

English summaries

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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

B. Waldenfels, Humankind as a being of limits, RThPh 2005/IV, p. 297-310.

It is from the concept of order that the author sets out to think humankind, defined not by such and such supposed properties that distinguish what is human from what is not, but as the place where limits – constitutional of all order – are instituted, marked out and shifted. Thus every time humans give themselves to thought, they are responding to an order. They do not have exclusive possession of this or that feature, distinguishing themselves imperviously from what is extraneous; rather here they are seen at the place of a continual tracking of limits between what is of themselves and what is not. Far from defining themselves as holding a certain position in an order, they are bothered and thrown off centre by the extraneous, from which they are forever distinguishing themselves. So “humankind as a being of limits” implies that humans are automatically situated at the limit.

B. Waldenfels, Start elsewhere. A liberty under the sign of extraneousness, RThPh 2005/IV, p. 311-327.

First the author retraces the history of the concept of freedom through several great figures of western philosophy (especially Aristotle and Kant). Using the literary possibilities of the staging of an event, he then tries to shift and revise these concepts by valorising the dimension of extraneousness, which is also integral to freedom. He can thereby specify a freedom which does not start spontaneously by itself, but responds to solicitations which have always already drawn it out. Such a revision leads the author to consider, in concluding, the political play of institutions and to see constantly at work in them an “outside order” and an indigestible provocation.

B. Waldenfels, Bodily experience between self and otherness, RThPh 2005/IV, p. 329-343.

The bodily dimension of existence is a classic theme in phenomenology, which has strongly underlined the experience we have of our body in the first person, removing it from all objectivization. In this article, the author shifts the phenomenological position, showing that the body itself is not only an intimate and familiar sphere, but entails extraneous and exterior aspects also. Through my body, I am exposed to affections which touch me deeply though they are not mine. Through my body, I feel my vulnerability without which, however, I would be incapable of experiencing the world. The pivot between doing and being done to, nature and culture, distinctive features and foreign, the body is a nodal theme around which all philosophical questioning can be spread.

B. Waldenfels, Between cultures, RThPh 2005/IV, p. 345-358.

The inter-culture theme is submitted here to criticism from the point of view of inter-cultural experience. The writer starts from the theory that a sovereign and panoramic viewpoint on different cultures is a non-being. So one must take seriously the

expression "between cultures" and think of inter-culture as a sphere between two, which cannot be reduced to either one's own or the foreign. To do this, the writer develops a phenomenology of the experience of foreignness, by analysing the interlacing of one's own and the foreign with regards to experience, discourse, and politics, while never ceding to reduction in the framework of a synthesis either global or of a definitive nature. Inter-cultural experience must be thought of in terms of responding to foreignness.

B. Waldenfels, Phenomenology between pathos and response, RThPh 2005/IV, p. 359-373.

Here the writer calls into question phenomenological intentionality, while taking it nevertheless as a starting point. This means orientating the analysis of the meaning of phenomena toward the taking into account of a pathic dimension which conditions them. What happens to us or affects us cannot be reduced to previous horizons. Not even if we have always already responded. Between pathos and response, there is an irreducible cleft which translates as a temporary and productive diastase. Therefore the writer calls for a "responsive reduction" which guides all meaning toward that to which it responds. In conclusion, he evokes some of the areas in which such a pathic and responsive revision of phenomenology could valorise its pertinence: bioethics, the historical elaboration of memory and the relation to foreignness.