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Collective Responsibility and Solidarity: Toward a Body-Centered Ethics

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Abstract: Practices such as cogenerative dialoguing and coteaching are grounded in the notions of *collective responsibility* and, the former more so than the latter, in *solidarity*. However, both notions are not generally grounded in a more encompassing philosophical framework that would allow us understand how concrete human praxis is tied to ethics generally and collective responsibility and solidarity more specifically. In this brief introduction to the topic, I articulate how ethics can be grounded in our material existence, itself inherently social. I provide a concrete situation, and excerpt of a heated discussion about access to a basic necessity (water), in the context of which the collective nature of responsibility is exemplified. The framework outlined is indeterminist, leading us to the requirement of resolving its inherent contradiction in continued concrete praxis.

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1. Introduction

As a result of the societal division of labor, the responsibility for the education of future generations has been delegated to school systems generally and teachers particularly. To my knowledge, there is not a single policy document that encourages schools and teachers to involve students, their parents, or other individuals outside of the traditional division of labor to contribute to curriculum design and teaching. Research on teaching and learning, too, generally is the result of and characterized by a division of labor, according to which university-based researchers—besides teaching future generations—observe, collect data sources, and interpret documentary evidence whereas the participants in their research projects are responsible for the production of what become data sources. The practice of cogenerative dialoguing, presented in the feature article on ethics in this issue (STITH & ROTH, 2006) changes both of these forms of division of labor. The responses to the lead article provide additional evidence from feminist (SCANTLEBURY & LAVAN, 2006), embodiment (KIM, 2006), and

cosmopolitan ethic (EMDIN & LEHNER, 2006) concerning the complex nature involved in the endeavor to enact *collective responsibility* and *solidarity*. [1]

Both *collective responsibility* and *solidarity* refer to aspects of human praxis that are important to the survival of the human species, but which are also violated in a struggle for resources that leaves many exploited even in industrialized nations. Friedrich NIETZSCHE (1976) called the source of this struggle the *will to power*, which overrides any sense of community and solidarity in many countries and societies. More so, in an increasingly legalistic society (especially in North America), individuals attempt to divest themselves of their part in collective life blaming others and place the responsibility for events with "them"—frequently associated with financial implications. In the field of academic research, too, the question of responsibility is dealt with in legalistic ways, whereby institutions (e.g., the three Canadian research councils responsible for the social sciences and humanities, health research, and natural science and engineering, respectively, published the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and institutional boards (e.g., Institutional Review Boards, Human Research Ethics Boards) create and implement policies that not only protect research participant but also researchers and institutions from possible legal action concerning issues that have arisen in the course of research. [2]

The field of ethics in research has tremendously developed over the past decade, especially in the North American context. It is a cultural-historical phenomenon, which, following NIETZSCHE (1976) and pragmatic philosophy (RORTY, 1991), are inherently contingent, cultural-historical achievements of human collectives (societies). Pragmatist philosophers suggest substituting "a 'merely ethical' foundation for our sense of community" and ask to "think of our sense of community as having no foundation except shared hope and the trust created by such sharing" (p.33). NIETZSCHE (1976) showed that ethics and morals were essentially in the service of those in institutional positions that constitute resources for the enactment of power; those people want to justify ethics and morals, the "sign languages of the affect" (p.96, my translation).[1] Instead, NIETZSCHE wanted humans to develop relations that in all their contingency and discursive embellishments come to be seen as firm, canonical, and obligatory, that is, he wanted social relations for which solidarity was a sufficient foundation. [3]

Although the feature text (STITH & ROTH, 2006) and the responses address the notion of collective responsibility and solidarity, they do not provide a more comprehensive framework in which these notions can be grounded. The purpose of this article is to show how responsibility can be grounded in ontology and epistemology consistent with anthropogenesis and cultural-historical development. It is a way of grounding consciousness in our bodily existence and the plural (social, societal) nature of being more generally. There then no longer is the question whether we are free to choose responsibility, which implies both

1 Ethics and morals, though frequently used synonymously as Greek and Roman equivalents, nevertheless may be distinguished as pertaining to the general aim toward conducting a "good" life *with and for others in just institutions* and the practical rules and norms that are created to concretely realize this aim (e.g., RICŒUR, 1990/1992).

