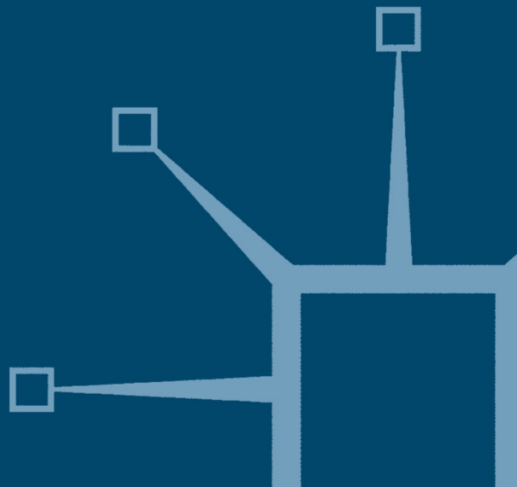# The Other

Feminist Reflections in Ethics

Edited by

Helen Fielding, Gabrielle Hiltmann,
Dorothea Olkowski and Anne Reichold

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Notes on the Contributors

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Annemie Halsema is Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and teaches philosophical anthropology, psychoanalysis and gender studies. She has published in the field of feminist philosophy, especially on Irigaray (*Dialectiek van de seksuele differentie*, 1998), edited a volume on Butler (J. Butler, *Genderturbulentie*, 2000), and a book with D. Van Houten on humanism (*Empowering Humanity. State of the Art of Humanistics*, 2002). She is currently working on a project that aims at developing a notion of 'horizontal transcendence' starting from the work of Luce Irigaray, Paul Ricoeur and Jessica Benjamin.

Gabrielle Hiltmann teaches philosophy at Basel University, Switzerland. In summer 2002 she was invited professor for feminist philosophy at the University of Hanover. She was invited scholar at the Centre de Recherches Phénoménologiques, University of Paris XII and at Manchester Metropolitan University, as well as invited teacher at Manchester Metropolitan University. She co-edited 'Les disciplines en jeu', an issue of the journal *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 23(2004)1, and is the author of a work on Ludwig Wittgenstein's method, *Aspekte sehen. Bemerkungen zum methodischen Vorgehen in Ludwig Wittgensteins Spätwerk* (1998). She has published articles on French contemporary philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, methodology, interdisciplinarity, ethics and feminist philosophy. Forthcoming is a book developing a reflection on otherness in the late ontology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

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Dorothea Olkowski is Professor of Philosophy and former Director of Women's Studies at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. She has authored *The Universal (In the Realm of the Sensible)* (2006), and *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (1999). She has edited *Feminist Interpretations of Merleau-Ponty* (with Gail Weiss, 2006), and *Resistance, Flight, Creation: Feminist Enactments of French Philosophy* (2000).

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Jenny Slatman studied philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and at Université Paris XII. Currently, she is Assistant Professor at the

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Veronica Vasterling is Associate Professor at the Department of Philo-sophy and the Institute for Gender Studies of Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Her recent research focuses on feminist theory, political philosophy and philosophical anthropology. She is especially interested in phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches to feminist theory, and political approaches to psychoanalytical theory. English and German key publications include: *Feministische Phänomeno-logie und Hermeneutik*, edited with Silvia Stoller and Linda Fisher (2005); 'Body and Language: Butler, Merleau-Ponty and Lyotard on the Speaking Embodied Subject', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 11.2, 2003.

Gail Weiss is Director of the Human Sciences graduate programme and Associate Professor of Philosophy at the George Washington University. She is the author of *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (1999), and co-editor of *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (2006), *Thinking the Limits of the Body* (2003) and *Perspectives on Embodiment: the Intersections of Nature and Culture* (1999). Her new monograph, *Refig-uring the Ordinary*, is forthcoming with Indiana University Press, and an edited volume, *Intertwinings: Intercultural Encounters with Merleau-Ponty*, is forthcoming with SUNY Press. She is currently working on a manu-script entitled, *Beauvoir's Ambiguities: Philosophy, Literature, Feminism.*

