), it does not come from knowledge or reason. In classical ethics, which is familiar to us, one can become ethical by doing something. In the case of Kant's understanding of ethics, it means willing a universal law which you have derived from the maxim of your action (Kant 2002), for the utilitarians, it means maximizing freedom and minimizing suffering (Mill 1870). With Levinas, things are not so simple, take the following passage, for example. The following is not easily reduced in summary and covers an essential dimension of the task at hand; it is worth quoting at length.

> "The better I accomplish my duty the fewer rights I have the more I am just the more guilty I am. The I, which we have seen arise in the enjoyment as a separated being having apart, in itself, the center around which its existence gravitates, is confirmed in its singularity by purging itself of this gravitation, purges itself interminably, and is confirmed precisely in this incessant effort to purge itself. This is termed goodness… To be I and not only an incarnation of a reason is precisely **to be capable of seeing** the offense of the offended, or the face. The deepening of my responsibility in the judgment that is borne upon me is not of the order of universalization: beyond the justice of universal laws, the I enters under judgment by the fact of being good. Goodness consists in taking up a position in being such that the Other counts more than myself. Goodness thus involves the possibility for the I that is exposed to the alienation of its powers by death to not be for death." (TI, 245-247)

The center around which the I gravitates is the I of enjoyment. In the face of the Other posited in me, the I goes beyond mere self-maintenance and confirms its singularity by being otherwise than for itself. To be more than egoistic enjoyment means to be for something other than death. Instead, to be for the Other. Levinas is arguing that what it means to be an I in the highest and most real sense is to be good. Where goodness means to welcome the Other into the world of the same by purging the sameness of the I while maintaining the otherness of the Other by speaking to them. The I speaking ('saying,' as we will see later) to the Other is not reducible to speech. The address amounts to saying 'here I am before you'; conversation is making space. In the address to what Levinas calls the face, I am responding to my responsibility. Levinas describes the face as the surface of Other's being. It is what we hear in the laughter of a colleague in a neighbouring office, what we see in the extended hand in front of an open doorway; or a single tear running down a cheek. The face is simultaneously vulnerable, it is something which I can kill, but which is also the source of demand which states precisely 'thou shalt not kill'; it is violently reducible to totality and yet always infinity.

The face of the Other does not only play a role in the foundation of the meaning of ethics. Alterity also founds all meaning itself. Prior to consciousness, prior to form, the Other gifts us language. Alterity attends to its own manifestation. Difference is first signification.

"Let us recall what is involved in signification. The first instance of signification is produced in **the face**. Not that the face would receive a signification by relation to something. The face signifies by itself; its signification precedes *sinngebung*. A meaningful behavior arises already in its light**; it spreads the light in which light is seen**. One does not have to explain it, for every explanation begins with it. In other words, society with the Other, which marks the end of the absurd rumbling of the *there is,* is not constituted as the work of an I giving meaning. **It is necessary to already be for the Other**—to exist and not to work only— for the phenomenon of meaning, correlative of the intention of a thought, to arise. Being-for-the-Other must not suggest any finality and not imply the antecedent positing or valorization of any value. To be for the Other is to be good…. The fact that in existing for another, I exist otherwise than in existing for me is morality itself." (TI, 261)

Sinnebung is the world of things, think of everything which has form, meaning, ontology. To be genuinely prior mean to exist as a superstructure to being. The ground from which comes things that come via *answessen* or *Bildung*, tékʰnɛ or φύσις is set by the Other prior to the passage of time. Exteriority, that which is not I, attends to its own paradoxical manifestation, there is no 'third man.'

"Exteriority is signifyingness itself. And only the face in its morality is exterior. In this epiphany the face is not resplendent as a form clothing a content, as an image, but as the nudity of the principle, behind which there is nothing further. The dead face becomes a form, a mortuary mask; it is shown instead of letting see—but precisely thus no longer appears as a face." (TI, 262)

The face is not a form. The face of the Other is its infinitude, its very alterity. The face is naked and vulnerable. Otherness is vulnerable to violent reduction. According to Levinas, Heidegger ignores the face and covers up the actual structure of subjectivity that results from the primordial relationship here described. In Heidegger, as in all of western philosophy according to Levinas, the sameness of the I and the human subject has ultimately taken position over the Other. In the light of knowledge and in the 'unfolding' of being being-disclosed by a human subject, otherness vanishes and is stripped away. In this view, all of ontology (and its corresponding ontic world) which takes its starting point in sameness will commit violence and ignore the possibility of ethics. According to Levinas to interpret the Other and make space for the subject is to do violence to the Other. Knowledge is a violent grasp, a reduction of infinite indeterminacy to shallow determinacy (EP, 76). His radical writings force us to reconsider the grounds of ethics and politics. The latter, politics, is a difficult question. Although Levinas provides an extensive description of the meaning of ethics, there is little in the way of politics, and theorists have debated what one 'ought' to do after Levinas (*The Oxford Handbook of Levinas* 2018).

In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas's chief concern is the encounter between two persons. Anything else that involves more than two people is no longer a question of ethics but of justice (X). The question of justice will shortly be a central one for us in our argument considering the generation of Levinas's ethical subject. Responsibility for the manifestation of justice is what justifies an educational paradigm of subjectification following Levinas. We will turn to the writing of Anna Strhan to parse out how this could be. First, we must speak to the degree to which Levinas's ethical subject is free to

choose how to act. Second, we will explore Strhan's take on how one may enter the political at all from the primordial relationship between a single infinite Other. Afterwards, we will enter into our investigation of Levinas's ethical subject and its purported generation.