that others can count on us and our accountability for; we are not and therefore are hostage to a phenomenon that predates our individual and collective becoming conscious. We can only select to violate it and act irresponsibly, and therefore also violate the principle of and solidarity, without which the world can only become a jungle where the law of the strongest is the only one at hand. [4]

2. The Limits of Rational as Grounding for Ethics

Philosophers have attempted to construct a theoretical model of human understanding of human understanding, including ethical and moral questions. The millenary quest arrived at an endpoint with Immanuel KANT, who constructed a model that links human experience and ideal forms of knowledge. KANT's achievement came with a price: he had to presuppose the human subject, which constructs itself and knowledge from experience, and he had to presuppose time and space as the preconditions for someone to have experience. His ethics emblematically is captured in the categorical (moral) imperative: "only act upon that maxim that you can simultaneously want to be a general law" (KANT, 1785/1956, p.51, my translation). All other imperatives of duty can be derived from this one. For KANT, ethics comes into play *precisely* then when duties and responsibilities are not covered by law, for all responsibilities fall into the domain of ethics, "but their legislation is not thereby not anchored in ethics, but for many of them comes from somewhere outside of it" (KANT 1797/1956, p.325, my translation). KANT therefore separates law from ethic, which he defines as *Sittenlehre*, the "science of morals" (p.508). [5]

Duty, obligation, liability, and responsibility, the terms covered by KANT's notion of *Pflicht*, all imply the idea of a legal constraint (limitation) of free will. This constraint may be external, anchored in law, or coming from the self. The moral imperative, through its categorical appeal, announces this constraint, which applies to humans as rational beings, who, in KANT's words, are unholy enough to whimsically act other than the moral law. When they follow the law, they do it unwillingly: and here lies precisely the aforementioned constraint. [6]

The moral imperative is categorical, which means, transcendent and therefore exists outside of and prior to human law and (bodily) experience. It is also evident that the imperative is centered on the subject who acts following a principle that comes from another realm than human experience. Ethics and morals, here, are dimensions of rational action. It is a matter of human consideration to combine the freedom and will to act with the constraints implied by ethics. For KANT, the natural drives of human beings, which counteract ethico-moral obligations, are "to be battled," constrained, and victoriously overcome in the mind prior to acting. This leads us to *be able to do* what law commands we *have to do* (p.509). [7]

The KANTian approach has its limits, as it is fundamentally grounded in rational logic. KANT's subject presupposes itself as autonomous and then constructs itself in the course of its biography. NIETZSCHE (1976) was highly critical of the possibility to ground ethics and morals in the way KANT had done, showing, among others, that the associated discourses are highly contingent (i.e., non-

teleological) and cultural-historically specific. The categorical imperative is nothing but an untenable claim. Another fundamental shortcoming in KANT's approach lies in the fact that he inadequately deals with the relations between human beings. HEGEL (e.g., 1807/1977) criticizes KANT for the purely formal and emptily tautological nature of approach to ethics. He characterizes the battle of self-consciousness as a "sorry spectacle of a collision between passion and duty" (p.279 [§465]) and proposes a solution fully grounded in the social nature of being. Because HEGEL's developing mind implies the dialectic of individual and collective, his approach to ethics inherently differs from his predecessor. [8]

Even prior to NIETZSCHE's critique that philosophers think their objects non-historically, HEGEL thought ethics and morals from a developmental evolutionary perspective. Both are the result of consciousness that develops as it estranges and returns to itself. For HEGEL, morality is an integral part of the social activity of humans. It therefore cannot be divorced from the concrete totality of society, its laws and institutions, which, as all its other aspects, are the products of cultural-historical processes. HEGEL articulates a view in which there is a continuous interaction between all the moments of the dialectical movement according to which men make their society with all its institutions, a society in which they then work and live as independent beings (LUKÁCS, 1938/1977). [9]

More recently, philosophers have come to recognize that KANT's theoretical model of human understanding is non-viable, as it is not consistent with possible ways in which anthropogenesis may have occurred, that is, pre-human, great-ape-like ancestors have come to know and have culture as humans currently have. HEGEL, while overcoming the problem of contradictions in human consciousness, nevertheless reproduced idealism and its fundamental gap between consciousness and the material nature of all conscious being and the way it experiences the world—the object of phenomenology. HEGEL's subject only can be an idealist subject, as it is grounded in consciousness only. It is a subject of consciousness that turns back upon itself in and through engaging the object of consciousness, which constitutes its own negation, other than itself. The fulcrum for this turning back upon itself of the individual consciousness is the practical activity of thinking. This subject, which engages it self by making part of itself the object, therefore never gets out of itself; for this reason, it also has to presuppose itself. The problems of both phenomenology and dialectics have been "sublated" in a philosophical approach that deserves the adjectives materialist, dialectical, and phenomenological. [10]

2. Responsibility: From Beyond Essence

Even before KANT and HEGEL, there existed attempts to overcome the body-mind split and the resulting transcendental idealism. Thus, SPINOZA (1677/1966) suggested that the split theorized by his colleague DESCARTES can be overcome only when consciousness and ethics are grounded in the material body. Although materialist, SPINOZA's *étique* ultimately had to fail because it was founded in a mechanical materialism and therefore inherently deterministic. This determinism arises from the fact that SPINOZA did not think of and theorize the

things in themselves but the aspects under which they appear. Because SPINOZA begins with setting the Substance (One) equal to God, he ends having to conclude that the ultimate being also is the origin of evil, which has led some to conclude that he provided a death-blow to morality (see HEGEL, 1890). [11]

During the twentieth century, phenomenological philosophers grounded consciousness and ethics in our everyday being in the world (e.g., HEIDEGGER, 1927/1977). For HEIDEGGER, the wish to have a conscience is the most fundamental, existential precondition for the possibility of being and becoming factically guilty—being guilty, including in a legal sense, is an existential. Human beings let their inmost self take action, and "it is only in this way that [they] can *be* responsible" (p.288). But, so HEIDEGGER, each action inherently is without conscience by necessity—the idea that we do not know our actions is already present in SPINOZA—because in its orientation to others, "it has always already become guilty toward the others" (HEIDEGGER, 1927/1977, p.288). This formulation would become a foundation of much of subsequent thoughts on ethics, whereby we already are responsible prior to being and beyond all essence (LEVINAS, 1998). In the most pointed form, we can formulate the possibility for responsibility in the incompossible—that is, dialectical and therefore self-negating, self-contradictory—nature of *responsible* action. Because action is without conscience, it inherently is irresponsible. Therefore, responsible acting means being responsibly irresponsible or irresponsibly responsible. It is only in such a dialectical framing, as impossible possibility—as im-possible (the possible as impossible)—that we can come to grips with experience in general (DERRIDA, 2005b). "It is no accident that this discourse on conditions of possibility, at the very point where its claim is obsessed by the impossibility of overcoming its own performativity, should extend to all the places where some performative force occurs" (p.88). This link between the dialectic of performativity and ethics is central to recent dialectical materialist phenomenology (e.g., RICŒUR, 1990/1992). [12]

Recent philosophical thought theorizes the emergence of human consciousness in a threefold dialectic: self|other, body|bodies, and the relation between these two dialectics (ROTH, in press). Thus, in an originary moment, human beings discover their bodies as different from other bodies, including those of other humans; and they discover their selves as different from other selves, for whom they themselves are other selves (LEVINAS, 1978/1998). This originary moment paradigmatically is signified in the figure of the touch, in which one organism reaches out to touch something other than itself only to realize that the other touches it (DERRIDA, 2005a). It is in and through the touch (a person touching another with her hand or touching one hand with another), which presupposes proximity, that we come to experience the other as other, his or her body as that which lies outside of my touch, which in fact touches me as I touch it. In touching it, I am responsible for it's touching me. [13]

