

Module 6-0 Initial Reading Notes

Ethics with a Human Face

Violence is the order of the day

- Violence on individual, interpersonal, and social levels
- Violence is a datum of experience

connatus essendi -> every being desires to remain, to conserve itself, to persevere in being, self-preservation

Dasein -> being itself authentically, authentic self-being

Levinas thinks that it betrays a "centripetal movement"

First Point: Centripetal Movement and I

In this centripetal movement: there is an "allergy" towards the what is not *ako*

Different forms: fear, insecurity, aggressivity

An allergy towards The Other, our "natural attitude" (from Husserl)

The radical goal of our activities is enjoyment

Levinas does not say if it is "good" or "bad", simply what we experience, what happens

We are enjoying ourselves

Also in possession (i.e. the postponement of enjoyment)

Orientation is towards the "I"

Even applies with work (a general term to transform matter, see Module 5)

In this one confronts with the Other, yet matter is transformed according to one's own image and likeness

The Other will be in function of certain goals

Even in thinking/knowing, there is immanence

The Other becomes "in me", immanent

Rendering whether the Other is immanent, the same, what is not me is ultimately me
e.g. eating spaghetti, when it is digested it becomes part of us (and what does not is eliminated), the spaghetti is made into I; this applies to all experiences of enjoyment, possession, work, thinking

Second Point: Breaking Loose from Allergy

Conversation is an experience that breaks away from ingestion/allergy

"The speech situation" has three elements: pinag-uusapan, kumakausap, at kinakausap

Levinas focuses on the kinakausap

When you speak to someone, you face someone

Face-to-face relation: vocative situation

At this point the Other is the other (it is not reduced or transformed into an object, or I)

To see one in their face, the part substitutes for the whole (e.g. "thirty sails set out" instead of "thirty ships set out"; sail stands for totality of ship)

metonymy (part substituted for whole)

The face acts as metonymy of the whole person, the loob

Loob itself acts as a metonymy of the totality of a person

Encounter of face -> epiphany (to manifest, suddenly)

e.g. abstract painting: you cannot understand when first looking at it but it suddenly makes sense

We only encounter the Other as they would fit into certain categories we prepared

Fellow jeepney passenger: first you only see their objective facial features, an Other as an object; they stare at you, you are embarrassed, and they become a new center

The perception of the face is also a moral experience, that is summarized in "You shall not kill!" (also a metonymy)

The moral experience begins in the face of the Other

Regardless of whatever moral norms one follows, it is rooted here

The Other has a height (kataas-taasan) yet also a humility -> ambiguity

e.g. Having to refuse to give a money to a beggar, one asks for forgiveness (patawad po!)

Third Point: Responsibility

Levinas does not define the responsibility, but does give two indications:

"Me voici!" -> Narito ako! -> Here I am!

e.g. One's mother is dying, you say "Here I am" even if you do not have the solution

"Après vous" -> Ikaw muna.

Politeness, the Other is always ahead

Renders sacrifice possible; reciprocity is not ultimate, else sacrifice is absurd

Responsibility is opening one's home, pocket, palms, etc.

The two indications are economic in nature

The responsibility for the other is infinite, without end

One's response will always be inadequate

e.g. utang na loob; can never be repaid (from Brother's Karamazov: each one is responsible for all and before all, and I more than any other)

Fourth Point: The Third Party

Unfortunately, underdeveloped

Past three points are about "ako at ikaw"

Horizontal Aspect:

There are other Others, each related to one another

"Hindi lang ako at ikaw meron ding siya. Meron ding sila."

But because we are not alone, there are also others, then I also have to take care of myself because I have to take care of others

We try to organize life in society where we try to compare the uniqueness of each person (incomparable); we are weighing *loob*

Paradoxical

The third party sort of corrects the asymmetry of the face-to-face

Vertical Aspect:

In the relationship with the Other as other it also relates to the Infinite (God)

God would always be a trace

The notion of God is the ultimate horizon, but can never be objectified, always beyond us (kinda reminds me of THEO 11)

"Laging yun na nga, hindi na yun"

Respects the transcendence of God (otherwise we idolize God)