Autonomy/Heteronomy, Illeity

In *Levinas, Subjectivity, Education: Towards an Ethics of Radical Responsibility,* Anna Strhan concerns herself with Levinas's ethical subject and education. Strhan argues that if we follow Levinas, we need not be afraid to be political subjects as educators (Strhan, 15, 32). We have already covered that the ethical subject purges itself continuously before the Other. Many theorists, like Gert Biesta, Sharon Todd and Claire Katz, believe Levinas to be reacting directly to the ideal of the self-determining autonomous rational subject at the heart of western philosophy. Certainly, Levinas was against this ideal. This is particularly clear in his 1930's paper entitled "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism," in which he critiques egoism as being the antecedent to violence (Hitlerism). What Strhan argues is that although the priority of autonomy (self-governance) is clearly incommensurate with Levinas's philosophy (concerned with heteronomy, governance by the Other), there is still a place for freedom and identity. She asks whether it is possible to conceive of an autonomy for the ethical subject in which they will enforce laws which bring about a just state (Strhan, 88). Strhan answers in the affirmative. It is important to remember that one is infinitely responsible *and* must choose how to respond to this responsibility. In order to understand how this can be the case--how one can be both always held responsible before commitment and also choose a path—, we must approach the concept of illeity and the neighbour.

Although ethics may exist only in the relationship between the subject and the Other, it is through the concrete Other that the subject experiences the call of all Others. That is to say that the subject is not merely responsible for a non-violent relation with the Other in front of them. Instead, they are also responsible for the just nature of the fabric of their relations with all others. They are political subjects in addition to ethical subjects. They are responsible for working to engender just institutions and social fabrics. These propositions rely on foundations laid in in *Totality and Infinity* and the concept of the neighbour from *Otherwise than Being*, which has built on these. In *Totality and Infinity,* the concept of illeity (the external embodiment of the self) refers to the approach of 'the Third,' which is responsible for the need for the state, institutions and justice (Strhan, 8). In the proximity and exposure to the face of the Other, all other Others are made present, the knowledge that those Others also exist in relationship with Others founds a community. Because you cannot face all Others at once, the single Other becomes like a conduit for all Others, for whom you are also responsible. In Strhan's words:

> "Levinas describes the relationship with the third as 'an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity in which the face is looked at' (158 OB). The third party interrupts the asymmetry of responsibility between self and neighbour by revealing the existence of other subjects who are neighbours to my neighbour. Through the third's approach, I question my place in these relations of responsibility, my 'own place in the sun', and with this consciousness begins. The

third demands justice, justification and ultimately weighing up, calculating, judging how I take up the responsibilities I have for all the others. Thus, society is not founded on equality or commonality, but on a community of others, in which each subject is unique and resists reduction to classification." (Strhan 149)

The approach of the third through illeity founds judgement. The neighbour serves as the precondition for calculation, deliberation and law. The subject's responsibility to the neighbour requires it. It is from the approach of the third that I become conscious that my responsibilities are truly infinite, and I will have to choose how to respond to the Other and all of the Others. This is how Levinas's ethical subject can also be an 'autonomous subject' and a 'heteronomous' subject. The ethical subject does exercise reason. They must reason to just laws such that the neighbour of my neighbour is safe. These laws are also the responsibility of the ethical subject. Of course, one is free to ignore all of one's responsibility.

"One can uproot oneself from this responsibility, deny the place where it is incumbent on me to do something, to look for an anchorite's salvation. One can choose Utopia. On the other hand, in the name of spirit, one can choose not to flee the conditions from which one's work draws its meaning and remain here below. And that means choosing ethical action" (DF, 100 in Strhan 192)

As an educator choosing ethical action means making decisions and working to respond intentionally to one's infinite responsibilities. This task necessitates the operation of a violent way of being. In fact, "the judgements I make in discharging these responsibilities must inevitably involve comparison, rationality and thus the ontological is brought into this process of responding ethically, yet the ethical demand is always there prior to and interrupting this, for each subject within an educational community" (Strhan 159). In a teaching role, where one is not only responsible for the cultivation of an ethical learning environment but the cultivation of their student's ethical subjectivity, illeity helps us understand how the gap can be bridged, how subjectification can be a part of an ethical-moral education after Levinas. In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas presents a way of imagining a future which is 'both my own and non-mine, a possibility of myself but also a possibility of the other' (TI, 267) through the concept of fecundity. Perhaps willing and acting to generate Levinas's subject is justifiable in such a frame. In order to respond intentionally to one's responsibility to the kingdom of neighbours of today and the far future, the educator decides to take measures to set foundations in the minds of students resistant to fascist, racist and otherwise violent ways of being. Such, as we have seen earlier, does not have to be construed to be an act of production, but cultivation.

Is the future of the flower mine and not mine? Although the bud tends to its own manifestation, the roots finding purchase without aid, the gardener does have a hand in the affair. Since the alterity of the Other is preserved in such a relation, my presence in the future envisioned for them is not intrusive, but a welcoming. Like weeding the flower bed, the educator tends to their learning environment, sure to be rid of structures of thinking which reify violent relationships between the same and the Other, leaving space for the subject to grow into its very singularity. For, it is in their

very responsibility where ipseity and uniqueness are found. It is you, the one, not in the abstract or from a view nowhere, who can respond well. One cannot defer, transfer or bracket one's responsibility, only the subject responds. Weeding is an intentional act of intervention, but the program of subjectification is not limited to contingencies. In the final part of this paper, we will concern ourselves with educational theory closer to the ground. We will find that there are ways forward for subjectification after Levinas. Before beginning such a discussion, we must lay down a final piece of the subjectification puzzle on the production side. Later we will explore further the hither side of subjective generation, what the student ought to develop — first, a short note on truth.