For this first realization to occur, the other bodies, which are the source of other human selves, already have to exist—touching is always "self-touching you" (DERRIDA, 2005a). It is only in the community with others that consciousness can emerge. And this consciousness is both individual and collective. Without a

collective, this unfolding of the threefold dialectic cannot occur. Being human therefore always means being singular plural (NANCY, 2000). Being singular plural also means being responsible—being countable on, being accountable for—not only for one's own doings but also for the doings of others. And this responsibility reaches into our past, the beginning before all beginnings, and into the time before all consciousness, which some cultures fittingly express in terms such as *Dreamtime* or *La nuit du temps* (the night of time). Both in phylogenetic and ontogenetic development, humans participate with others in collective processes, and it is out of these processes that consciousness develops. We therefore contribute to the emergence of intersubjectivity as much as to the emergence of our own subjectivity. But contributing to the production and emergence of intersubjectivity means that we are responsible for the other, whose own subjectivity is interdependent with intersubjectivity. We are responsible before being conscious beings: responsibility for the other, which inherently is responsibility for oneself (LEVINAS, 1998). [14]

In this way, responsibility arises from the fact that we are inherently constitutive of the singularity of others in their plurality, who, in return are equally responsible because they contribution to my own singularity. In a reflexive way, therefore, I am both responsible for others and their actions as well as for my own self and my actions—my actions are constitutive of others *and* of myself. Strictly speaking, I perform, as an action cannot be reduced to the individual but always lives in and through the dialectical tension in the internal contradictions of individual | collective, self|other, and singular plural phenomena. Responsibility in this singular plural mode means responsibility that simultaneously is both individual and collective. But other than in the KANTian imperative and in the HEGELian idealist formulation, responsibility is thoroughly tied to collective human bodily existence, because existing always means existing in and through the body. It is a body-centered ethics of the kind that KIM (2006) founds in a different literature, which is also concerned with the embodied nature of cognition and human experience. [15]

In this way of thinking, human beings are responsible for the other, whose becoming a being they are a precondition of. Even as children, prior to all consciousness of self and being, we—prior to any consciousness of "I" and "we"—collude with our parents and others in the production of child–parent interactions, and thereby contribute who *they* are, collude in the production of parental identities. We are responsible for the other before all consciousness, before there is a separation between self and other, and therefore, we are responsible before and beyond all essence, in a state of *otherwise than being*, as the title of LEVINAS' book (1998) suggests. The moment humans first came to realize themselves as human subjects among subjects, they already have been the precondition of each other, any other, both human and non-human, for whom they are responsible. But equivalently, the other is responsible for me. Human beings therefore are responsible for one another, collectively—even if they, in their focus on the individual, foreshorten and reduce being and thereby attempt to cover up collective responsibility. [16]

Being thereby is founded not in the subject, which presupposes itself as a condition of its being and development—both KANT and HEGEL require the subject, which develops itself, using classical or dialectical logic. *Co-appearance* and *being singular plural*, however, do not presuppose being. The ontology articulated here grounds being in non-being: every presupposition of being consists in its non-presupposition (NANCY, 2000). Subjectivity therefore can no longer be grounded in consciousness and thematization. My subjectivity always is given to me, in an act of absolute passivity, a passivity that transcends all intentionality—which, too, is received, as I cannot intend my own intention. Thus,

> "being singular is plural in its very Being. It follows, then, that *not only must being-with-one-another not be understood starting from the presupposition of being-one, but on the contrary, being-one ... can only be understood by starting from being-with-one-another*" (p.56, original emphases). [17]

Individual beings always co-appear in and as plurality. This also means that the self appears to itself as an other. But it is immediately clear that one cannot be an other to oneself unless one started from the alterity of the *with*. This *with* the other is the origin of being singular plural,

> "*since it is neither 'love,' nor even 'relation' in general, nor the juxta-position of in-differences, the 'with' is the proper realm of the plurality of origins insofar as they originate,* not from one another or for one another, *but in view of one another or with regard to one another*" (p.82, original emphases). [18]

Here, NANCY arrives at a formulation of the origin of self and other that has striking similarity with LEVINAS' concept of the *face*. To be "in view of one another" means to view his or her face and, simultaneously, to expose one's own face to the other. The face, therefore, and with it the regard that is associated with the face, is the ultimate experience of the *with*. It is through the face that we discover the other as another self, and with it, our responsibility for the other. This face is revealed to us precisely in proximity. In this way, subjectivity comes to be "the other in the same, without alienating the same" (LEVINAS, 1998, p.112). [19]

Being thereby comes to be not only *for itself*, as HEGEL thought it, but also *for all*, the other in general. The responsibility for the other is integral to and foundational for our being in the world, which always and already is being with others. I cannot think responsibility into appearance because I am always and already responsible prior to all consciousness and thematization. Others have to be able to count on my, which makes me accountable for my performances; but others complete my performances to produce acts that are both mine and not mine. The upshot is that in harming others I also harm myself; and my responsibility is as much as for what I do as for the doings of others. "Responsibility for the other, this way of answering without a prior commitment, is human fraternity itself, and it is prior to freedom" (LEVINAS, 1998, p.116). This responsibility therefore is more profound than anything we can think, as it not only implies responsibility for the other but also for the responsibility of the other toward the other, including me. My responsibility therefore precedes my being—I

am a hostage to it. It precedes all egoism and altruism, is older than the ego, and exists prior to all principles. [20]

The idea of *fraternity* and *being hostage* in and through responsibility for the other leads us to the notion and praxis of *solidarity*. To pragmatist philosophers, solidarity is as contingent as self and community (e.g., RORTY, 1989). It is therefore characterized by "we-intentions," whereby the "we" pertains to something smaller than humanity. It comes to be "thought of as the ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation—the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of 'us'" (p.192). For RORTY, the contingency of self and community also means contingency of solidarity and the possibility to make it rather than having to find it. While this appears reasonable, I do not agree with RORTY that solidarity and with it responsibility *only* concern our public lives: "our responsibilities to others constitute *only* the public side of our lives, a side which competes with our private affections and our private attempts at self-creation, and which has no *automatic* priority over such private motives" (p.194).[2] The problem here lies in the fact that even private motives inherently are mediated by sociality, because even the most private motives always are motives inherently intelligible not only to ourselves but also to others. As MARX (1976) suggested, in his individuality, Robinson Crusoe can be understood only as a Brittan (collective); any attempt to understand his doing on its own would be a Robinsonade. A better approach appears to be to ground responsibility in the "*with*," which precedes all essence, which is neither mediated nor immediate and therefore constitutes mediation without mediator (NANCY, 2000). Thus, Robinson is thoroughly Brittan; and the Kaspar Hausers of this world do not act human at all. [21]

Responsibility, therefore, cannot be willed or intended because it precedes all will and intention. We receive it passively as we receive intentionality itself. Collective responsibility is with us, whatever we do: we can only assert it or deny it (willfully, out of ignorance), which in any case only reaffirms it. We are hostage to responsibility; and inherently, we are unconditionally so. This situation grounds solidarity. Being unconditionally hostage "is not the limit case of solidarity, but the condition for all solidarity" (LEVINAS, 1998, p.117). Responsibility for the other and solidarity are both condition for and result of collectivity, taking us to think in terms of "we," common general interests rather than particular partial interests. A common general interest is exactly that which the practitioners of cogenerative dialoguing are after. [22]

2 RORTY fundamentally is an Anglo-Saxon philosopher, thoroughly bathed in and formed by the individualist tendencies of his culture. Because he does not think dialectically, he cannot overcome the contradictions inherent in the individual–collective opposition.

3. Responsibility for the Other: A Concrete Illustration

Responsibility and solidarity may appear abstract concepts, but in fact operate at the level of our everyday lives, which we produce and reproduce through everyday actions, including talk with others. The responsibility for the other can be exemplified in an example from speech act theory (AUSTIN, 1962), where each act is understood as comprising three components: the performance (locutionary act), the intent (illocutionary act), and the effect (perlocutionary act).[3] In the following interaction, which occurred as part of a public meeting over a controversy, where the politicians of a municipality refused to connect the one remaining part of town to the water grid that already serves all other citizens. One of the residents of the unserved area, Bolt, requests a turn at talk, reserved for questions to the experts present (town engineer, scientists, engineering consultants, water advisory council). The town engineer, Bishop, responds (Figure 1).

