

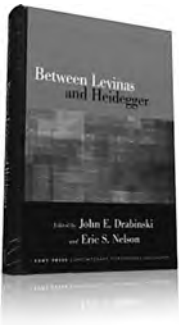
says, one God appears in various forms according to the attitude of the devotees. The same God is the sat-chit-ananda Shiva of the Shaivas and the sat-chit-ananda Vishnu of the Vaishnavas, and also the sat-chit-ananda Kali of the Shaktas. Once this idea becomes clear, then one can see one's chosen deity in all the forms of God and be free from fanaticism that makes one narrow and petty-minded.

Even a good work has scope for improvement. Some of the Sanskrit words have not been spelt in the usual way, like 'Brihaspati' is spelt as 'Brahspati', 'Kadamba' as 'Katampa', 'tirtha' as 'tirta', 'Dhananjaya' as 'Dananjaya'; this may be due to following the Tamil pronunciation. Few words have been variously spelt in different places, like the word 'Visvarupa' is also spelt as 'Viswarupa'; 'Vrutrasura' as 'Vrutasura', and 'Vruttra' as 'Vrutra'. Also, there are some typos.

The presentation is in the form of a pictorial storybook and the translation is simple and lucid, hence it can be enjoyed by the young and the old alike. Before every story there is a small note mentioning the important points of the story and after the story there is a rendering in verses—both add devotional charm. The artwork including line drawings and paintings have added beauty and elegance to the volume.

Swami Shantachittananda

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Between Levinas and Heidegger

Edited by John E Drabinski
and Eric S Nelson

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This book begins with the questions: 'Who is Heidegger to Levinas? Who is Levinas to Heidegger?' (1). The answers to these questions are the essays collected in the book under review. It is, according to the editors, and actually so, a critique of the 'fairly standard narrative' (2) of Levinas's journey to Freiburg during 1928–29, to that 'city of phenomenology' where Levinas 'fell under

the spell of Heidegger's critique of Husserl' (2). *Between Levinas and Heidegger* negotiates Levinas's readings of Heidegger's transcendent 'ecstatic structure of subjectivity' (2) to 'what [eventually] becomes a language of alterity' (2). Drabinski and Nelson correctly point out Levinas's dismissal of Heidegger post the latter's *Being and Time*. Perhaps they judge Levinas too harshly when they write of the 'polemical intensity' (3) of Levinas against the latter Heidegger; the Heidegger who colluded with the Nazis and, did not do anything to stop the gassing of Edith Stein (1891–1942) at Auschwitz.

Though, this book is a comprehensive anthology of cutting edge-essays, not once do any of the philosophers including Simon Critchley (109–30) mention the foremost phenomenologist of the last century, Edith Stein. Stein's facticity is the missing link between Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas. What Peter E Gordon in his essay, 'Displaced: Phenomenology and Belonging' (209–25) accuses Martin Heidegger of, all the contributors to this volume are guilty of. Gordon locates through a reading of Jacques Derrida, the foundational yearnings of Heidegger, thus trapping Heideggerian philosophising within a prison of foundational 'ontotheological metaphysics' (221) which nonetheless assumes 'that the world is a domesticity' (219).

What Gordon misses in his otherwise excellent essay is that the triple-bind of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida traps all thinkers in the last century including Hannah Arendt, mentioned by Gordon in endnote 17 on page 225 of his essay, could be solved by applying Stein's conception or qualia of other minds. Once the problem of other minds is solved within Western metaphysics, we will see that the structure of being is in fact grasped by Heidegger without Heidegger being able to explicitly state this comprehension for a 'nihilistic ontology of Dasein commits Heidegger to the idealist model of entering a dialogue of the soul with itself' (Emilia Angelova, 'Time's Disquiet and Unrest: The Affinity between Heidegger and Levinas', 91).

