

PREFACE

SEONG KYEONG JOUNG; DANIELA MATYSOVÁ

Grounded in the phenomenological tradition, Levinas invites us to rethink the notion of subjectivity beyond the traditional philosophy of subjectivity. Focusing on the two concepts of ipseity and alterity, our present issue explores levinasian non-identifiable subjectivity, which is neither a reinforcement of the identical subjectivity, nor a simple denial of the subjectivity itself, but an ipseity fundamentally conditioned in relation to alterity as sensibility, temporality, other and God. Within this framework, starting with an introductory essay, we publish eight articles selected by a double-blind peer-review system.

Christian Rößner's introduction invites us to the passionate thinking of Levinas, shedding light on his general prophetic tone of voice and the empirical roots of his philosophy. To the questions raised from the horrible events of the last century like the Shoah and the Second World War, how ethics is still possible, what moral still could mean, Levinas' answer is to think the ethical radically new, from the affection of suffering, of misery or pain: the ethical comes from the impossibility to be silent in the face of the suffering other.

The following papers approach Levinas' thoughts from each specific perspective. Our first two papers allow us to discern not only the influences of Levinas' thinking from his two phenomenological mentors, Husserl and Heidegger, but also the elements of his own thinking that develop beyond them.

Rosa Spagnuolo Vigorita focuses on the problem of the body, in relation to Levinas' critical acceptance of Husserl's phenomenology. Following Levinas' subtly changing position about Husserl, the author tracks how Levinas' concept of embodied subjectivity, inspired by Husserl, plays an important role in shaping his own concept of alterity. While Husserl concerns an ego's own body as an

important opportunity to establish, through the alterity of others, the objectivity of the world, Levinas emphasizes the material thickness of the body which belongs to the pre-predicative field of the sensible. Levinasian passive alterity of the body inscribed in the very core of the subjectivity, the “*je pense quasi musculaire*”, eliminates the dualism between the pure ego and the lived body (*Leib*).

Haeyeun Han shows how Levinas’ concept of temporality owes the Jewish tradition beyond phenomenological conception of time. She articulates the idea that within the face-to-face encounter with Other the ipseity is always confronted with the radical alterity of the future and appealed for the responsibility for the time after any representable time. With regard to Levinas’ text devoted to the Judaic question of messianism, the author demonstrates how Levinas’ conception of eternity and messianic future overcomes Heidegger’s project of establishing the true transcendence of time, unfinished in *Being and Time*.

Studies of the philosophical connections between Levinas and his contemporary “second generation” phenomenologists, and the “third generation” phenomenologists furthermore, cannot be left out. Our next two authors summon Sartre and Marion to make opposition or alliance with Levinas.

Arnaud Clement sees the relation to the other in Sartre and Levinas through the prism of their common reference to Descartes idea of infinity inherent in *Cogito* and its different development of each. In spite of sharing the Cartesian model in which immanence is constituted by transcendence, Sartre and Levinas, varying or diverting from Husserl’s intentionality model, come to different conclusions: while Sartrian ego and other always have a reversible subject-object relationship through the gaze of each other, Levinas’ other who manifests as a face and is never reduced to the subject-object row, is an interlocutor who calls and commands me. The original relationship between self and other is irreversible and asymmetrical to Levinas.

István Fazakas considers Levinas’ alterity as a crack that breaks the “symbolic tautology of ipseity”, a concept of Richir criticizing a possession of the self by the self within the Same. Noting that this levinasian alterity was formed through Descartes’ idea of God, the author finds its twin in Marion who elucidates Augustine’s *memoria*. Not only for Levinas, but also for Marion, the most inner space is defined as an anonymous ipseity as alterity which exceeds the reflective self-consciousness thematized by intentional consciousness.

Our following two authors provide the conceptual foundation for Levinas’ thought to blossom in the fields of aesthetics and literature through the dialectic of ipseity and alterity.