Transcript 1: Public Meeting, September 1999

Bolt: What capacity are, uh, you looking at in terms of population levels that can be met and uh, obviously agriculture is an issue there too. So what are you dealing with? Why that size as opposed to a two-inch or four-inch? I'm just curious as to what, uh, information. I'd just like to know what the difference is.

Bishop: That's a good question. The line was sized to provide residential flows and a bare minimum fire flow. Between five hundred and eight hundred gallons a minute sustain flow for a fire anywhere along that line. This would be the bare minimum that we would recommend to be installed under good engineering practice. If, you were to try and provide water for agriculture you would have to increase the size of the new line and you would have to also increase the size of the line that runs along Mount Newton Crossroad from Saanichton from Wallace Drive all the way down past the school where it exists now. It's only an eight-inch line as well. So the line that is proposed at the moment is simply an extension of that system for residential and fire flow purposes. So, if that water main were to be approved, we, as staff, would take it forward a recommendation to Council to at least consider upgrading that for agricultural purposes and to pay the increased cost for it. But yet again that would be, uh, uh, a secondary step well after a lot of other things had taken place. Have I answered your question?

Bolt: No you haven't.

Bishop: I'm sorry.

Bolt: My question was, what population would serve=

Figure 1. Transcript from a public meeting that is part of a fight between a municipality and local residents, who want to get access to the same water grid that already supplies everyone else in town. [23]

When Bolt completes his utterance (locutionary act), everybody in attendance (including the researchers) understands that he has asked a question (illocutionary act). That is, the audience does not just hear some sounds but they hear someone talk; and they hear the person not just talk but ask a question. Thus, the speech act allows those present to hear the talk as a question. That is, the intent of the speech act is already understood, though Bolt has not even talked about his intentions. Rather, in the modulation of his voice and the achieved grammar of the utterance, he also communicates how what he says is to be heard. And these things human beings learn before they know about

3 RICŒUR (1990/1992) suggests that speech act theory is ethically neutral. However, this illustration and my analysis grounded in LEVINAS will show that because the speech act requires two turns for its completion, responsibility for the other is inherent. This also appears to me consistent with BAKHTIN (1993), who postulated that completeness of an act requires the unity of its special (deriving from content) and moral responsibility (deriving from its historical actuality).

grammar or prosody. That is, even preceding conscious awareness, human beings know how something is to be understood, as a question rather than as a statement. [24]

Here, Bolt wants to know something from the town engineer (Bishop). The town engineer knows he is the addressee rather than someone else in the room, one of the scientists or doctors present. Bishop begins to speak and acknowledges to have been asked a question rather than having heard a statement: "That's a good question." In this, Bolt's utterance is completed as a question, rather than as an annoying comment, an insult, or any other form of speech act that we might want to imagine. Bishop then provides a lengthy statement about the amount of water that a water main has to be able to carry when it also serves fire hydrants. He subsequently gets into explaining the process by means of which the local administration would approve an extension to the water main. He ends with asking whether he has answered the question asked. [25]

In asking whether he has answered the question, Bishop articulates a general understanding and responsibility that a question has to be answered, or the non-responding person would be considered rude. That is, in acting in the way he does, Bishop also answers to the collective responsibility for making human interactions work, by answering the question. [26]

Interestingly, though, after answering he asks a question in turn, namely whether he has answered the question asked. That is, although he has just extensively talked what might have been taken to be the answer to the question, which he acknowledges as having understood, he now asks whether he in fact has answered the question he has just answered. [27]

Bolt responds. In responding, Bolt, too, does what is generally expected; he answers to his responsibility as much as he answers the other. Here, the answer is negative: "No, you haven't" answered the question I (Bolt) asked. But Bolt cannot deny his responsibility for Bishop's turn, for the latter only responded in what he was hearing Bolt to ask. Thus, in asking the way he was asking, Bolt is responsible for the resources Bishop can draw on in responding. That is, not only is Bishop responsible for retrospectively completing Bolt's turn, but also Bolt is responsible prospectively for the form and content of the subsequent turn. [28]

