

Ethics Reading List

Note: To teach these materials, might begin with Levinas and the edited volume The Turn to Ethics (esp. Butler, Guillory, Johnson) and then move to feminist ethics (Flax; Gatens; Willet) and queer ethics (Winnubst on Irigaray) to then teach clearer texts like Foucault, Critchley, Keenan, Oliver, and perhaps also Mahasweta Devi's stories (with Spivak commentary) with Oliver's ed. vol. on Kristeva, concluding with Ziarek; leave Badiou, Chow, Irigaray, and Spivak (after/with Foucault and Derrida) for advanced students; may want to use May as intro, but be cautious before endorse/use him.

Badiou, Alain, Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil, Verso, 2002. Major French activist and post-foundational political philosopher; critiques human rights as supporting capitalism/liberalism; Oliver Marchart, Post-Foundational Political Thought (128-130) argues that Badiouian politics of the immediate and unconditional might best be understood not as a politics but as an ethics: rigorous and uncompromising ethics of the unconditional, by which steps out of Machiavellian moment of the conditioned, i.e., of power and strategy. Runs danger presented by subsuming politics under ethical of neglecting necessary horizontal solidarities (as Hardt and Negri do).

Bauman, Zygmunt. Postmodern Ethics. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993. Cited by Ziarek, n. 25 (intro.).

Chow, Rey, "Ethics After Idealism," in her Ethics After Idealism, Indiana University Press, 1998, on Spivak and Žižek.

Connolly, William E. "Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault," in J. Moss, ed., The Later Foucault, London: Sage: 108-28. Deleuzian reading of Foucault. ---. The Ethos of Pluralization. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Critchley, Simon, Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas, and Contemporary French Thought. Verso, 1999. Overview of ethico-politics in Levinas and Derrida and also Lacan, Genet, Blanchot, Nancy, Rorty; argues for an ethics of finitude that rethinks friendship, democracy, economics, and technology. ---. Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance. Argues for anarchism as an ethical practice drawing on Marx, Kant, Levinas, Badiou, and Lacan. ---. The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas, Blackwell, 1992. Major reconsideration of Derrida arguing against liberal humanist critique of Derrida as relativist and without ethics.

Flax, Jane, "Displacing Woman: Toward an Ethics of Multiplicity," in Daring to be Good: Essays in Feminist Ethico-Politics, ed. Bat-Ami Bar On and Ann Ferguson, Routledge, 1998, 143-55.

Foucault, Michel. Ethics. Ed. Paul Rabinow. Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 1. New York: The New Press, 1998 (1994).

---. The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality, vol. 3. Vintage, 1986 (1984). Argues for the care of the self as a practice of the ethical subject that intervenes in the ethics of control carried out through a particular ethics of pleasure and sexual ethics at the basis of the modern art of living.

Garber, Marjorie, Beatrice Hanssen, and Rebecca Walkowitz, eds., The Turn to Ethics, Routledge, 2000. Essays by Butler, Guillory, Johnson, Mouffe, Fraser, Bhabha and others addressing the relation between ethics and politics under poststructuralism challenging central presuppositions of what constitutes ethical behavior.

Gatens, Moira, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality, Routledge, 1996.

Irigaray, Luce, An Ethics of Sexual Difference.

---. "The Fecundity of the Caress," trans. Carolyn Burke, in Face to Face with Levinas, ed. Richard Cohen (SUNY Press, 1986), 231-56.

See also Spivak, "French Feminism Revisited," esp. p. 168-70 and Winnubst.

Keenan, Thomas, Fables of Responsibility: Aberrations and Predicaments in Ethics and Politics. Stanford University Press, 1997. Rereads Marx and Foucault to rethink the conditions of any political action and argue that the absence of unambiguous universal standards is the precondition of ethical responsibility, forcing the subject to engage fully with unacknowledged ethico-political choices in every apparently neutral position without recourse to metaphysics.

Levinas, Emmanuel. Totality and Infinity.