Rodolphe Olcèse examines Levinas' writings devoted to the issue of the primary establishment of the ipseity in a subject's fulfillment of life through the jouissance of the world. As regards our access to the world, the author stresses the inner ambiguity of jouissance on the basis of the aesthetic experience. On the one hand, he clarifies that the jouissance is a structural moment of the objectifying attitude toward the world. But on the other hand, preceding all possible grasping of the world by the intentionality and knowledge, jouissance bears within itself the affectibility as exposedness to the proper alterity of the world, experienced in aesthetic sensibility.

Mitchell Cowen Verter suggests an interesting way to link and understand a group of metaphors such as birth, nourishing, gender, work, death, etc. used in Levinas' works. Together with an effort to deconstruct some habituated and often simplifying interpretations of Levinas' statements, the author reveals the evolution of Levinas' notions of sameness and alterity and how to become pregnant with new meanings due to the mutual resonance of different families of metaphors through the time.

When it comes to the social and political space, not reduced to the ethics of face-to-face relationship with Other, what kind of answer can Levinas' philosophy provide for us? Our last two authors claim the conformity of Levinas' ethics on the social-political level of communities, emphasizing his concept of the third party (*le tiers*).

Ericbert Tambou Kamgue, bringing into relief the role of the third party in Levinas, elucidates levinasian consideration of the socio-political dimension of multiplicity beyond first-person and second-person ethics, starting from a question: facing the plurality of faces, each of which I have an asymmetric relationship with, how can I treat them fairly? For him, the politics is the place of the generalization of the ethical requirement. A state, born from the difficulty that one subject cannot extend its responsibility to all others, always carries a risk of being distorted into the totalitarianism. From Levinas' point of view, this risk can be avoided, when the politic is well grounded in the ethic of face-to-face relationship with Other.

Sebastian Jirgl's paper aims to remind us that Levinas' account of ipseity cannot be ever fully elaborated with regards to his ethical responsibility for Other but also with regards to the relationship with the alterity of a plurality of *Tiers*, and thus with society. Furthermore, the author considers the problem of globalization, migration, or war conflicts to assert that social and political practice as well shouldn't be applied regardless of the ethical consideration for the needs of individuals.

Expressing our greatest gratitude and congratulations to these authors, we should now mention that this issue was able to be published with multiple collaborations.

First of all, we would like to thank our referees for helping us to select publishable articles by reviewing submitted manuscripts. In response to unknown editors' requests, they allowed us to sort out the gemstones among a bundle of contributions, and sometimes willingly accepted even a second review to help revising an article through written discussions with the author. We feel that just mentioning their names on the list of the first page is not enough to appreciate them. Without their goodwill for our journal and their responsibility as experts in their academic fields, this issue would not have been published.

We appreciate other editors, who helped us with the linguistic and formal editing, and especially our chief editor, Marius Sitsch, who organized the whole process of publication and gave us infinite encouragement and support.

As inexperienced responsible editors who have more to learn than to be sure, feeling at every moment that an academy's favorable or wrong function depends on our own hands was truly special: it was pleasant but sometimes came with a great burden because of our limitations. Released finally from that burden, we invite you to the adventures of thought contained in the following articles.

Seong Kyeong Jung is a Ph.D student in philosophy at Wuppertal University. Working at the intersection between Husserl's genetic phenomenology and Deleuze's ontology, she investigates the possibility of hyletic phenomenology as vitalistic materialism and in this regard Emmanuel Levinas and Michel Henry inspire her project. sonya.joung@gmail.com

Daniela Matysová is a Ph.D. student in German and French philosophy at Charles University. She is a member of the grant team concerning the problem of ecology in French phenomenology and she focuses on intertwining Levinas's project of ethics with ecotheology. andrda@seznam.cz

This issue was published with the support of grants:

Specific University Research 2020 – Phenomenology and Oikology, No. 260 609 03, realized at the Charles University, Faculty of Humanities.

The “Face of Nature” in Contemporary French Phenomenology – Czech Science Foundation, GAP 21-22224S, realized at the Czech Academy of Science, Institut of Philosophy.