In Strhan's reading of Levinas alongside Badiou, she positions Badiou's idea of 'truth procedures' as a useful way to understand the practical "application" of Levinas in day to day classrooms. She argues that teachers ought to work to manifest truth in the classroom by responding as political subjects. Leading by example, teachers should not be afraid to broach tricky topics and confront issues in a learning community that has as its foundation a commitment to bringing about justice in society. Teachers and students alike are here free to choose how to respond to concrete demands on them in an environment which engenders a subject which *is* otherwise than inward-looking and violent. We believe that a similar framework can guide our thinking about the generation of ethical subjects. Because responsibility is at the foundation of subjectivity, deepening one's sensibility by facilitating, say, an encounter with another with supportive frameworks would act to manifest a truth; the truth is that we are all infinitely responsible for the Other.

> "Education should therefore be aiming at the development of rationality, whilst *also* striving for autonomy as an awareness of the infinite demands of responsibility that are already there as a precondition of education… it is also necessary to encourage awareness that autonomy is only possible through the condition of existing in community, a community that makes demands on us, impresses on us and forms us in ways we cannot always control." (Strhan, 90-91)

And so, the possibility of a genuine and justifiable 'Levinasian' subjectification appears. However, one ought to be vigilant against over-intellectualizing. Without proximity, one runs the risk of totalization. One ought to work to maximize the exposure education planners have to actual teaching and learning, as "proximity here is seen as a control on the implicit violence that must take place within the work and mechanisms of the state, which necessarily involve equality and thematization." (Strhan, 150).

Levinas's Ethical Subject and its Generation

Thus far, we have established the metaphysical mode of generation, cultivation, as well as covered relevant pieces of Levinas and company's philosophy and theories concerning ethical responsibility. It is time to visit educational theory. Sharon Todd and Gert Biesta are both credited with introducing Levinas to educational theory (Zhao, 660-662). It has been claimed, however, that the authors' application of Levinas relies on incomplete interpretations (Zhao, 664; Katz 2018). Both Biesta and Todd reject normative claims with respect to the cultivation of subjects (subjectification) by decrying them as violent processes based on a Levinasian understanding of responsibility (Todd,

20-28 & 32-38; Biesta, 289 in Strhan). Biesta and Todd emphasize responding to and preserving the alterity of the Other by allowing oneself to be interrupted continuously (Todd, 12 & 37-39). Guoping Zhao argues that Biesta and Todd ignore the complete works of Levinas, and so misunderstand the role of interruption in ethical subjectivity (Zhao, 664). A more holistic approach to the works of Levinas could form a "…new ground for moral education" (Zhao, 675) which sees "subjectification and ethics" as aligned (Zhao, 674). For Zhao, the dialectic of being and non-being found in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (OTB, 177) is most overlooked in Levinas scholarship surrounding what it means to *be* as a genuine ethical subject (Zhao, 672).

Zhao's account is synchronous with Claire Katz's argument in *Levinas and the Crisis of Humanism* which argues that Levinas's corpus is not entirely descriptive, but normative in a particular way with respect to ends of education (Katz, 80-81). Katz' makes the case that Levinas's ethical subjectivity requires cultivation (Katz, 83 & 123). The evidence that Katz provides comes from a close reading of Levinas's often overlooked writings on Judaism and Jewish education. Placing Zhao's and Katz's work in tandem strongly suggests a need to return to Levinas's work and rethink what his ideas mean for a project of subjectification like that which forms the aim of moral education in general. According to Zhao Levinas's account of subjectivity "…expands and makes authentic the purpose of liberal education…" and "allows a genuine educational mission of subjectification, albeit toward a new and very different kind of subjectivity" (Zhao, 675). Different from that of the enlightenment based rational, autonomous agent which Biesta sees as being at the heart of the aims of subjectification (Biesta, 2015). Katz joins Zhao and departs from Philosophers Martha Nussbaum, Hannah Arendt and John Dewey by arguing that the cultivation of Levinas's ethical subjectivity is the real solution to the "crisis of the humanities" and by extension the ends liberal education. Both positions are commensurate with what we have developed thus far with the help of Anna Strhan. Let us take a moment to examine the latter, Katz's charge, as it is unfamiliar to us at this moment of the investigation.

The apparent failure of the humanities to produce ethical humans, according to Katz, lies in how they have misunderstood the nature of subjectivity (Katz, 22 & 33-40 & 81). Contrary to critical theorist Theodor Adorno in "Education After Auschwitz", Katz and Levinas argue that the cultivation of "autonomy" and "self-determination" (Adorno 1998, 4) is not the solution to but precisely that which perpetuates the mode of existing which created the consciousnesses complicit in the Holocaust (Katz, 40 & 51 & 62; "Hitlerism", 66). For Katz, the response to the crisis of humanism is to turn to Levinas's writings on Judaism and Jewish Education. For it is precisely Jewish education insofar that it is Jewish, which Levinas sees as being the solution to the crisis of humanism (Katz, 121). According to Katz, Levinas understands the "Jewish way of being" as a source of universal insight into the ethical dimensions of responsibility (Katz, 96). Katz turns to what Levinas highlights in his writings on Jewish education to draw out insight as to how the subjectivity he describes in his secular philosophical work is brought about (Katz, 141 & 162). For example, in something like rabbinic exegesis, the way in which the learning community is organized is itself an ethical teaching (Katz, 162).

There is much more to say regarding pedagogy, for now, let us look at the theory just introduced. We will dive into what Katz sees as relevant insights from Levinas's Jewish writings and

approach the dialectic of being and non-being in *Otherwise than Being* which Zhao claimed was missed. We will then briefly criticize Sharon Todd and synthesize some threads.