Introduction: Accounting for the Other: Towards an Ethics of Thinking

Gabrielle Hiltmann

Approaching ethics through a reflection on the fundamental ethical concept of the other challenges traditional Western conceptions of modern ethics, since these either exclude, or have an exclusively negative conception, of the other. An ethics of value, for example, such as that developed by the Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, focuses on universal and eternal ethical values which are supposed to be the same for everyone. The subject – understood as a general and rational being – approaches the universal rationality of ethical values through reflection. In this conception the (implicitly white male) subject is a free and autonomous legislator of rational ethical laws and values which implies that the subject is supposed to be free from physical desires; thus rational values are not grounded in physical drives. This freedom *from* physical urges is understood to be the ground for the freedom *for* (a rational) morality. In this universalizing and unifying approach, the other is only taken into consideration in a negative way. Immanuel Kant states, in a version of the categorical imperative, that the subject should act in such a way that it does not abuse humans, in terms either of his [*sic*!] own person, or of any other person, by using them as a means. Instead, the others have to be considered as an end in themselves. Value ethics thus follow a monist and universal rationalist logic which excludes the positive recognition of the other's individuality.

Utilitarian ethics, on the contrary, seem to acknowledge the other's right to happiness since they exclude an egoistical pursuit of happiness. In this conception, an action is considered to be ethical if it provides (at least a certain amount of) happiness for all persons concerned. Nevertheless this seems to work only when one considers small groups and is not concerned about persons who may be excluded from such a group. If all humankind is taken into consideration, then the optimum of happiness inevitably implies the unhappiness of some people, since resources are limited. Ethics then becomes a problem of distribution.

One of the questions raised by utilitarian ethics is: what counts as happiness? And further, how can these different happinesses be measured and weighed against one another? What would be the common standard for comparing different happinesses? Utilitarian ethics become entangled in complicated measuring problems where the other, in its individuality and diversity, finally disappears. If the optimum of happiness is achieved when the greatest possible number of people are happy, it is possible to be satisfied with the happiness of a majority of only 50.1%. This means that the other 49.9%, who might not be happy, are neglected. Thus, utilitarian ethics also do not acknowledge the other in its otherness and diversity.

   The only negative concept of the other, as developed in modern Western ethics, is not sufficient for an ethical reflection. It is necessary to develop a positive concept of the other, which can allow for a relational ethics. This reflection on a positive concept of the other can not be limited to an ethical approach, in view of the fact that the neglect of the other in its otherness and diversity is not only a characteristic feature of modern ethics, it is a problem in modern Western philosophy in general. What are the reasons for this difficulty? It is possible to trace back the difficulties in modern Western philosophical accounts of the other to the *subjectivity-turn* in early modern philosophy. René Descartes' meditation on the I's capacity to think, and to gain a clear and distinct conviction that this thinking I *is*, necessitates a methodical doubt in the existence of the other. The outside world, including the I's own body as well as other persons, is considered to be a *res extensa* (an extended thing), of which the thinking I, understood as *res cogitans* (the thinking thing), can not gain clear and distinct knowledge through thinking. The I to eliminate them through a procedure of methodical doubt. This leads to an isolated monadic I without a body, without relations to others, and without world. One consequence of this is that external objects become the unthinkable other of the I. Based on this delimitating reflection, the I confirms itself as a thinking being. The I *is* only in and through thinking. It is *per se*. Consequently, the I who constitutes itself in reflection seems to be autonomous, self-sufficient and even self-constituting. It appears not to need other(s). Furthermore, it is independent of the world of deception. Due to the I's methodical self-assurance, the existence and the status of the other person become problematic. This constellation of a categorical separation and distinction of the thinking I and the irrational other is of determinative influence for the further development of Western philosophy, not only for epistemology, with its separation of subject and object, but also for