In both instances, Bishop's utterance completes Bolt's earlier one as question. It is only because Bishop answers that Bolt's utterance comes to be a question. One could imaging Bishop having said, "It's not your turn," which would have had the consequence that Bolt's talk might be considered to be rude. (This is in fact what happens elsewhere in the transcript as part of the interaction between one of the members of the Water Advisory Task Force and a local resident.) Or Bishop might have said something like, "This is ridiculous!" and thereby marked Bolt's utterance as something that is not only unexpected but out of order or something else altogether. Bishop therefore contributes to making a completed act of what Bolt has performed, Bishop completes Bolt's performance, which becomes an action only through Bishop's completion. Bishop therefore enacts a

second form of responsibility, namely the one for the action of the other, or rather, completing the action as something social. Bolt performs the utterance, enacting an intent that is both his and not his (others understand the intent), but whether Bolt asks a legitimate question or makes a ridiculous statement depends on the effect his utterance has, and the affirmation of the effect only comes in the performance that follows. That is, Bishop does not just engage in an independent, subject-centered performance, but in fact also completes the preceding performance and begins the new one, which is only completed in the subsequent action, here the one by Bolt, who answers that the answer has not really been an answer. [29]

Here, Bolt's response confirms that Bishop has not answered, that all the speech production that preceded his turn has not fulfilled his request. That is, the responsibility for Bishop's action as one that has not answered the question also lies with Bolt, in and through whose speech act Bishop's turn has become a non-answer to the previous, produced | affirmed question. This state of affairs is then confirmed in the following turn, which can be heard as an apology. [30]

Bishop says, "I'm sorry." In it, we can hear an apology. Thus, Bishop responds to another responsibility embodied in sociality, apologizing for a misstep or mishap. He takes responsibility for not having responded, but his utterance only completes Bolt's earlier statement. Had Bishop said, "Yes I did," then Bolt's statement "No you haven't" might have been turned into a complaint, or, under different circumstances, into a pleasantry. [31]

This brief example and analysis shows how human performances are intertwined to complete each other as speech acts. Each person is responsible both for his or her performance, which sets up the resources for the next speaker, and for completing the previous performance into a speech act. In each performance, I am not only responsible for what I do, perform, but also for the other—and this in a dual way, as I both complete previous and set up subsequent speaking turns. Others, in turn, are equally responsible. And each performance is responsible both toward the individual and the collective. We therefore are collectively responsible. [32]

4. Actions as Paradigm

Speech actions are but one among a range of different kinds of actions, all of which are constitutive of the cultural-historical activities that reflexively constitute the former. The same analysis used for speech acts therefore can be applied to any form of action, not just speech acts (RICŒUR, 1991). This analysis shows that in talking, we both complete the previous turn at talk to make it act and begin a new act, which, in turn, is only completed by the subsequent turn at talk. Responsibility therefore reaches both backward and forward: I am responsible because in my doing something, I complete the previous turn, which thereby becomes an action; and I begin the next act, which is only completed by someone else. I am therefore responsible prospectively, as my doing sets up the other to

act, so that again I am responsible for his/her action. In fact, all actions therefore are *our* actions rather than just mine. [33]

At one level, an action is collective because its intelligibility is always already given, and its intents are not dependent on my thinking but are given in the material body of the doing (sound for speaking, movement of body). What I do therefore is inherently a concrete realization of a collective possibility, the responsibility for which we, humankind, have to bear collectively. What I do is a collective possibility, because someone else, too, could have done it and because in doing what I do I presuppose that my action is intelligible to others, which means, that they understand my doing as something they could have done as well. But collective possibilities do not exist outside realizations of them, which are always accomplished in the concrete acts of individual persons. [34]

At a second level, an action is collective as shown in the preceding analysis, because each performance completes the previous performance to become an act, and sets of the following performance. The completion of a previous performance as an act in and through the present performance means that the intention of a performance is available even if it is not explicitly articulated. That is, the intention of a performance has to be available and recognizable in the performance before any communication at all, which is possible only when being is being singular plural, so that intersubjectivity exists simultaneously with individual subjectivity, the two being but two sides of the same coin. [35]

