1. The temporal relation to the other is such that an appearance of the Other would be impossible and so Levinas fails to provide normative justification. **HAGGLUND:** Martin Hagglund (Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Buffalo). “The Necessity of Discrimination: Disjoining Derrida and Levinas.” Diacritics 34.1 (2004), For the same reason, **the other cannot be respected *as such***—as given in itself—**but only by being related to the perspective of another. The "violence" of not being respected as such is not something that supervenes** upon an instance that precedes it but is the trait of constitutive alterity. If the other could appear for me as him- or herself, from his or her own perspective, he or she would not be an other. Hence, **we may always misunderstand or disregard one another, since none of us can have direct access to the other's experience**. The face-to-face encounter can thus not be characterized by the "immediacy" to which Levinas appeals. Rather, the encounter is always mediated across a temporal distance. **Temporal distance opens the space for all kinds of discords, but it is nevertheless the prerequisite for there to be relations at all.**

2. Levinas’s obligation to the Other is the result of an assumption in the good of the Other which is simply not real. **HAGGLUND (2):** As a result, **Levinas's injunction of unconditional submission before the other cannot be sustained.** Although Levinas claims to proceed from the face-to-face relation, he evidently postulates that the subject in the ethical encounter either gazes upward (toward the Other as the High) or downward (toward the Other as someone who is helplessly in need, bearing "the face of the poor, the stranger, the widow and the orphan" as a refrain declares in *Totality and Infinity*). But regarding all the situations where you are confronted with an other who assaults you, turns down the offered hospitality, and in turn denies you help when you need it, Levinas has nothing to say. **If the other whom I encounter wants to kill me, should I then submit myself** to his or her command? And **if someone disagrees with me, should I then automatically accept this criticism a**s a law that is not to be questioned or counterattacked? Questions like these make it clear that **Levinas** does not at all found his ethics on an intersubjective encounter. Rather, he **presupposes that the ethical encounter exhibits a fundamental asymmetry**, where the other is an absolute Other who reveals the transcendence of the Good. Accordingly, Levinas condemns every form of self-love as a corruption of the ethical relation, and prescribes that the subject should devote itself entirely to the other. **To be ethical is for Levinas to be purely disinterested, to take** **responsibility for the other without seeking any recognition** on one's own behalf.[19](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/diacritics/v034/34.1hagglund.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22FOOT19)

3. The asymmetrical relation to the other causes a nonsensical mutual obligation of submission as well as justifying oppression. **HAGGLUND (3):** It suffices, however, to place yourself face-to-face with someone else to realize that **the asymmetry assumed by Levinas is self-refuting. If you and I are standing in front of each other, who is the other?** The answer can only be doubly affirmative since **"the other" is an interchangeable term that shifts referent depending on who pronounces the words.** I am an other for the other and vice versa, as Derrida reinforces in "Violence and Metaphysics. Derrida's argument not only contradicts Levinas's idea of the absolutely Other, but also undercuts his rhetoric. That "the other" is a reversible term means that **all of Levinas's ethical declarations can be read against themselves**. To say that the I should subject itself to the other is at the same time to say that the other should subject itself to the I, since I am a you and you are an I when we are others for each other. To condemn the self-love of the I is by the same token to condemn the self-love of the other. Indeed, **whoever advocates a Levinasian ethics will be confronted with a merciless irony** as soon as he or she comes up to someone else and face-to-face declares, "**You should subject yourself to the Other,"** which then literally **means, "You should subject yourself to *Me,*you should obey *My*law."**

4. It’s impossible to ever associate the Other with the good and still have a consistent theory. **HAGGLUND (4):** Levinas cannot think these inversions of his own prescriptions since he refuses to realize that alterity cannot be ethical as such. Rather, alterity marks that nothing can be *in itself*. Levinas cannot assimilate this insight because his philosophy requires that alterity ultimately answers to the Good. Even when Levinas describes the ethical in apparently violent terms—as in *Otherwise than Being,*where the other "accuses," "persecutes," and "traumatizes" the subject—he understands violence as an instance of the Good, which disrupts the evil egoism of the subject by subordinating it to the demands of the other. It is thus quite crucial for Levinas that the subordination to a tyrant—who also accuses one of self-love and demands that one follow his command—can be rigorously distinguished from the subordination to an ethical other.[20](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/diacritics/v034/34.1hagglund.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22FOOT20) But it is precisely the possibility of such a distinction between the "good" other and the "bad" other that the deconstructive analysis calls into question. **To posit the other as primordially Good is to deny the constitutive undecidability** of alterity. **The other cannot be predicted, and one cannot know in advance how one should act** in relation to him, her, or it. Consequently, **there is nothing intrinsically ethical about subjecting oneself to the other, who may always be a brutal tyrant**. There can be no **The relation to a finite other** is accordingly what makes ethics *possible,*but at the same time what **makes it *impossible*for any of its principles** to have a guaranteed legitimacy, since **one may always confront situations where they turn out to be inadequate.** When one speaks of "the other," one can never know in advance what or whom one invokes. It is thus impossible to decide whether the encounter with the other will bring about a chance or a threat, recognition or rejection, continued life or violent death.