Angelova's chapter (85–107) is essential reading for those interested not only in Heidegger and Levinas's oeuvres, but is also of interest to Judeo-Christian theologians working within the domain of Judeo-Christian eschatology. Angelova rightly understands both Heidegger and Levinas

as theologians primarily concerned with explicitly theistic religious time or ‘kairos’: ‘Faith is a self-relation that repeats itself as a meaning set out from the start—a meaning upon which life is based. But faith’s relationality is a repeating on the order of the linguisticity of Being. ... The kairological determination of time is at once the form of suddenness ... and a specific determination of existence as availability and vigilance’ (103).

‘Time’s Disquiet and Unrest’ is the most engaging essay in this volume. Angelova’s conclusions are the nearest to the truth claims of both Heidegger and Levinas. Her endnotes 7 and 8 in page 105 prove her clear grasping of difficult concepts within continental philosophy and theology: ‘7. *Eros* is distinguished from *agape*, the Good or God that turns-toward [wisely left unanswered by Angelova], which is in turn attributed, controversially, to the masculine, throughout Levinas’s work. 8. Since there is no generosity or fecundity to the *il’ya*, Levinas levels against Heidegger objections against the neutrality of the *es*, “it”—“*es gibt*” (105).

What Angelova locates as ‘a certain sense of metaphysics’ own exhaustion and completion’ (104) within the philosophies of the other in both Heidegger and Levinas; we find in her own essay in this volume. Her essay is not really, to borrow a term from John Barth; a literature of exhaustion but is, a literature of replenishment. Few have been able to explain *agape* and fecundity within twentieth century continental philosophy as well as Angelova. Angelova thus, is a feminist theologian in her own right. It is in passing that we note the superiority of theology to philosophy since the latter is merely speculative and heinously ratiocinative being reductive of the o/O-ther.

The book under review reveals ‘the call of conscience, later ... [known as] being. ... An inappropriable [revealing] ... the aporetic structure of responsibility, situating an impossible in its heart’ (François Raffoul, ‘The Question of Responsibility between Levinas and Heidegger’, 175–206; 201). Drabinski and Nelson in their selection of authors and their essays have shown a rare synoptic view of Heidegger and Levinas without ever underplaying the Janus nature of Heidegger. The book is wisely tempered with an engagement in the here and the now, and always shows the

differences between Heidegger’s reprehensible realpolitik and Levinas’s true sanctity.

Quoting Peter E Gordon again: ‘Alterity for Levinas is the unassimilable, the pure excess of a phenomena that forbids description and carries its own signification from an elsewhere essentially incommensurable ... because alterity is what escapes immanence, it can only be the supernatural ... [for] alterity [is] patterned after divine revelation ... [for] Heidegger it is ... the disruption of the references by which Dasein’s world is *a world at all*’ (223). In contrast to Heidegger’s ‘other’; Peter E Gordon sees Levinas’s ‘the Other’ as ‘perhaps’ God (223). Between Heidegger and Levinas, is the spectre of St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, aka Edith Stein.

And as yet, this reviewer did not even touch on the mystery of the act of naming Levinas before Heidegger in the title of this book. Let the constant reader, a favourite of such killjoys as Wolfgang Iser and of such literary giants like Stephen King, call forth the mystery of the naming of this book. You, my constant reader, ignore the late Harold Bloom when he ranted against Stephen King. This book is *a* theodicy to horror literature, and specifically to the ontology of King’s seemingly unending books with their connected multiverses. The point being that Drabinski and Nelson have created a new hermeneutics for even literature students. Those who think that horror literature is not high art need only read this book in which National Socialism’s drumbeats echo in every chapter for the book reverberates with ‘Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You’ (Sylvia Plath, ‘Daddy’). Does this book sort out Martin Buber’s ‘I/Thou’ and ‘I/It’ dyads/dichotomies? This reviewer can only reply through Plath’s lines from ‘Daddy’:

An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

Reading this book is a terrifying experience that brings to mind Søren Kierkegaard’s fear and trembling. That is how we end; perhaps T S Eliot got it all wrong. The world does not end in a whimper but with the drumbeats of unknown future apocalypses.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay