In a recent contribution to a conversation between philosophers from the "Third" and "First" Worlds, Karl-Otto Apel contends that part B of his discourse ethics can easily accommodate the preoccupation with the exclusion of the Other that characterizes the philosophy of Enrique Dussel, a Mexican philosopher in the tradition of Emmanuel Levinas. In my opinion, however, such a facile accommodation cannot take place since Apel's reconstructive transcendental methodology conceives interpersonal relationships as if their terms were the reversible and interchangeable ones of formal logic. Therefore, Apel inevitably fails to recognize the Levinasian discovery that the Other is not given as an equal but as one commanding from a height. Instead of Apel subsuming Dussel and Levinas, I would rather suggest that these two philosophical endeavors with their different methodologies, purposes, and emphases, can be located at different levels on a common architectonic, analogous to the dual levels of the life-world and transcendental philosophy in Edmund Husserl's philosophy. Dussel and Levinas, reflecting on the forgotten horizons prior to the origin of theory itself, at a level analogous to Husserl's lifeworld, utilize an intuitive-descriptive methodology in a continual effort to revivify the Other's easily overlooked height and resistance to totalization. Apel, on the other hand, through self-reflection, explores the operative but unadmitted presuppositions within argumentation and every ongoing theory, at a level analogous to that of Husserl's reflections on the transcendental ego. My purpose here, though, is not to defend further this architectonic, but to clarify Levinas's and Apel's philosophical "foundations," offered at different levels of the philosophical spectrum and sharply honed through critical confrontations with Jacques Derrida, on the one hand, and Jürgen Habermas and Hans Albert on the other. I will attempt further to point out the similarities between these "foundations" and to suggest the implications of their respective endeavors for an understanding of rationality as a source of

§1. Levinas's "Foundation" and Derrida's Critique

Levinas confers an atmosphere of foundationalism on *Totality and Infinity* when he announces in the Preface that his notions owe everything to the phenomenological method. This foundational motif continues when he describes his own work in terms that evoke the memory of Husserl’s *Crisis*, going back behind theory in order to probe the life-world out of which theory arises.

Intentional analysis is the search for the concrete. Notions held under the direct gaze of the thought that defines them are nevertheless, unbeknown to this naive thought, revealed to be implanted in horizons unsuspected by this thought; these horizons endow them with a meaning—such is the essential teaching of Husserl. What does it matter if in the Husserlian phenomenology taken literally these unsuspected horizons are in their turn interpreted as thoughts aiming at objects! What counts is the idea of the overflowing of objectifying thought by a forgotten experience from which it lives.

The rest of *Totality and Infinity* proceeds to situate the branches of philosophy, such as ontology or epistemology, and philosophical problems such as truth, language, universals, freedom, God, suffering, and death, with reference to the forgotten metaphysical relationship to the Other which

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2 *Totality and Infinity*, 28.