Bringing Bataille to Justice

by Gad Horowitz

"Intelligence ... as sensitive to pain as aching teeth"[1] is at work in both Bataille and Levinas. Bataille is a hell dweller, and Levinas visits him there. They confer there, through gritted teeth, discoursing on the experience of evil. They agree that evil is, in Levinas' words, "an excess, a break with the normal and normative, with order, with synthesis, with the world"... It is "the nonsynthesizable."[2] Like death or as death, it is wholly other. Evil is trauma, overwhelming energy, energy that overwhelms the being, shattering its boundaries, making it impossible to experience it in the sense of assembling it as an event in historical time, within the mineness of the narrative of my life. Therefore, Bataille and Levinas would agree, evil can be a salutary shock, an awakening from the pleasant slumber of self certitude; "without evil, human existence would turn on itself, would be enclosed as a zone of independence, and [this] would certainly be the greater evil."[3]

But Levinas would not agree with Bataille that the experience of trauma *is* the experience of divinity. For Bataille, but not for Levinas, trauma *is* God. Bataille is transfixed in trauma, dying to repeat the transubstantiation of anguish into the joy of self loss. He prostrates himself before this divinity, propitiating the trauma, devoting himself to the object of his terror: "to face the impossible—exorbitant—when nothing is possible any longer" he says "is ... to have an experience of the divine."[4]

For Levinas, to find the God of Abraham *in* Energy, Intensity, or Trauma, one must somehow have loosened herself from the grip of what Levinas would call the primitive religion of taking Trauma *as* God. Bataille writes: "horror won't stop making me sick but it is my wish to love this weight unreservedly."[5] This weight is for Levinas the whole "weight of the world"[6] to which the subject, which is at bottom "sensibility," "vulnerability," "exposure to wounding," to "outrage," is subjected.[7] "The self is a subjectum; it is under the weight of the universe responsible for everything."[8] In the suffering of this evil the human being is called to "pass from the outrage undergone" and from an ensnarement in trauma to responsibility for the other man, for the persecuted and for the persecutor; to hear this call is to hear the name of God.

Bataille had pictured the Unknowable—the otherwise than being—as "a hard alien fingertip pressing into the small of the back."[9] Like many Bataillean expressions, Levinas could have used this. Perhaps he did, for he describes the subject as "a pure sensible point,"[10] a "point of pain."[11] "All the suffering and cruelty of essence weighs on a point that supports and expiates for it.... In expiation, on a point of the essence there weighs the rest of essence, to the point of expelling it"[12]—not as in Bataille, expelled as a "pure inner fall into a void"[13]— but expelled into itself: "a subject is immolated without fleeing itself, without entering into ecstasy ... it is pursued into itself, to the hither side of rest in itself, of its coincidence with itself ..."[14] into itself, its self *as* "substitution" for the other.

For Bataille, "sovereignty" or "glory" is the "moral summit," "a radiant shining through," in which the "isolated being denies itself as isolated being."[15] It is the moment in which I "ruin in myself that which is opposed to ruin."[16] Glory is to "drown joyously, sinking, and laughing at one's own tragic demise:[17] "One who loses his life is a saint—it matters little to what end."[18] For Levinas, it matters more than anything. For Bataille, "sovereign," glorious, is "what you and I are, on one condition, that we forget, forget *everything*."[19] But for Levinas, to forget *justice* is to fall short of the moral summit, to fall far short of glory. In the sovereign

moment of glory, Abraham drops the knife at the summit of Mount Moriah. For Bataille, "the sovereign is he who is as if death were not."[20] For Levinas, the self substituted for the other is he who is as if his *own* death were not: glorious is to prefer to die rather than let the other die. And we shall see that Bataille can't really forget justice: when the primitive gods sleep, he flirts with justice. Even Nick Land, the most intense Bataillean, flirts with justice when he writes: "all energy must be spent...the only questions being where and when and in whose name this useless discharge will occur."[21] "Useless" to the ego, Bataille and Levinas agree. But Levinas wants to focus on the question: In Whose Name?

The beyond being for both Bataille and Levinas is the beyond thought, beyond the idea, beyond form: it is the *singular*, what Bataille calls *l'informe*, the formless. "Bataille's writing," says Dennis Hollier, "is only an effort to... [get] lower and lower..." to that base matter "too low... to be submitted to the common measure of the idea." Bataille's desire is "to *fall*"[22] to the otherwise than being—taking Socrates' hint in the *Parmenides* about the excessive distance from the Forms of such useless things as hair, mud, dirt. Bataille goes lower: spiders, spit, the big toe, cadaver, tears and laughter, shit, rot, mutilation and waste, madness, obscenity, the severed foot... The low, the formless, is "outside genus," "unexplainable discrepancies."[23] "Base matter," says Bataille, is that which "exists outside of my self and the idea."[24] His desire is to fall into the realm of chance, going below any will to power into the will to chance, the will to laughter: "it is alea, how the dice *fall*."[25] "Here," says Hollier, "man finds himself in Hell....the realm of the pagan gods. The *inferni*, the places below, are divine."[26] But Levinas distinguishes two very different meanings of formless: first, the "absurdity" of that which, falling outside of form, is still relevant to form: "its uselessness appears only relative to the form against which it contrasts itself of which it is deficient." Second, the "signification of the (human) face breaking through all form."[27]

Here we only touch that which in Levinas' work is most difficult and most distinctive in contrast with Bataille and all other pagan and Christian and of course post-Christian thinkers—for Bataille, though he was introduced to philosophy by the Jew Lev Shestov, author of *Athens and Jerusalem*,[28] could never shed his foreskin. He could shred it but he could never shed it. Levinas distinguishes sharply the "Saying" from the content or words communicated, the sign, the "said." The Saying, signification itself, is prior to all signs. (There is no saying *outside* the said: the saying is "betrayed" in the said, leaves a "trace" in the said, but we can't pursue this matter here). The said belongs to Being. The saying is otherwise than the said, otherwise than being, prior to being, and its condition. Peperzak says it well: "The question of being—the question of 'what is?' has forgotten that this question is asked of someone. It is a call for help. Demande and priére..."[29] Questioning is what evokes, calls forth, or interpellates the "someone." Levinas writes: the theme, the said, "seems to contain the other. But already it is said *to* the other..."[30] Signification, Saying, happens when the human being, always already vulnerable, exposed to wounding, already responsible in the sense of compelled to respond to the weight of being, encounters the Face of the other human being as absolutely Other, unavailable to my material or intellectual grasp, essentially beyond essence, unpredictable, incalculable, inconceivable: the other not as alter ego, another me, another version or instance of "self," the other, signifying nothing but itself, signification itself, signification of signification. "The signifier, he who gives a sign, is not signified."[31] The face of the other, precisely because it is in its primordial materiality beyond any possibility of grasping, arouses in me an unquenchable temptation to murder her, in every sense of the word murder, including possession, comprehension, incorporation, assimilation, reduction to the same, recognition of the other as alter ego, another "me."

At that very instant of temptation, the other becomes the Questioner, the Interlocutor who questions being, essence, *my* drive to be for myself. It is the question of justice. How can I *justify* my existence? The existential possibility of murder—of myself as lord and master, exploiter, torturer, and executioner, of which Bataille was so excruciatingly aware—poses its ethical impossibility. It is the question of the first human being born of woman, our father Cain, the first murderer: "Am I my brother's keeper?" With this question he enacted his inescapable responsibility, his response to the Face of the other, his response to the question of the other: Will you murder me? How can you murder me?

The question is at once the only Commandment: thou shalt not murder. Cain's response was to murder and to turn away—but not to escape—from his inescapable responsibility; and Levinas' comment is: "only beings capable of war can rise to peace."[32]