Katz and Preparedness

Let us first examine Katz's claims. The "crisis" of the humanities identified in the title of Katz's book speaks to the failure of western philosophy to produce ethical humans, as evidenced by Adolf Eichmann who, fully versed in Kantian moral philosophy, played a significant role in orchestrating the holocaust (Katz, 35 & 40 & 81). What the humanities miss, according to Katz and Levinas, is what it is that needs to be cultivated to produce ethical subjects. That is, to be someone who sees the face as something one is responsible for; a someone who needs to be shown, either as a child or as an adult, the meaning of ethics (Katz, 82). It is not easy, however, to "apply" Levinas's thoughts on Jewish education to a non-Jewish educational project. For it is precisely Jewish education insofar that it is Jewish, which Levinas sees as being the solution to the crisis of humanism (Katz, 121).

Katz leaves the project of 'applying' Levinas to education unresolved in her work. She asks at the end of her book if it is possible that we can "…identify or construct an educational model that is both necessary and comparable to the Jewish education model, which Levinas presents?" (Katz, 150). We perceive this question to be aligned with our current endeavour to understand how to produce ethical subjects after Levinas. Claire Katz argues that Levinas's radical ethical subjectivity can only be secured by a complimentary education, both formal and informal (Katz, 123). For Levinas, this education is distinctly Jewish. Katz makes clear, however, that one does not need to "become Jewish" to develop an ethical subjectivity. Levinas himself understands the "Jewish way of being" as a source of universal insight into the ethical dimensions of responsibility (Katz, 96). So, to make sense of the apparent confusion, we must first speak to Judaism.

The core to the Jewish disposition, according to Levinas, is to be "chosen." Not chosen in a manner which holds one above others but precisely the opposite. To be "chosen" means to be appointed to be one who first recognizes their responsibility to the Other and must respond and lead by example (DF, 272 in Katz, 154). This responsibility is rendered explicit in the acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai in Jewish theology (Katz, 96). What this signifies is a commitment, a covenant between Jews that they will "do and then listen," to act and then *feel* the call of the face of the Other (Katz, 93-94). This can be read in terms of the way in which Jews come to recognize the fact that the covenant *has already been formed*, which entails *election*. Responsible before choice, *election* appears as an injunction to respond to an un-interpretable infinitude antecedent to determinacy (EP, 84 & Katz, 160). This is what is meant by the term "pre-ontological" used in Levinas's philosophy. That is, responsibility precedes being itself; responsibility is not "experienced" consciously but is a precondition of explicit conscious thought, as we have seen (TI, 100).

According to Katz, Judaism and its understanding of normativity can aid us in understanding what needs to be cultivated such that the face of the Other can be "seen" in its self-signification (Katz 92-93). That is, we must *prepare* and cultivate *preparedness* for the face; we must prepare to receive

responsibility as a call that necessitates ethical action. To be an ethical subject is not just to be open to being interrupted by the other, but it means being willing to cede one's position to the other (Katz, 133; DF, 100). We will return to an interrogation of *preparedness* and 'seeing' the face when we discuss Zhao and Strhan's propositions. For now, the question is, what constitutes the cultivation of *preparedness*? What is clear is that we must do away with the same patterns of thought within western humanism, which Levinas identifies as being responsible for covering the meaning of ethics and perpetuating horrors. That is a conception of the human which is a self-sufficient, autonomous, rational individual ("Hitlerism," 66-67 in Katz 62 & Katz, 40), except as understood by Strhan above. In addition, cultivating preparedness means that we do away with any system of thought or way of being that would lead to the obfuscation of one's radical responsibility. To understand *election* and *preparedness* in the context of Levinas's philosophical work, it is necessary to go beyond *Totality and Infinity* once again and return to a more metaphysical discussion.

Beyond Totality and Infinity, Being Otherwise

In *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence,* Levinas uses the concepts of the 'saying' and 'the said' to approach more closely the structure of ethical subjectivity. 'The said' and 'the saying' refer to the relationship between being and infinity similar to totality and infinity as described in the prior work, but escape the structural privileging of being which Derrida recognized in *Totality and Infinity* (Derrida 2005). Levinas tries to escape the framing of responsibility through the lens of ontology by reducing 'the said,' that is, meaning, form or content, to illuminate the preconditions of its existence. A subject which is Otherwise than being sits as a precondition for meaning. Anna Strhan helps us here:

> "The saying does not signify action on my part, but rather indicates my receptivity to the demands of the Other, my openness to their 'being'… in my exposure to the Other in the saying, I am open to their capacity to be wounded, traumatized by the possibility of *their* pain, and this affects me and my response" (Strhan 47)

The saying 'slips through' from the hither side of ontology (remember the unthematizable side of the cup) and disturbs comprehension. Precisely since it is the very signifyingness of signification the intellect cannot reduce this presence to a category or substance; its theme is the giving of the ability to have meaning, it is without theme qua theme. Levinas attempts to reduce signification to reveal 'the trace' of infinity, or the unthematizability of the event of signification, through almost poetic approaches. A trace (its unthematizable nature) of the saying is present in all language, and Levinas attempts to enlighten his readers by bringing it to consciousness, Strhan helps us again:

> "The plot of saying that is absorbed in the said is not exhausted in this manifestation. It imprints its trace on the thematization itself' (OB, 46). Thematization therefore always involves the duality of saying and said, the responsibility in passivity of the saying and the activity of consciousness in the said. The passivity of the saying does not refer to any Heideggerian notion of language speaking:

>> 'It is not the discovery that it speaks' or that 'language speaks' that does justice to this passivity. One must show in saying, qua approach, the very de-posing or desituating

of the subject, which nonetheless remains an irreplaceable uniqueness, and is thus the subjectivity of the subject. (OB, 47-48)'

This reduction exposes the saying as leading back to the pre-original subject, not meant in a developmental state of a condition prior to language, but rather an examination of the conditions necessary for subjectivity prior to consciousness and the Ego." (Strhan, 48)

At the base of subjectivity, as a precondition for subjectivity (the I'ness of the I), there is exposure to the absolute alterity of the neighbour. We are chosen, elected to be responsible infinitely, and in this responsibility, we are unique, for we cannot shake our election off, and nobody can fulfill our responsibility for us.

"Assigned, placed in the accusative, the 'me' is not a particular case of the universal…I am unique, and my uniqueness consists in the impossibility of my slipping away…in substituting itself on the in-side of its own identity; in this way alone does it show its uniqueness" (GDT, 162).

Unique but self-deposing to be for the Other, the subject is exposed in the saying. Naked like the face, both the Other and the I are otherwise than being. Sensibility to the Other is an unsettling of oneself and to be for the other in responsibility, as in substitution, but substitution which maintains separation (or the separate and distinct form of the I) (OB 54). How can this be? Let us turn to the 'dialectic' of being and non-being that Zhao eluded to.

In visiting the pages of *Otherwise than Being* cited in Zhao, Levinas is attempting to describe a way in which the subject can be otherwise than either being or non-being. The latter, being and non-being, is a dichotomy which is undesirable, for either term is a reduction to totality, to being. If the subject is responsible and for-the-other in the way that it has allowed itself to be continually interrupted without resistance, then the subject cannot be either being (an I) nor non-being (actually interrupted). As we have seen with substitution, the subject cedes their position to the Other while maintaining their uniqueness. Levinas asks and defines the mode of existence of the ethical subject on these pages, and the passage is worth quoting at length:

"Can one not understand the subjectivity of the subject beyond essence, as on the basis of a leaving the concept, a forgetting of being and non-being? Not of an 'unregulated' forgetting, which still lies within the bipolarity of essence, between being and nothingness. But a forgetting that would be an ignorance in the sense that nobility ignores what is not noble, and in the sense that certain monotheists do not recognize while knowing, what is not the highest. Such ignorance is beyond consciousness; it is an open-eyed ignorance… there is ignorance of the concept in the openness of the subject beyond this struggle for oneself and this complacency in oneself. This is a non-erotic openness, and it is not again the openness of a look fixing a theme…This ignorance and openness, an indifference to essence… is the terrain necessary for the distinction between truth and ideology." (OB, 177-178)

The mode of being of the ethical subject is beyond a distinction between being and non-being. Because in responsibility, one is for-the-Other, one cannot also remain fixed fundamentally. The saying, the

very signification of signification relies on a subject first in a mode which places it outside, in the exterior plain where absolute alterity comes to pass. When one gives one's position to the Other in goodness, there is no longer a position. What it means to welcome the Other in a non-violent relationship is to ignore, at the base of one's subjectivity, being and nothingness. So, any conclusions from educational theory which involve calls to negate one's identity are misguided. The question of 'being' or 'becoming' Levinas's ethical subject is not a matter of negation or mere interruption, but sensibility and hospitality. *Preparedness*, then, must mean sensibility to the saying. In other words, a profound and cultivated open-eyed ignorance to the order of being and nothingness. As an educator, a simple takeaway for pedagogy would be to ensure that ideologies of being or nothingness do not take hold in the minds of youth. So, what are some of the societal factors, structures and institutions which are ideological in their obfuscation of alterity education?

Steps Forward

This final section of this work is dedicated to investigating practical and theoretical steps forward in the generation of Levinas's ethical subject. By negative and positive interventions in teachable moments or via cultivation by precise curricular design, teachers ought to be conscious of the responsibility they have to the unfolding of their student's subjectivities. Beyond institutional contexts, parents are those who ought to hear this message before all else. Governments and their ministries, as agents which make executive decisions regarding the direction of public education programming, teacher training and other matters are those bodies who stand with the most onerous burden to respond to the responsibility of ethical subjectification. As it stands, the responsibility which the BC provincial government (my context) recognizes is the apparent right to human flourishing as evidenced in the language of the ministry of education's stated mission to facilitate human development and service a 'healthy society' and economy.

> "The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable the approximately 553,000 public school students, 81,000 independent school students, and over 2,200 home-schooled children enrolled each school year, **to develop their individual potential** and to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to contribute to a **healthy society** and a prosperous and sustainable economy." (Ministry of Education Accessed July 2019.)

Much rather than hide from our duty as educationists in unconscious incompetence with regard to the generation of ethical subjects, I suggest a move to conscious competence. That is, to adopt, as Zhao put it, "…new ground for moral education" (Zhao, 675). Anna Strhan has a thorough discussion and critique of the growing trend of the marketization of public education in *Levinas, Subjectivity, Education*. Such a topic is too broad for a thorough summary here, but the influence of the economy on the ends and means of education ought to familiar. Remember our Sumerian school child. Today we may not beat children in the West, but competition, rote memorization and factory methods still rule the day. If there is to be any hope of ethical subjectification in public education, the marketization of education must be limited. Besides rooting out capitalist ideology in education, let us examine what theorists have to say about ethical subjectification.

Katz and Others, in the Concrete

Katz points towards some ways one might make sense of the cultivation of an ethical subjectivity by analyzing what Levinas promoted and enacted in Jewish education. The principles of such an education are my object here. Levinas argues that the Jewish teaching method is intimately tied with the very possibility of learning as he understands it. That is, having one's identity and horizons of determinacy interrupted by the speech of the un-interpretable face of the other (TI, 98-99). Contrary to the "banking model" of education as information transfer[4], or the "midwife" Socratic model of education as bringing forth what was already there, responsibility as for self-identity is for Levinas, as Katz writes, "…something grown organically through the process of education" (Katz, 162). Katz goes to great lengths to extract what Levinas considered to be the most significant outcomes and practices of Jewish education.