Collective responsibility therefore is not something that I can contribute or not, but inherently is something that I can intend only to affirm or deny. But in denying collective responsibility, that is, responsibility for the other, I already affirm it even though in its negative form. When my actions are such that they exploit or damage the environment or exploit the poor and those in third-world countries generally, I can close my eyes or push my head into the sand, but I cannot deny my contribution to the system of exploitation and destruction. In each act, I not only do something but also reproduce and contribute to the maintenance of a society, in which exploitation and environmental destruction are concrete general possibilities that anybody can concretize in and through his performances. [36]

5. Cogenerative Dialoguing and Ethics

Cogenerative dialoguing, both as educational praxis and research praxis, has a lot of potential for deconstructing traditional boundaries that come with different institutional relations, including those that define student–teacher or researched–researcher relations. The potential comes from the fact that human beings, irrespective of their origin and irrespective of their institutional position, get together to talk about what is to be done next and how it will be done. The fact that ethics and morals are contingent, as NIETZSCHE pointed out, not only means that these notions and what they encompass are the results of cultural-historical processes but also means that we have at any one moment the power to contribute to ethico-moral practice and to the configuration of ethico-moral discourses. It also means that there is no ultimate purpose or goal of ethico-moral

praxis and discourse—which would lead us to teleology; rather, we continually develop praxis and discourse on the basis of where we currently find ourselves, the lessons we have learned in the past. And because there is no ultimate goal, if it not be radical solidarity, then we can only attempt to establish together, and thereby already enact radical solidarity, to achieve new forms of praxis and new ethico-moral discourses together. [37]

Concerning feminist and cosmopolitan critiques and their impact on a male-dominated (DERRIDA writes in various places about the *phallogocentric* nature of Western cultures) society, we need to keep in mind NIETZSCHE's (1976) warning that ethics and morals might be used by patriarchs and others in institutional positions that confer power to justify their own goals and ends and to pacify their bad conscience. If teacher-researchers were to use cogenerative dialogue to serve their own needs and to appease their conscience, whether this is in respect to traditional gender, class, and culture relations, then we would not have gone any further than our culture has been in NIETZSCHE's days. Here, critical scholarship and praxis, such as the one instantiated in the feminist (SCANTLEBURY & LAVAN, 2006) and cosmopolitan perspectives[4] (EMDIN & LEHNER, 2006), should assist us in adding a reflexive turn to our research endeavors. As a result of this reflexive turn, scholars are continually reminded of the double-edged sword of bringing about and instituting new practices when these originate with those who traditionally have held the reigns. The sword is double-edged, because at times, those who might benefit the most may not yet have be conscious of the changes that might be the result of their involvement and practice of collective responsibility and solidarity. Here, I mean solidarity not to be limited to the class, culture, or gender of the person but solidarity *across* the traditional boundaries produced and reproduced by power, which in turn is produced and reproduced by one's positioning on one or the other side of some boundary. I therefore argue for solidarity as boundary-crossing rather than boundary-constituting and -affirming praxis. [38]

6. Coda

Instituting cogenerative dialoguing as a new form of praxis in schools and educational research is but a first step, the stage before any chicken-and-egg question can occur. As it is proposed and initiated by those in particular institutional relations, the praxis itself can be viewed as but another move that reproduces particular relations that come with institutional forms of power. If those invited to contribute reject the praxis, we have not gone one step further in dealing with societal inequity and injustice. If those invited—here students—do participate, they also need to be able to legitimately question the very forms of relations and thereby shape these relations and their continued development. Cogenerative dialoguing, if its current forms are seen as endpoints, does not get as further toward collective responsibility and solidarity. [39]

4 A critical cosmopolitan ethics may be well characterized by the term cosmo*politics*.

The move to cogenerative dialoguing does not mean to erase differences. This is inherently impossible, as we are always and already different because of our singularity. (We are different because singular, not singular because different!) Rather, the praxis provides hope only because—grounded in a sense that we are in this together in a plurality, we can participate all the while taking into account our singular nature—we can jointly construct our future all the while taking different institutional positions. To help us guard against the pitfalls of reproducing power in new forms, cogenerative dialogue requires the participation of those whose critique contributes to shaping the new forms of praxis in deconstructively constructive ways. [40]

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