There is a similar moment in Bataille: "Philosophy," he writes, "is never supplication:" but "without supplication, there is no conceivable reply: no answer ever preceded the question; and what does the question without anguish, without torment mean?"[33] For Bataille the

anguish is essentially inter-personally shared by alter egos who are *with* me down here in hell. But for Levinas what approaches is the alterity of the other, not from hell, not in hell, but from above, in an other dimension, the ethical dimension of "height." This ethical relation is asymmetrical, or non-relational, in the sense that it is always the I who is obligated, always I who am obligated. It is I as being, as the same, that is put in question by the other, beyond being. The other is not simply *refractory* to representation like traumatic happenings per se: he is, has always been prior to representation, she has never *been*. The other, and my (non) relation with the other is in principle absolutely invisible from any perspective; not visible to an observer, to a third, whether myself as third (thus myself as conscious subject) or some other ego or conscious subject as third. At this level there is no possibility of reciprocity in which *each* would be other to the other, for this would require a third position from which this reciprocity could be seen. I and the other are not on the same plane, for if we were she would not be the other but "a peculiar point of my realm ... [if the other were] included within a network of relations visible to a third party" the individuals would appear from the outset "as [mere] participants in the totality"—submitted to the common measure of the idea—particular instantiations of a genus—no longer singular. "The other would amount to a second copy of the same, both included in the same concept."[34] "The absolutely other is the Other. He and I do not form a number."[35] It is my non-reciprocal, asymmetrical obligation which individuates me. Thus for Levinas I am sovereign only in the sense that no one else can be responsible in my place as "hostage" for the Other, for all the others. What the other can do for me, says Levinas, is "*his* affair. If it were my affair, then the substitution would be only a moment of exchange and would lose its gratuity.... The other may substitute himself for whomever, except for me."[36] This is asymmetry, nonreciprocity, ingratitude, or the "curvature of intersubjective space."[37]

Bataille's lowering gave us an alterity which is still caught up with being. Ethical height, for Levinas, does involve a kind of lowering in the sense that the Face of the other obliges me without having any power over me: "I call face that which ... in another concerns ... me—reminding me from behind [his] countenance of his abandonment, his defenselessness, and his mortality."[38] Bataille's "communication" as the *sharing* of anguish, the loss of self of all of us on the same plane, our dying together, misses the irreplaceable singularity of the subject. It does not go below, that is above, the community of those who have nothing in common to the null place where I alone, the hard alien fingertip pressing into my back, bear the burden of all the others. The Bataillean space is not curved. That's why Bataille can only beat his head against the walls of this double dilemma: first he explains, "that which I desired to be for others" (he doesn't often formulate his desire in this Levinasian way) "was excluded" by my "being for me ... Therefore the use to which I wanted to be put by others required that I cease to be ... that I die.... [Thus] I was condemned to live as an unreality, as a fetus tainted at birth," and second: "I see the good of another as a kind of decoy, for if I wish the good of another it is in order to find my own." Therefore I'm left with only an "empty yearning, the unhappy desire to be consumed for no reason other than desire itself—to burn."[39] With both "therefores" Bataille turns himself around inside of a kind of symmetrically-twisted-on-itself mobius space. But Levinas would hear Bataille's helpless speech betraying its source in his election from on high, which has already produced him as inescapably himself, as self-for-the-other, prior to all possibilities on the plane of being of wishing the good of another in order to find his own. According to Levinas "without Saying, passivity would" doubtless "be crawling with secrets designs."[40] However, the Saying, the pure direction to the other, which is itself the condition for all possibilities of refusing or embracing this direction, ensures that what I do for the other could never be *merely* or *fundamentally* a modality of the for-self. And Levinas as well as Bataille uses the images of dying and burning: The Self "is a burning for the other, consuming the basis of any position for myself. He dies continuously"[41] not, thank God, for no reason other than to burn, but for the sake of the other. Levinas would say that Bataille is mistaken about his desire, "desire itself": desire itself (as opposed to ego's need) is desire for the other. Bataille's saying, betrayed in his said, is: hineni, here *I* am, not condemned to live as an unreality but as "myself, at the service of men ... without having anything to identify with but ... [this] saying itself."[42]

The subject being just a point of pain "does not identify itself, does not appear to knowing."[43] The subject is the singular being, just "moi, c'est moi.... and nothing else to which one might be tempted to assimilate me."[44] Signification is "expression"[45]—just pure expression of self, as self, to you for you, prior to any expressed. Bataille approaches this when he writes of Manet "no painter more heavily invested the subject not with meaning but with that which goes beyond and is more significant than meaning."[46] Levinas would ask: signifying signification?