questions of ethics. When the other's existence is dubious, the other cannot be a subject of ethics. René Descartes' methodical separation of the thinking I and the other was of considerable consequence for the further development of modern Western philosophy. In the nineteenth century, German idealism developed all the possible consequences of this reflexive solipsism. These consequences do not exclude a shift in perspective. From an epistemological problem in René Descartes, the question of the other became an ontological one. In German Idealism the I constitutes the other following its own categories. This means, the I is an absolute, autonomous and self-sufficient creator of the external world and of other persons. The I is, in fact, the standard for the other who is conceived as the I's antithesis. Idealistic philosophy cannot consistently think a constitutive other in so far as it starts with an absolute constitutive self. This implies a double exclusion of the other. First it is subsumed under the standards of the I as a mediated other, and second is not recognized in its otherness – it becomes a complete other. This applies to the other person as well as to the world as another of the I. The world is object of the I's research and knowledge. In short, German Idealism only accounts for a mediated otherness which is subordinated to the solipsist rationality of the I.

What are the consequences of modern Western philosophy's focus on solipsist thinking? Notably, it cannot account for a positive and heterogeneous otherness. The exclusion of otherness not only concerns women in general, conceived as they were as the irrational other of the rational man, but also other men who developed a different rationality than the (dominant) one. The differentiation of subject and subordinate other is not only epistemologically, but especially ethically, problematic. The other – be it the world or the other person – has no autonomy, no right in itself. The absolute I might eventually concede that it will not harm others, that it will respect their bodily and psychic integrity, a concession considered to be a free act of the autonomous I. Since others are constituted by the I, they have no right to claim recognition as ethical subjects with an acknowledged ethical status. They can expect even less to receive care from this autonomous and self-sufficient I. If the world is understood to be constituted as another by the absolute I, it is not a *lebensraum* (life-world) for the I. The world too is not given to its responsibility and care.

This development of the absolute subject, starting with the Cartesian distinction between the thinking I and the extended thing in Western philosophy, was not a necessary development. It was just one of several possibilities and it is possible to conceive of other developments arising

out of R. Descartes' work. In his philosophy the concept of the other has a double sense. In the *Meditations of First Philosophy*, for example, the other is the other of thinking. The I delimitates itself from this other in order to achieve the clear and distinct insight that it *is* while and through thinking. The I can gain no direct knowledge about this other, which is outside the thinking soul, through thinking. This impossibility to gain clear and distinct knowledge of the exterior world, including one's own body, remained the basic epistemological problem of Western philosophy in the centuries that followed. It was not, however, a problem for R. Descartes. In his *Meditations,* he refers to the Christian god as the creator of the world and thus as the ground for the ontological existence of the outside world. Furthermore, for R. Descartes, god created not only the world as rationally cognizable, but also the person with the capacity for clear and distinct thinking. This double constellation of a hidden rationality, provided by god, and the capacity god gave the subject to think rationally, allows for clear and distinct knowledge of the exterior world, and of the I's own body. Otherness is acknowledged through god as a mediator between the radically separated dimensions of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.

Despite this reference to god as guarantor of a scientifically mediated otherness, the question of the relation to the other person continued to challenge René Descartes. In his last book *The Passions of the Soul,* he starts with the everyday experience of our contact with the other, including the I's own body, the other person, and the world as other. This contact with the other is experienced in a double way. On the one hand, the external other arouses affects, and on the other hand, the external other is the object of passions. This *experience of an affective relation to the other* allows for conceiving of body and soul as a unity as the other affects the soul through the body of the I. The other affecting the I can be an animal causing fear, or a plant which might be poisonous; yet it concerns especially other persons, who excite diverse emotions such as love and sympathy, but also irritation or anger. In *The Passions of the Soul,* the I is not looking for the truth of the other epistemologically. The other *is* as it excites the I's emotions. One could transform the famous formula of the *Meditations of First Philosophy* into the following two claims: I feel you, thus you are; and, I feel you, thus I am a unity of body and soul. Due to the experience of being affected by the other, soul (the thinking, feeling and willing part of the I) and body are experienced as a unity. In the experience of being affected by the other, the soul is passive. Nevertheless, the soul does not only experience the affections aroused by another person, it can also act on them through its will. In

the cases of anger and sexual violence, René Descartes argues that it can be necessary to block the physical acting out of one's anger or of sexual violence in order to avoid harming the other person. This self-control is not only imposed due to the respect for the other person, but also due to the respect for oneself. Through the wilful self-control of the passions, the I achieves a certain independence with respect to its bodily drives. The affective relation to the other not only necessitates control of one's affects, but furthermore, the other, be it one's children, one's friend, or one's mistress, can make a claim for positive recognition and care from the I. Thus *The Passions of the Soul,* which was written as a reflection on the mutual interaction of body and soul, can be read as an ethics accounting positively for otherness.