May, Todd. The Moral Theory of Poststructuralism. Pennsylvania State University press, 1995.

Miller, J. Hillis, An Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin. Columbia University Press, 1987.

Oliver, Kelly, Witnessing: Beyond Recognition, University of Minnesota, 2001.

Argues that the Hegelian demand for recognition that characterizes identity-based social movements is a symptom of the pathology of oppression that perpetuates subject-object and same-different hierarchies; proposes an ethics founded in the ability to respond to, and address, others, which she terms "witnessing," in the ethical ability to respond and to enable response-ability from others (15); s.a. her Subjectivity without Subjects: from Abject Fathers to Desiring Mothers and Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double Bind and her edited volume, Ethics, Politics, and Difference in Kristeva's Writings.

Spivak, Gayatri. Death of a Discipline, esp. p. 13-14, 55-72, 101-2.

---. "French Feminism Revisited," in The Spivak Reader, 141-171.

Argues through a reading of Irigaray's critique of Levinas for an ethics where sexual difference is "posited as the undecidable in the face of which the now displaced 'normal' must risk ethicopolitical decisions" (165); ethics occurs via a shaping of otherness at the prepropriative site

of the impossible origin of the ethical where the subject accedes to the agency of the caress that violates the historical narrative in which the subject is written (167, 169); finds the impossible intimacy of the ethics of sexual difference as a response to the call of a larger critique of humanism (170-71).

---. "More on Power/Knowledge," *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, Routledge, 1993 (1992), 25-52; also published *The Spivak Reader*, 141-74. Argues for a type of "ethical living with hope for political change" (44) through a refusal to be taken in by "victories measured out in rational abstractions" (45) while still pursuing the "persistent critique of what one cannot not want" (42, 45, n. 71); urges begin ethical investigations with the study of the historical, cultural, linguistic limits of the constitution of the ethical subject in order to a) question "the transparent ethical subject... into specificity and visibility" (39), following André Glucksmann, to "make appear the dissymetries, the disequilibriums, the aporias, the impossibilities, which are precisely the objects of all commitment." (40)

---. "The Politics of Translation," *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, Routledge, 1993 (1992). Argues for the ethics of relations with the Other as agency is staged within language via a certain erotics of surrender; s.a. "French Feminism Revisited."

---. "Righting Wrongs"

---. "Translator's Preface" and "Afterword" to Mahasweta Devi's Imaginary Maps; also pub. in The Spivak Reader, 267-86.

Willett, Cynthia. Maternal Ethics and Other Slave Moralities.

Winnubst, Shannon. "The Place of Sexual Difference: Idealizing Heterosexual Desire," in Queering Freedom, Indiana University Press, 2006, 78-107. Reads Irigaray's An Ethics of Sexual Difference to rethink the categories and presuppositions of ethics in a way that reduces their heteronormativity and reinscribe the limits in a way that clears space for the performance of embodiment that includes queer pleasures.

Ziarek, Ewa Płonowska, An Ethics of Dissensus: Postmodernity, Feminism, and the Politics of Radical Democracy, Stanford University Press, 2001. Develops an ethical model of intersubjective relations contrasting Nietzsche/Deleuze/Foucault where the Other is contained within endless variation against Levinas/Derrida/Lyotard where the ethical significance of alterity persistently escapes the social system of signification; supplements Foucault with Levinas on the Other and Lyotard on the differend and Kristeva on the libidinal economy of the drive (5); elaborates non-appropriative relations to the Other based on accountability that balances obligation for/responsibility to the Other (Levinas) with agency/freedom of the subject (Foucault) to articulate a place of anarchic responsibility (6-7); enables the tension between unconditional responsibility and the radical contingency through a reading of Kristeva and Irigaray (6-7); moves beyond the problem of identification that troubles Butler and Laclau/Mouffe (10) through a positive aesthetics of existence affirming irreducible alterity (8) that avoids the dilemma of equality versus difference (11).