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Essential Vulnerabilities. Book Description: In Essential Vulnerabilities, Deborah Achtenberg contests Emmanuel Levinas's idea that Plato is a philosopher of freedom for whom thought is a return to the self. Instead, Plato, like Levinas, is a philosopher of the other. Nonetheless, Achtenberg argues, Plato and Levinas are different.

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**Essential Vulnerabilities | Northwestern University Press**

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**Levinas | Ancient Philosophy Society**

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In Essential Vulnerabilities, Deborah Achtenberg contests Emmanuel Levinas's idea that Plato is a philosopher of freedom for whom thought is a return to the self. To the contrary, she agrees, Plato, like Levinas, is a philosopher of the other. While they share the view that human beings are essentially vulnerable and in relation to others, they conceive human vulnerability and responsiveness differently. For Plato, when ones see beauty in others, one is overwhelmed by the beauty of what is, by the vision of eternal form. For Levinas, on the other hand, we are disrupted by the newness, foreignness, or singularity of the other. For him, the other is not eternal, but new or foreign. The other is an unknowable singularity. By bringing into focus these similarities and differences, Achtenberg resituates Plato in relation to Levinas and opens up two contrasting ways that self is essentially in relation to others.

This volume examines the relevance of Emmanuel Levinas's work to recent developments in analytic philosophy. Contemporary analytic philosophers working in metaethics, the philosophy of mind, and the metaphysic of personal identity have argued for views similar to those espoused by Levinas. Often disparately pursued, Levinas's account of "ethics as first philosophy" affords a way of connecting these respective enterprises and showing how moral normativity enters into the structure of rationality and personal identity. In metaethics, the volume shows how Levinas's moral phenomenology relates to recent work on the normativity of rationality and intentionality, and how it can illuminate a wide range of moral concepts including accountability, moral intuition, respect, conscience, attention, blame, indignity, shame, hatred, dependence, gratitude and guilt. The volume also tests Levinas's innovative claim that ethical relations provide a way of accounting for the irreducibility of personal identity to psychological identity. The essays here contribute to ongoing discussions about the metaphysical significance and sustainability of a naturalistic but nonreductive account of personhood. Finally, the volume connects Levinas's second-person standpoint with analogous developments in moral philosophy.

In the second half of the twentieth century, ethics has gained considerable prominence within philosophy. In contrast to other scholars, Levinas proposed that it be not one philosophical discipline among many, but the most fundamental and essential one. Before philosophy became divided into disciplines, Plato also treated the question of the Good as the most important philosophical question. Levinas's approach to ethics begins in the encounter with the other as the most basic experience of responsibility. He acknowledges the necessity to move beyond this initial, dyadic encounter, but has problems extending his approach to a larger dimension, such as community. To shed light on this dilemma, Tanja Staehler examines broader dimensions which are linked to the political realm, and the problems they pose for ethics. Staehler demonstrates that both Plato and Levinas come to identify three realms as ambiguous: the erotic, the artistic, and the political. In each case, there is a precarious position in relation to ethics. However, neither Plato nor Levinas explores ambiguity in itself. Staehler argues that these ambiguous dimensions can contribute to revealing the Other's vulnerability without diminishing the fundamental role of unambiguous ethical responsibility.

"This book is about the poststructural Franco-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. This book covers Jewish ethics in the twentieth century and also cultural philosophy"--

How has ancient Greek thought been received within phenomenology? The volume offers chapters on Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacob Klein, Hannah Arendt, Eugen Fink, Jan Patočka, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida.

In Politics, Money, and Persuasion, distinguished philosopher John Russon offers a new framework for interpreting Plato's The Republic. For Russon, Plato's work is about the distinctive nature of what it is to be a human being and, correspondingly, what is distinctive about the nature of human society. Russon focuses on the realities of our everyday experience to come to profoundly insightful assessments of our human realities: the nature of the city, the nature of knowledge, and the nature of human psychology. Russon's argument concentrates on the ambivalence of logos, which includes reflections on politics and philosophy and their place in human life, how humans have shaped the environment, our interactions with money, the economy, and taking account, and the pursuit of the good in social and political systems. Politics, Money, and Persuasion offers a deeply personal but also practical kind of philosophical reading of Plato's classic text. It emphasizes the tight connection between the life of city and the life of the soul, demonstrating both the crucial role that human cognitive excellence and psychological health play in political and social life.

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) emerged as an influential philosophical voice in the final decades of the twentieth century, and his reputation has continued to flourish and increase in our own day. His central themes--the primacy of the ethical and the core of ethics as our responsibility to and for others--speak to readers from a host of disciplines and perspectives. However, his writings and thought are challenging and difficult. The Oxford Handbook of Levinas contains essays that aim to clarify and engage Levinas and his writings in a number of ways. Some focus on central themes of his work, others on the ways in which he read and was influenced by figures from Plato, Hobbes, Descartes, and Kant to Blanchot, Husserl, Heidegger, and Derrida. And there are essays on how his thinking has been appropriated in moral and political thought, psychology, film criticism, and more, and on the relation between his thinking and religious themes and traditions. Finally, several essays deal primarily with how readers have criticized him and found him wanting. The volume exposes and explores both the depth of Levinas's philosophical work and the range of applications to which it has been put, with special attention to clarifying why his interests in the human condition, the crisis of civilization, the centrality and character of ethics and morality, and the very meaning of human experience should be of interest to the widest range of readers.

Internationally renowned as one of the great French philosophers of the twentieth century, the late Emmanuel Levinas remains a pivotal figure across the humanistic disciplines for his insistence -- against the grain of Western philosophical tradition -- on the primacy of ethics in philosophical investigation. This first English translation of a series of twelve essays known as Alterity and Transcendence offers a unique glimpse of Levinas defining his own place in the history of philosophy. Published by a mature thinker between 1967 and 1989, these works exhibit a refreshingly accessible perspective that seasoned admirers and newcomers will appreciate. In today's world, where religious conceptions of exalted higher powers are constantly called into question by theoretical investigation and by the powerful influence of science and technology on our understanding of the universe, has the notion of transcendence been stripped of its significance? In Levinas's incisive model, transcendence is indeed alive -- not in any notion of our relationship to a mysterious, sacred realm but in the idea of our worldly, subjective relationships to others. Without presupposing an intimate knowledge of the history of philosophy, Levinas explores the ways in which Plotinus, Descartes, Husserl, and Heidegger have encountered the question of transcendence. In discourses on the concepts of totality and infinity, he locates his own thinking in the context of pre-Socratic philosophers, Aristotle, Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, and Descartes. Always centering his discussions on the idea of interpersonal relations as the basis of transcendence, Levinas reflects on the rights of individuals (and how they are inextricably linked to those of others), the concept of peace, and the dialogic nature of philosophy. Finally, in interviews conducted by Christian Chabanis and Angelo Bianchi, Levinas responds to key questions not directly addressed in his writings. Throughout, Alterity and Transcendence reveals a commitment to ethics as first philosophy -- obliging modern thinkers to investigate not merely the true but the good.

First published in English by Duquesne in 1969, this has become one of the classics of modern philosophy.

Argues that the central cognitive component of ethical virtue for Aristotle is awareness of the value of particulars.

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