It is noteworthy that R. Descartes' last work, *The Passions of the Soul,* with its reflection on the unity of body and soul, and its positive recognition of the other, did not attract the same interest as the *Meditations* and the *Discourse*. The further development of modern Western philosophy focused on the clear separation of thinking (soul) and body and one could certainly speculate on the reasons for this. The aim of this volume however is to take up the possibilities that a reflection on the other in its otherness offers, not only for a critique of the solipsism of modern Western philosophy, but also for developing an *ethics of thinking*. Feminist research criticizes the exclusion of the otherness of woman as well as that of different rationalities as one of the fundamental problems of modern philosophy. This *critique of transcendental solipsism* concerns different aspects: 1) the tendency to hypostasize the I as an absolute, autocratic and self-sufficient legislator of reason, 2) the hierarchical subordination of the other to the I, 3) the negation of the otherness of the other, 4) the exclusion of the manifold by focusing on the *one*.

It appears then, that Western philosophical theories were orientated towards universal conceptualizations. Since the paradigm for the human in this universal perspective was the white man, there was no space for woman conceived as the other of man. There was no space for rationalities which do not reject the other. For this reason, woman and female experience were excluded from philosophical reflection. This neglect of the female perspective is still the dominant attitude of contemporary philosophy. What is called for by the essays in this book is a rethinking of the implicit and explicit ethical structures of Western philosophy insofar as they continue to exclude women as subjects who contribute to the conceptualization of world and society. This volume, which gives voice to women philosophers, is a contribution to that task. Furthermore,

the book considers an opening towards cultural and social differences as a necessary condition for rethinking philosophy. The volume brings together feminist philosophers from the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe, thus allowing for a certain diversity of perspectives. All the authors share the in itself diverse background of a phenomenological approach to philosophical questions. They investigate the concept of otherness as a basic ethical concept that calls for a fundamental rethinking of the structure and content of ethics, one that takes different rationalities, and the feminine other in its social and cultural diversity, into account.

Phenomenology is one of the most important philosophical movements developed in the twentieth century that reflects on the other as an other who is co-constitutive for the I. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, introduces the concept of transcendental intersubjectivity. In this conception of intersubjectivity, the other is a necessary and constitutive feature of the transcendental Ego. The I only understands an objective sense and gains knowledge of an objective truth through transcendental intersubjectivity. In Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time,* the I can – by acknowledging its own individual possibilities and impossibilities – accede to an 'authentic being with' others. Emmanuel Levinas even gives the Other priority before the I, making ethics a first philosophy. For Hannah Arendt 'being with others' is the dimension of the political. Maurice Merleau-Ponty develops a non-hierarchical figure of relation in which the other and I are mutually constitutive.

Based on these and several more phenomenological approaches to the other, feminist phenomenologists reflect on the possibility of thinking the other in a way that neither integrates the other into categories of the same developed by the I, nor excludes the other as a complete other, for which thinking can not account. This fundamental reflection on the status of the other leads to questioning if (and if so, how) the other can be conceived as necessarily related to the I. Can the I in fact approach its self *and* its own otherness only through the other? These questions require a new approach which replaces the categorical distinction of I and other with conceptions in which I and other, other and I, are interrelated. In contrast to R. Descartes' early philosophy, the reflection on the constitution of one's identity and on one's relation to oneself does not start with the reflective thinking of an isolated, monadic I. The concept of thinking must be freed from auto-reflexivity and be opened towards the other of thinking. It is possible to approach this other of the Cartesian concept of thinking by taking experience into account.

Experience demands openness to the other and constant reorientation towards new possibilities. Experience demands acknowledgment of the mutually constitutive relation of other and self.

Once the supposition of an absolute and neutral thinking subject is put into question, it becomes possible to explore subjectivity as tied to corporeal experiences. Phenomenology, defined here as the description of the ways in which the world, things and others appear to an embodied subject, lends itself to the exploration of alternate experiences. In a feminist perspective which starts from the position of an embodied person, it becomes obvious that questions of otherness imply a reflection on respect for the other and its body. In this perspective it is also possible to account for the *ethical recognition of the other* which has been until now obscured by the universalizing and solipsist approach of modern philosophy. A self who continually constitutes itself through its interaction with the other is open to the other as well as to new experiences, and to relations with people from the same and different cultures. Due to this ungrounding openness, the self is not autonomous and self-sufficient. It can acknowledge that it is vulnerable and that it is itself an ethical subject who needs recognition and care from the other. In difference to the idealistic tradition, the self, which is open towards the other, can no longer act as an autonomous ethical legislator. The ethical dimension itself has to be developed in and through interaction with the other. To approach this aim, it is essential to show how the other is necessary for the constitution of the self and its personal and bodily identity.

This ethical dimension of the relation with the other is experienced in a manifold way. We encounter it for example through the impact of otherness on identity. In what sense is the other necessary to constitute a non-solipsist self? Although the body was excluded as the other of thinking in modern philosophy, is it nevertheless possible to understand the body as an other which is constitutive for personal identity? In what respects can artworks which reveal the body's otherness allow for new ethical perspectives on the body? The question of otherness in ethics also concerns reproduction since otherness in female experience is still linked to giving birth and motherhood. How does the recognition of these experiences allow for constituting a political theory and an ethics based on the fact that all humans are born? How do the female experiences of giving birth and of motherhood change the conceptualization of language? Otherness can not be limited to the relation of male and female sex/gender. Instead, diverse otherness-relations are at work within the sex/gender groups challenging contemporary feminist

philosophy to reflect, in multiple ways, on a *differential ethics of the other,* and thus allowing for a diversity of experiences and perspectives, which finally undercuts a binary conception of sex and gender.

By focusing on the ethical significance of the concept of the other, the goal is not to develop a concrete ethics of the other. Instead, the volume offers a *meta-ethical reflection* on the problem of how the concept of the other can be conceived in a way that allows for integrating the ethical dimension into philosophical reflection – be this in political philosophy, in epistemology, in ontology, in aesthetics, in applied ethics, or in hermeneutics. This integration of the ethical dimension into philosophical reflection allows for a change of paradigm towards an *ethics of thinking.* The concept of the other – not only in ethics – is not a uniform concept. It covers a multiplicity of diverse significations. This multiplicity is not reduced in this volume. Instead every text offers different possibilities for the conceptualization of the other and of otherness. This openness to multiple senses is necessarily accompanied by the challenge to develop an argument which is convincing because of its differentiated rationality rather than its reliance on the violence of a monist and absolutistic logic. If this succeeds, thinking can open up multiple possibilities for how to live an ethically good life. This capacity to be open to different and new possibilities is one of the features of an ethics of thinking.

Part 1 of this book, 'The Other and its Impacts on an Ethical Relation to Oneself', focuses on the impact of otherness on identity. Although it is possible to argue that the question of a good relation to oneself is an ethical question which does not concern the other, the first three articles in this book advance the position that an ethically good relation to oneself necessarily has to be developed in and through the relation to the other. This other has multiple features, and consequently a different impact on the development of the self and its identity. In contemporary multicultural societies, the traditional conception of a homogeneous cultural and accordingly a national identity, is called into question. The Dutch scholar *Annemie Halsema* reflects in her article, 'The Gift of Recognition: Self and Other in the Multicultural Situation,' on the impact of multiculturalism on personal identity. Numerous studies that address the issue of identity within the context of multiculturalism focus on cultural, group or political identity but not on personal identity. This paper focuses on personal identity instead. Within the multicultural situation the question of personal identity is most often addressed in relationship to recognition. But what does 'recognition' imply? In many studies recognition is understood in the Hegelian sense, and is the result

of the struggle between self and other. This implies that the relationship self – other is an adversarial one, and that the other is opposed to the self. Annemie Halsema develops a critique of the Hegelian notion of recognition, as she fears that within a multicultural context, such as that of the Netherlands, notions of recognition that start from the self – other opposition reinforce already existing tendencies to oppose self and other. Since the murder there of the film director Theo van Gogh by a young radicalized Dutch Muslim, oppositions along the dividing lines of religion and gender have become more apparent. Muslim, foreign and not emancipated is distinguished from secular, Dutch and emancipated. Yet, Annemie Halsema maintains that if we were to acknowledge the constitution of the self by the other, in other words, accept that our selves are formed by the others around us with whom we live together, the strong self–other opposition could perhaps disappear. For her critique of the oppositional self – other distinction she refers to the works of Jessica Benjamin, an American object relations psychoanalyst, and Paul Ricoeur, the French phenomenological hermeneutist. Both criticize the Hegelian notion of recognition and provide for a self that is constituted by otherness. By bringing the other inside as an intrapsychic other, Benjamin breaks the autonomy of the self that prevails in Hegel's notion of recognition. By internalizing the struggle between self and other, and understanding the other as the 'other inside' the subject, she provides a psychic basis to recognition. Ricoeur criticizes the Hegelian notion of recognition as a model in which struggle is central, and complements it with a notion of recognition as reciprocal gift. Such a notion helps us to understand recognition not merely as something that newcomers can gain by assimilating to the norms and practices of the old residents of the state, that is, as something one receives according to certain conditions (which is the current Dutch policy), but more importantly as a gift in which both consider the other as a person who is similar to the self, and who already, on that ground, deserves recognition.

In the essay 'Relational Identity: an Interpersonal Approach to the Body–Soul–Consciousness Problem,' *Gabrielle Hiltmann* argues that in order to conceive of personal identity it is necessary to reconsider the body–soul–consciousness problem in relation to the other. If the concept of identity is not understood as forming an autonomous monadic self, but as developing in the relation with other persons, it is necessary to ask how it is possible to account for this constitutive interpersonal interaction from which the self as an individual emerges. For her concept of relational identity, Gabrielle Hiltmann refers to two philosophers, Hannah Arendt and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as well as to the

African American artist Kara Walker. Kara Walker's reflections on bodily, cultural and intellectual identity cast a differentiating light on the philosophical approach. Since art is a necessary other of thought, it allows for observing a non-rational otherness at work in philosophy. In the Western philosophical tradition the question of identity aims at the definition of a being's essence. By transforming the traditional 'What-is question' that philosophy asked, to define this essence into the question 'Who are you?', Hannah Arendt shifts the exclusive approach of the essence towards an interpersonal conception of personal identity. Hannah Arendt's philosophy allows for understanding the importance of the other for the concept of individual and personal identity. Nevertheless, although she acknowledges that the indefinable Who of a person can be seen by the other in a movement, a glance, a gesture, as well as in the sound of the voice of the I, her philosophy does not allow to account for the bodily features of personal identity. To better understand the intercorporeality constitutive for the development of an individual person, Gabrielle Hiltmann refers to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's relational conception of the person. M. Merleau-Ponty develops a conception of intersubjectivity which starts with intercorporeity. This inevitably leads to the question of how the relation of intercorporeality and intersubjectivity can be conceived. Gabrielle Hiltmann argues that M. Merleau-Ponty's interrelational understanding of the human person necessitates a new conception of the body–soul–consciousness relation. The separation of body, soul and consciousness is the reason why idealistic philosophies can not account for an other which is not constituted by the I. Instead, M. Merleau-Ponty does not start with thinking, but rather with the perceptual experience of the other in the 'being in and towards the world' (*être au monde*). In this relational ontology, the person is always already and necessarily open towards the other. Due to this constitutive openness, the self is always already in a (potentially ethical) relation to the other and to itself. This interrelated constellation allows for a differentiating interaction with the other person and the other of the world on the level of the body, but also in terms of feeling and thought. In the process of a continuous differentiation of these several aspects of a person through the other, a self, which is constantly changing and remains open to otherness and further differentiation, is constituted as a unity of body, soul and consciousness. It is not the body, nor the soul, nor consciousness, which would ground the identity of a person, but rather the unlimited process of intertwinement which is constantly opened towards the other.

In the third article of this first section, 'Beyond Narcissism: Women and Civilization', *Dorothea Olkowski* analyses the concept of narcissism traditionally used to explain female identity development. According to the dominant psychoanalytic theories, women are fundamentally narcissistic and their narcissism is strongly correlated with, if not the cause of, their inability to engage in intellectual and cultural practices identified with the creation of civilization. And yet, many women have engaged in the creation of civilization. Notably, women have written philosophy; they have directed films; they have created works of art and contributed in every possible way to the creation of civilization. Feminists have reinterpreted psychoanalytic statements about women's narcissism to mean that what makes the narcissistic woman attractive is precisely that she has what the man has lost. The woman keeps her original narcissism, her high quality libidinal energy – she is an open system, open to new flows of matter and energy. But the male wants this libido, insofar as he appears to be a closed system, lacking new matter and energy and is subject to libidinal dissipation. This essay posits going beyond these interpretations by theorizing that what is called narcissism is woman's 'indifferentiation', her ability to change forms and exceed the binaries the theory of narcissism entails. The concept of indifferentiation allows for the possibility that women's libidinal energy is precisely the source of her creativity as well as of her ethical relation to the world. In other words, women seek to express themselves in a manner that is not subject to the binary structure of closed or open systems, so that their behaviour can be comprehended as neither masculine aim-inhibited production nor narcissistic self-love. In this manner, it has been posited that women have 'too much' love rather than not enough. And what traditional psychoanalysis called sexual over-esteem may be, instead, the exaltation of the loved object, attributing beauty and value to it insofar as it serves as a substitute for an underlying, all-embracing, unity of nature and self, a symbol of abundance, of excess, even enriching the source from which it arose. In other words, it is only in the cathexis, in the love of others, that the libido is manifested as something in itself. Thus, *without the love of others, no self even emerges*. It is then, this essay argues, only out of such an emergence of love, in which one's own boundaries are continually recognized but surpassed, that there arises not only the self, but friendship and ethics as well.

In Part 2, 'The Other in Relational Ethics', the authors consider how taking the experiences of birth and mothering into account radically alter conceptions of the self as well as the form and content of linguistic expression in order to argue that the concept of otherness is

fundamental to conceiving a *relational ethics*. In 'The Relational Onto-
logies of Cavarero and Battersby: Natality, Time and the Self' *Rachel
Jones* conjoins the work of two contemporary feminist philosophers,
Christine Battersby and Adriana Cavarero. Both thinkers build on
Irigaray's analysis of the repression of the maternal in Western thought
and culture by developing philosophical frameworks that are attentive
to sexual difference and that take birth as their orienting term. Like
Irigaray, Cavarero works closely with Greek philosophy and myth in
order to recover the contours of a maternal order in which female iden-
tity is constituted in the relation between mother and daughter in ways
that are irreducible to a phallocentric logic. Rachel Jones shows how, by
drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt, Cavarero expands her position
into a model of relational identity rooted in birth, according to which
who we are as unique existents emerges in the ways that we appear to
one another, and is captured not in philosophical definitions, but in the
narratives that trace our singular life stories. She argues that Cavarero's
work points to, but does not fully develop, the importance of attending
to the temporality of the event of appearing, and in particular, the event
of birth as the primary event via which singular existents make their first
appearance in the world. Rachel Jones expands Cavarero's framework
by using Françoise Dastur's account of the unmasterable and generative
temporality of the event, which is exemplified for Dastur in the always
surprising event of birth. Finally, she turns to the work of Battersby who
draws on Kierkegaard's refiguring of Antigone to develop a model of
time in which past, present and future intersect via complex patterns of
repetition and echo. Such a temporality, Rachel Jones argues, is better
able to do justice to the transformative capacities of birth as an event,
and is hence appropriate to the relational ontology rooted in birth that
Battersby and Cavarero differently develop. Implicit in the paper is the
view that it is crucial that such feminist approaches do not give birth
to an unjustified metaphysical privilege as a moment that determines
identity and fixes relations. Instead, by developing Cavarero's thought
via that of Battersby, we can position birth as an event that inserts each
singular being into a plural relationality whilst simultaneously trans-
forming those relations and opening a multiplicity of future possibilities.