What Jewish education teaches us is that to be Jewish is to respond to the other person (Katz, 121), to guide action towards the Other. To act is to do, think and listen, precisely not a religious catechism (118). As if to hammer this point home, Levinas positions prayer, although critical, secondary to the cultivation of reason and responsibility (154). In his life and in his Jewish writings, Levinas argues (among other things) for a return to rabbinic exegesis, or, the reading of sacred texts in Hebrew—The Midrash, or Talmudic study—to reclaim what it is that makes Judaism unique. The Talmudic Midrash is a method of engaging sacred Jewish texts which involves intense communal interpretation and reading of commentaries on commentaries surrounding the work. In this manner, one's religious education involves encountering Others in the text and its surrounding community and having to respond throughout. Katz helps us understand why Levinas thinks this is so central; she writes that he "…believes that the Jewish scriptural tradition embodies a response and attention to the particular other without losing sight of the universal" (Katz, 159). Where the Talmudic word—of "God" conceptualized in Judaism as the absolute Other—is the universal and the commenters are the particular. The alterity of a text is preserved at multiple levels, modelling an encounter with the face. A multiplicity of voices poses questions, answers and arguments which surround the original text, to make the sacred word a dense singularity which makes interpretation necessary and a community affair (BTV, 87 in Katz, 158). This, among other dimensions of Jewish education, shows us that for Levinas to cultivate the "Jewish" disposition requires a sort of implicit pedagogy which operates in a manner which brings with it lessons in responsibility, irrespective of the particular content. Katz does not suggest that we all should engage in Talmudic study, although, she claims that something which involves whole-hearted engagement with a text and its context in a social environment is integral to cultivating Levinas's ethical subject (Katz, 157 & 165-166).

Katz gives some examples of how this might be done in a non-Jewish environment, such as the "50/50" second language program in Texas, where native English and native Spanish speakers pair up for the duration of the school year as the class regularly switches between content taught in Spanish and content taught in English (Katz 161-162). Students are to go to their partner for assistance when the language they are immersed in is not their mother tongue. Here, the pedagogy itself is what

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[4] See Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* for a good critique of this model of education (Freire 2018).

is essential; the way the learning community is organized is itself teaching (Katz, 162). Responsibility for the Other is required to learn the content. Vulnerability and responsibility are embedded in the fabric of the classroom; here, we see the heart of what Katz's analysis brings. The call to responsibility in the classroom is not a call at all, but an *election* (Katz, 162). This way, what is being taught is language, yes, but also *preparedness* to see the face and everything that entails. These ideas challenge other theorists, also responding to the prospect of 'Levinasian' ethical subjectification.

In her work, *Learning from the Other: Levinas, Psychoanalysis, and Ethical Possibilities in Education*, Sharon Todd holds psychoanalysis and Levinasian thought in tension to argue for an approach to teaching which rejects normative claims with respect to the cultivation of subjects (Todd, 20 & 28) and emphasizes vulnerability, ignorance, ambiguity, love and recognition (Todd, 12 & 37-38). Many of Todd's points resonate with what has been discussed here, for example, the importance of making texts "speak" so that students encounter Otherness (Todd, 39). Her writing contributes to the discussion insofar as it calls our attention back to the lived experiences of both student and teacher, out of the highly theoretical realm of our current deliberations. Despite this, in light of Katz's argument, Todd's broader framework is in need of renewed attention with respect to the position of normativity in how subjectivity is to be cultivated. Todd argues that teachers are faced with "two layers of interaction" with their students (Todd, 31).

The first layer of interaction is an obligation to present a kind of content aimed to shape subjectivity, which Todd understands to reflect a dangerous normativity which threatens to do violence to students (curriculum). She sees the second level of interaction as an opportunity to intervene and explore non-violent possibilities in the classroom (Todd, 31). Taking from Levinas, Todd argues that it is in the teacher's response to a student's response to content where ethicality in education lies (Todd, 32). She then argues that normative claims regarding how or what to teach should exist only in the particular relation between a given teacher and their student; broader claims regarding ethics and education are dubious and suspect (Todd, 32 & 38). Reading Todd's work after our discussion allows one to see an overlooked dimension in the former. I am suggesting that because Todd is operating with an incomplete conception of Levinas's ethical subjectivity and what it requires (namely, responsibility to all others via illeity, or, the responsibility for the Other's ethical subjectification), she does not see that she is both correct and slightly incorrect in her assessment of the relationship between normativity writ large and education. We argue that the teacher is really operating at three levels of interaction. Where an additional third is added, being an underlying aim to cultivate *preparedness* to see the face and recognize responsibility, following this argument, the other layers of interaction should be modified to maintain their structure but take this third as a tacit target, as we see with the 50/50 pedagogy in Texas.

We have sketched some beginnings of how one might go about cultivating ethical subjectivity. We would like to step one more step closer to the ground, so to speak, to really illustrate what cultivation of ethical subjectivity means. We will contextualize our inquiry by presenting the author's lifeworld and efforts to engage in ethical subjectification. There will be a shift in tone and style as the author will begin to write in the first person. This is to collapse the distance between the reader and text to provide the best illustration of these ideas as possible.