Asymmetry again: asymmetry forbids taking human beings initially form any *perspective*, theological, sociological, biological, or cosmological, and deriving somehow an ethical orientation *from* such a perspective, deriving ethics from truths of being. "Like a shunt," says Levinas, "every social relation leads back to the presentation of the Other to the same without any image or sign, solely by the expression of the Face"[47].... "When taken to be like the genus that unites like individuals, the essence of society is lost sight of."[48] It is Bataille's cosmological ("general economical") perspective above all which holds him to the mobius plane of heterogeneity-homogeneity.

For Levinas, only the subject is formless, beyond being. An arrow shot at Hegel here will also hit Bataille: Levinas notes that for Hegel, unique or singular beings are mere "bits of dust" or "drops of sweat" collected by the movement of "universal self consciousness"—"forgettable moments" of what counts, which is "only their identities due to positions in the system."[49] Since that's what they are for Hegel, that's what they are for Bataille: dust, sweat, spit, with their value reserved or inverted scatalogically as the value of no value: singularity attributed to base matter. We come back to Levinas' distinction between the nudity of the useless which falls outside of form relative to form, and that of the Face breaking through all form at every moment. Nothing falls as low as it can go, impossibly low, lower than lower than low, except the other on high. "Nothing is unique" says Levinas, "that is, refractory to concepts, except the I involved in responsibility"[50] because the alterity of the Face is "not only a resistance to generalization, which is on the same plane.... Here the refusal of the concept is not only one aspect of its being but is its whole concept."[51] Bataille's tears, laughter, the absurd: for Levinas they are on the brink at which Bataille feels himself stymied: the human subject, says Levinas, is "called on the brink of tears and laughter to responsibility"[52] for all the others. Here Bataille has already been brought to justice.

What Levinas calls the face Bataille can only call defacement. Bataille defines "painting as the defacement of human figure, the defacement ... in which he constitutes himself as a man. In contrast to architecture, painting does not ask man to recognize himself in the mirror trap.... painting confronts him with an image in which he cannot find himself. Man produces himself refusing his image, in refusing to be reproduced."[53] Levinas' intuition of asymmetry allows him to present defacement, which is in the mode of lowering, precisely as the Face, in the mode of an ethical height which is neither the high nor the low of being. It's no longer a question of self-defacement as self-mutilation like Bataille's beloved Van Gogh cutting off of his ear, self-mutilation as refusal, even as refusal of the choice between submitting and refusing (of the kind Bataille attributes to Baudelaire),[54] for I am *already* constituted as human, already "fallen *upward*"[55] into the human, subjected by the Saying of the other, already a pure sensible point of responsibility. It's not the ear that has to go but the foreskin. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any other cuts. For Levinas, self-mutilation and suicide are evasions of responsibility, though only "the being capable of suicide is capable of sacrifice"[56] for the other.

For Levinas, spit, sweat, cadaver, rot, waste, etc. are not yet otherwise than being but products of the fragmentation of being ... "However incomparable the fragments of being" excluded, excreted by the Idea from knowledge, usefulness, and beauty, "[b]eing weaves among incomparables a common fate ... despite their diversity ... [they] do not escape order."[57] "Disorder is but another order."[58] "Every attempt to disjoin the conjunction would be only the clashing of the chains."[59] In the *Story of the Eye* Bataille enacts among other execrable marvels the transubstantiation in the mode of lowering of the body of Christ (the scene is a Roman Catholic Church) into the sperm of Christ "in the form of small white biscuits" and the wine, His blood, into his urine. Is this the first piss Christ?

"The ecclesiastics," writes Bataille, "at the bottom of their hearts...are quite aware that this is urine," otherwise they would have used red rather than white wine. And the hosts "obviously smell like come."[60] And obviously—would Bataille deny this?—this lowering of God (elsewhere Bataille makes Him loathe Himself and recognize Himself as pig and whore) not only lowers the God of Being but *repeats* him at a lower level, no matter how much lower still symmetrical, without breaking the mobius circle of higher being and lower or fragmented being. Bataille writes: "Life is a product of putrefaction, and it depends on both death and the dung heap.... Death is that putrefaction, that stench ... which is at once the source and the repulsive condition of *life*."[61] Here is the circle of life and death, saving and expenditure, the symmetry of life as detour to death, presented in the tractate *Avot*, in Levinas' favorite text, the Talmud, in these words: "Where do you come from? From a putrid, stinking drop. And where are you going? To a place of maggots and worms." But the Talmud poses a third couplet: "And before Whom will you justify yourself? Before the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He." In Levinas' radical restatement of the Jewish tradition this

would be: before the Other, the Unknowable Interlocutor who Questions Me. Only the asymmetry, the curvature of intersubjective space, the Before Whom, breaks through the circle of being, of life and death, has always already broken through as the condition of all human experience. Life, says Bataille, moves "unceasingly from the known to the unknown." There's no escape, he says, from "this circular agitation which does not exhaust itself in ecstasy but begins again from it."[62] Recurrent impossible tension: the thirst for annihilation of the being that wishes at all costs not to disappear. From cemetery to church, from urine to wine and back, chalice.... from acephale to the Marshall Plan[63] and back, attraction/repulsion, prohibition/transgression, territorialization/deterritorialization, eros/thanatos, self-assertion/self dismemberment. Nietzsche, says Bataille, "thrashed about in all directions, seeking a way out."[64] Thrashing about in the mobius of the same, no otherwise than being for Bataille other than clear awareness of this thrashing about. Well, there is the moment of supreme victory/defeat, glory, sovereignty forgetting everything, past and future, living as burning as dying as living in the so called moment—but this ecstasy, insists Levinas, is "but the outside of oneself of an entity always closed up at home with itself."[65] The ecstatic moment of lowering only preserves "the structure of self-knowledge ... of a quest for self, though it be led astray on obstructed labyrinthine pathways."[66] "Every opposition to life takes refuge in life and refers to its values."[67]

Sometimes we can catch Bataille on the brink of circumcision, leaving behind the pagan gods. (Hold that man down and cut off his foreskin! But don't spare the anesthetic, we wouldn't want him to enjoy it too much).[68] For example: when he says "unknowing does not eliminate sympathy"[69] is he not on the brink of hearing why or how it is that unknowing does *not* "forget everything," that it eliminates everything but "sympathy"? When he writes: "it is insofar as an individual is not a thing that he can be loved... the loved one cannot be perceived unless projected into death,"[70] is he not on the brink of Saying with Levinas that "[f]ear and responsibility for the death of the other person.... is ... the secret of love ... without concupiscence?"[71] Most famously, Bataille's "I find in myself nothing" immediately moves on to "at the disposal of my fellow beings... everything in me gives itself to others."[72]

The great Rabbi of Prague, the Maharal (who, according to legend, created and destroyed the Golem), when asked to contribute to the interminable discussion about why circumcision happens on the eighth day of life, speculated that it is like the musical scale. It begins with "do." Let's call it the indifference to essence, the "expenditure" which is Bataille's "glory," and it ends with "do," the same note but at a *higher* level—let's say it's the indifference which has passed over into what Levinas calls "indifference to essence as non-indifference to another,"[73] which Levinas calls glory This Passover is the reason that absolute unknowing does not eliminate sympathy.

Now look: what have I done? Have I come from piety to piety to a pious conclusion? Here I am on the spot Jacques Derrida pointed out in *On the Name*: Now that deconstruction has taken on a certain Levinasian tone, Derrida admits that though this is on the one hand pleasing, on the other, the left hand, he is repelled by the prospect of a "community of complacent deconstructionists:" Now that we postmoderns may officially explicitly concern ourselves with ethics, obligation, and responsibility, we may fall into "a new dogmatic slumber.... Reassured and reconciled with the world in ethical certainty and good conscience ... The consciousness of duty accomplished, or more heroically still, yet to be accomplished."[74] Levinas himself often warned of the temptation of good conscience, insisting on bad conscience going from bad to worse, responsibility painfully increasing the more it is actually shouldered. But that can sound pious too. Perhaps nothing can insure Levinas' teaching against piety and the pious Jewish and Christian clerics and the pious liberals and social democrats like the editors of *Philosophy Today*, introducing their special issue on Levinas, who line him up with Vaclav Havel and Jan Sokol, giving him partial credit for the "fact" that "human rights, fifty years after they were enshrined in the U.N. Charter, have finally become a primary obligation. At least they are in principle an obligation for world citizens."[75]