Steps, in Context

In my situation and context in Canada, there is a long history of state-sanctioned violent assimilation of indigenous peoples through schooling. Read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's summative report to catch up on this country's cultural genocide (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Tens of thousands of children were forcibly separated from their families and communities to attend schools whose mission was to assimilate indigenous people into the colonial project. The mission was to destroy the indigenous people. Where physical violence was absent emotional and spiritual abuse ruled. The project was carried out and justified by precisely the type of subject ethical subjectification would try to root out. Below is first-hand testimony of what life was like at one of Canada's 'residential schools.' Speaking is Marthe Basile-Coocoo recalling first seeing the Pointe Bleue, Québec, school:

> It was something like a grey day; it was a day without sunshine. It was, it was the impression that I had, that I was only six years old, then, well, the nuns separated us, my brothers, and then my uncles, then I no longer understood. Then that, that was a period there, of suffering, nights of crying, we all gathered in a corner, meaning that we came together, and there we cried. Our nights were like that. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 38)[5]

Children were not allowed to speak their languages or practise their spirituality. Indigenous children learned that they were savage outsiders who were worthless. The legacy of residential schools wracks communities across the country and is living history today in the fragmented identities of generations. The last residential school closed its doors in 1997. In the best cases, the architects of the residential school system believed they were working for the benefit of indigenous peoples based on a fundamentally racist system of beliefs hidden behind Christian metaphysics and the assumption of European racial and ideological supremacy (Howe, 86-87; TRC 46-50). In the best of colonizers thinking they believed their project was righteous. We must be ever vigilant against moral thinking, which involves violence in any form: cultural, spiritual, ontological, emotional or physical.

Violent attitudes towards indigenous people are still alive in the fabric of Canadian society and manifest in brutal aggression fueled by a hierarchical ontology which places non-white bodies below white bodies. An event which demonstrates this well is the murder of Pamela George and subsequent trial of the two young middle-class white Saskatchewan men responsible. Well-studied and analyzed by Shalene Razack, this case demonstrates the way in which colonial relationships are reified and perpetuated by the construction of white male identities in Canada. Additionally, this case highlights the way that spatialized coding of non-white bodies marks people as deserving of death and suffering. The institutional response of the judicial system lessened the apparent responsibility of Pamela's murderers by appealing to the latter and the former—the murderers became 'good boys who made a mistake' and George became a dirty risky prostitute who knew what she was getting into— (Razack 2000). Indigenous women are almost three times as likely to be victimized by violent crime in Canada and are vulnerable in a host of other ways (Brennan 2011; Harper 2006). British Columbia, Canada's

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[5] TRC, AVS, Marthe Basile-Coocoo, Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (translated from French), Montréal, Québec, 26 April 2013, Statement Number: 2011-6103.

westernmost province, is home to what has been called "the highway of tears," a stretch of road which has been the cite of an epidemic of missing and murdered aboriginal women ignored mainly until recent years. Alongside violence perpetrated against indigenous peoples, the rate of suicide in indigenous communities score far above national averages of different demographics in numerous contexts (Hunter and Harvey 2002; Webster 2016). There is growing evidence to suggest that cultural revitalization is more effective at preventing suicide in indigenous youth than traditional practices of intervention which employ western notions of individual behaviour intervention (Barker, Goodman, and DeBeck 2017).

An educator who has cultivated *preparedness* in her own subjectivity would understand that she possesses infinite responsibility in this situation. That is to say, that through the faces of her students, whether non-indigenous or indigenous, she must (and always does) face the violent past and present of this country. What comes from this realization is a call to enact decolonial, anticolonial and post-colonial praxis in her daily life as a school teacher. The public education system ought to assist her in doing so. As a side project over the summertime between semesters, I reached out to my local public school district to see if they had a project that I could assist them with. Two months later, I would deliver a research report advocating for anticolonial and decolonial practices in both their education planning and structural organization. In appendix A, the reader will find a list of interventions which I had encountered and recommended to the school district. In general, the message was in support of a radical and comprehensive redesign to include indigenous voices, ontologies and epistemologies into the foundation of the district's education plan. The hope would be that when the changes are implemented white settlers growing up in this area will more likely develop their ethical subjectivity and be motivated to choose ethical action with respect to their relationship with and advocacy for indigenous people.

By revealing the shared history between non-indigenous and indigenous people and facilitating a genuine encounter with indigeneity and its contemporary challenges for their students, the teacher brings children closer to both A) Their own ethical subjectivity and B) A desire to manifest political justice. The pedagogical act of informing and revealing is a protective measure against racist ideology which would otherwise have a chance to root itself in the minds of Canadian children. The same principles may be applied in a multitude of other situations and issues which intersect and occupy (often) the same place. For instance, a Kenyan teacher is responsible for both a decolonial teaching to bring students to an anti-colonial consciousness and Queer teaching to combat the nation's violent attitudes towards people with non-hetero sexualities. One can never fulfill one's responsibility at any given time. One is always responding to the concrete demands of the situation and must decide how best to respond to the call to infinite responsibility. One must negotiate between familial demands, professional relationships, student relationships and global responsibilities. Climate change, justice for imprisoned journalists in Egypt, decolonial movements, community challenges all must be responded to, and one is always turning one's head away from another. The best one can do what one ought to do is choose engagement. For education systems and educators, this also includes ethical subjectification in a positive sense, or the cultivation of good dispositions to difference, vulnerability and freedom.