So I have come to an alternate conclusion which you were perhaps not expecting. Whenever I hear the word "Levinas," I reach for my Bataille. Yes, I want Bataille held down and circumcised, brought to justice, but I also want Levinas lowered. He *says* the "psyche" is "psychosis," possession by the other, but he never freaks out. I want him lowered down here, bug-eyed, red-faced, raving with me and Bataille and Nick Land and all the rest of us fools, raging against the world as it is, against our damaged lives, *with* us and the murderous kids of Columbine. I want to hear that clashing of the chains, at least a little bit. Even if it is almost immediately commodified.

NOTES

1 Georges Bataille, *Guilty* (Venice, California: Lapis Press, 1988), 66.
2 Emmanuel Levinas, "Transcendence and Evil," in *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 180.
3 Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 93.
4 *Ibid.*, 23.
5 Bataille, *Guilty*, 12.
6 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 128.
7 Ibid., 15.
8 Ibid., 116.
9 Bataille, *Guilty*, 12.
10 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 164.
11 Ibid., 56.
12 Ibid., 125.
13 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 121.
14 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 108.
15 Bataille, *Guilty*, 104.
16 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 120.
17 Ibid., 36.
18 Ibid., 197.
19 Georges Bataille, "Sovereignty," in *The Bataille Reader*, ed. Fred Botting and Scott Wilson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 312.
20 Ibid., 319.
21 Nick Land, *The Thirst for Annihilation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 56.
22 Dennis Hollier, *Against Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., The M.I.T. Press, 1989), 102, my emphasis.
23 Ibid.
24 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 36.
25 Quoted in Hollier, *Against Architecture*, 103, Bataille's emphasis.
26 Ibid., 103.
27 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 74-5.
28 Lev Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1966).
29 Adrian Peperzak, "Review of *Otherwise than Being*," in *Research in Phenomenology* (Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press, volume 8, 1976), 247-8 n.21.
30 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 195, my emphasis.
31 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 182.
32 Ibid., 222.
33 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 36.
34 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 16.
35 Ibid., 39.
36 Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 91.
37 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 291.
38 Ibid., 227.
39 Georges Bataille, "On Nietzsche," in *The Bataille Reader*, 337-38.
40 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 19.
41 Ibid., 50.
42 Ibid., 149.
43 Ibid., 56.
44 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 296.
45 Ibid., 297.
46 Quoted in Yves Alain Bois, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 21.
47 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.
48 The reciprocity of responsibility: the necessity of rationality, law, and taking care for oneself, comparison of incomparables, emerges as a secondary phenomenon—it "comes to be superimposed on the pure altruism ... of the I *qua* I" (Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 100). This is another important and difficult matter we cannot pursue here.
49 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 104.
50 Ibid., 139..
51 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 118.
52 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 18.
53 Hollier, *Against Architecture*, 55.
54 Georges Bataille, *Literature and Evil* (London: Marion Byers, 1997), 57.
55 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 184.
56 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 149.
57 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 8.
58 Ibid., 101.
59 Ibid., 182.
60 Georges Bataille, *The Story of the Eye* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987), 76.
61 Bataille, 'Sovereignty,' in *The Bataille Reader*, 242-43.
62 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 111.
63 According to Peter Tracy Connor, *Georges Bataille and the Mysticism of Sin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 182 n.34, it was said that Bataille mused for a while that he might with the Nobel Peace prize for his general-economic advocacy of the Marshall Plan.
64 Bataille, "On Nietzsche," in *The Bataille Reader*, 340-41.
65 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 178.
66 Ibid., 194 n.6.
67 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 145.
68 I am grateful to Roger Gibbs for the anesthetic suggestion.
69 Georges Bataille, "Unknowing and its Consequences," in *The Bataille Reader*, 324.
70 Ibid., 325.
71 Levinas, *Entre Nous*, 130-1.
72 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 128-9.
73 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 146.
74 Jacques Derrida, *On the Name* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 15.
75 Caroline Bayard and Joyce Bellows, "Editors' Introduction," Philosophy Today (Chicago: DePaul University, 43:2, 1999), 115.