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Appendix A

Major Conclusions from the literature review (Reconciliation and Restitution for the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia)

1. Create a stronger Indigenous presence in schools by implementing holistic, community-based teaching practices and indigenous curriculum (Lavoie 2016; Campbell 2014)

    a. Invite elders to visit classes and contact a community organization working with First Nations to find guest speakers. "A common feature of successful educational programs, however, was that of a creative collaboration, which builds bridges between public agencies and the community, often by engaging parents or community-based organizations." (Purdie and Buckley 2010)

2. Incorporate holistic practices such as learning about the land and oneself and maintaining ties with elders, traditions, traditional ceremonies and the community as a whole. (Lavoie 2016) To generate a culturally responsive curriculum which empowers all. Engage with the land as a teacher and the land as pedagogy (Archibald 2008; Styres 2011, 2017; Zinga and Styres 2011).

    a. Create connections between learning and the students' life experiences using observation, experimentation and personalization. (Cajete 1994)

    b. Incorporate the cultures, languages and oral histories of Indigenous Peoples, including teaching and learning practices specific to them (traditional ceremonies, narratives, stories, place names, medicinal plants, sports, arts). (Cajete 1994)

    c. Learn the cultural and historical content that put Indigenous ways of knowing that emerge from specific land and place into context. (Cajete 1994)

    d. Learn practical skills and knowledge for living in specific environments. (Cajete 1994)

    e. Allow for extended interactions with the natural world to develop relationships to place and environments. (Cajete 1994)

    f. Establish service-related activities designed to support and advance land and place-based priorities for Indigenous peoples. (Cajete 1994)

    g. Support Indigenous peoples environmental traditions as contemporary expressions and not as something of the past. (Cajete 1994)

3. Engage with story and narrative to facilitate intercultural learning and empathy while increasing the cultural responsiveness of one's pedagogy. (Archibald 2008)

a. Explore alternative modes of engaging with texts, curricula or objects through Dwayne Donald's concept of indigenous metissage (Donald 2012). Treating everything as related, braided and intertwined.

b. Use stories and narrative at every opportunity, especially with younger students.

c. Observe protocols and employ respect, reverence, responsibility when using indigenous stories in the classroom (Archibald 2008; UBC IndEdu 200x 2014).

d. When engaging with a story, engage with it as the community would. Some stories cannot be shared publicly, and others are very personal. Always ask for permission to use an indigenous story from the local (or any other) community. It is better to bring an elder or knowledge keeper to tell the story than to tell it on one's own.

e. Incorporate curricula into the delivering of stories. (Archibald 2008)

4. Deconstruct false representations about First Peoples

a. Working with the students, critically analyze teaching materials and identify the potential stereotypes and generalizations found in teaching materials. This could be done by conducting a content analysis of children's literature where the teacher suggests comparing books about First Nations written by Indigenous authors with those written by non-Indigenous authors. (Lavoie 2016)

5. Recognize and respect the complexity of indigenous perspectives.

a. Indigenous values, such as holistic development, place and land are sources of knowledge, family is extended family, patience is valued, and primacy to collectiveness, harmony, balance, and relationships. To be inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing requires dynamic and multiple strategies.

i. For example: After sharing a story with children, give them time to think about it. Perhaps even send them home early and tell them to dream on the story. Their experience thinking about the story that evening can become an object of discussion the next day (UBC IndEdu 200x 2014)

b. Stories may end without resolution and may have a circular structure. When working with indigenous narratives, we must work with an open mind which is comfortable with ambiguity and complexity. (UBC IndEdu 200x 2014)

6. Creating relationships with Indigenous Peoples

a. Attend community events (e.g. National Indigenous Peoples Day, Louis Riel Day, Arctic Games, round dances, community meals) and have a critical conversation about relevance and meaning with students.

b. Sustain relationships with local band office.

c. Visiting families and extended families.

d. Follow protocols.

e. Engage with students outside the classroom.

7. Work on one's own thinking and perspective on indigeneity, land and one's shared history with local indigenous peoples to uncover further responsibilities. (Lordan and Dei 2016; Regan 2010; UBC IndEdu 200x 2014, 2017, 2015; Archibald 2008)

a. Learning from local Indigenous Knowledge Keepers outside school walls in a culturally relevant space (e.g. medicine walks, living with the land, sharing circles, attending powwows, language camps).

b. Reflect one's learning in the classroom environment, not just instruction and curriculum (Bucholz and Sheffler 2009).

c. Engaging in community outreach projects (e.g. Project of Heart, Orange Shirt Day, I am a witness, Walking With Our Sisters, Shannen's Dream, Jordan's Principle, The REDress Project).

d. Participating in educational activities and seek out new learning (e.g. Imagine a Canada – National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous Rights Blanket Exercise Workshop – KAIROS Canada, WE Schools – Indigenous Programming).

8. Evaluate the effectiveness of one's efforts.

Recommendations for the District:

1. Employ a long-form individualized assessment, which is flexible to meet the student where they are, where they are from, what they need. Portfolios are suggested, especially for literacy (Archibald, 2008).

2. The district should strongly consider developing meaningful, active and ongoing professional development which shapes or enhances teacher social consciousness and relational approaches.

a. "Teaching diverse learners in diverse contexts requires that educators develop social-cultural competency. Essential to this development is the understanding that student

diversity comprises numerous socially constructed variables such as the differences associated with ethnicity, race, gender, culture, sexuality and sexual orientation, and ability/disability status…To effectively implement social justice pedagogies and to demonstrate cultural competence, teachers must progress from ethnocentric perspectives stemming from a dominant social hegemony to a place of cultural awareness." (Hodge et al. 2017)

3. Be public about commitment to decolonization and why.

4. Teacher attitudes towards indigenous students is a self-fulfilling prophecy (Riley and Ungerleider 2012). Research has indicated that if teachers believe that their students are incapable of succeeding, those students will be more likely to fail. We must uproot deficit thinking surrounding indigenous people and issues.

5. Richards *et al.* claim to have identified some District-level structural factors which seemed to reduce the outcome gap between indigenous and non-indigenous students (Richards, Hove, and Afolabi 2008). Although this research is outdated, and the theoretical framework is left wanting. (one of their recommendations was to spread indigenous students out as it seemed to improve outcomes if indigenous students could not interact as much, which I would consider racist assimilation).

6. Trusting the teacher's abilities (even perceived trust) will increase organizational learning (Louis et al. 2017). Therefore, in communications and professional development, planning confidence in teacher's abilities to learn and apply their skills to a changing context would be wise.