   In the second article of this section titled 'Mothers/Intellectuals: Alter-
ities of a Dual Identity', *Gail Weiss* reflects on the logical relaters which
structure the dual identity of mothers/intellectuals. Traditionally, the
relationship between mothers and intellectuals has taken the form of
an 'either/or', that is, of a choice one has to make between living as
a mother and living as an intellectual. Although numerous examples

can be provided of individuals who have managed to transform this disjunction into a conjunction in their daily lives, even in these cases the either/or seems to resurface to the extent that the mother/intellectual often lives out her dual identities by switching back and forth from one role to the other depending upon the situation in which she finds herself. In this scenario, success at both endeavours is a reflection of one's success at leading a 'schizoid' existence, that is, it is dependent upon one's ability to be able to 'switch gears' from one role to the other at a moment's notice. Regardless of how successful one may be in separating one's existence as a mother from one's existence as an intellectual (and an upset child calling at the office is all it takes to collapse even the most elaborate means of dividing the two), one nonetheless lives these dual existences simultaneously in what Merleau-Ponty would call a 'chiasmic' relationship whereby one shifts back and forth between the two roles without the one ever being reducible to the other. This article seeks to explore critically the nature of this 'reversibility' between being a mother and being an intellectual. Beginning with a discussion of how identities are socially constructed, Gail Weiss then turns to an examination of alternative models for conceptualizing the lived duality between motherhood and intellectual life, in order, ultimately, to get a clearer sense of the political as well as personal stakes at work. A central goal of this essay is to show that even the seemingly inclusive identity mother/intellectual enacts its own exclusions. Once we acknowledge that the demands of motherhood and the demands of intellectual life are often in conflict with one another, we are faced with the question of how an individual can successfully integrate her existence as a mother/intellectual in a manner that is not alienating to non-mothers and/or non-intellectuals. Put more positively, how does the chiasmic relationship between being a mother and being an intellectual break down artificial barriers between what have traditionally been viewed, to use Wittgensteinian language, as alternative 'forms of life?' Insofar as different horizons of significance seem to be operative in each sphere of existence, an individual's ability to navigate between these different spheres on an ongoing basis can potentially serve as a useful model for understanding how people can possess more than one identity simultaneously.

We are our body; nevertheless this body, which changes throughout our lives, has an otherness we can not monopolize with either theories or bio-sciences. Female contemporary artists working on the body are freeing the female body from its monopolization by the patriarchal view at work in theories and recent development of the sciences. Referring

to these artists' work on the otherness of the (female) body can allow feminist philosophers to re-conceptualize ethics. Thus, in Part 3, 'The Ethical Otherness of the Body', the otherness of the body is addressed as an ethical otherness in a double sense. In what ways does the approach to the body through a reflection on contemporary art allow for respecting the body as an ethical other? And how is it possible to conceive a different ethics by taking into account the otherness of the body? In the article 'Embodiment and the Ethical Concept of a Person', *Anne Reichold* observes a significant gap between ontological and ethical reflections on being a person that can be found in recent theories about the concept of a person. In ontology, analytic philo- sophers stress the importance of an embodied concept of person. In ethics, by contrast, the concept of a person is characterized by mental ascriptions only. Anne Reichold argues that an exclusion of embodied features of the person leads to an incomplete and misleading ethical concept of person. Vulnerability and mortality of human beings are basic features of every moral subject and have to be reflected in an ethical concept of a person. These features, as well as the relationship to others and the intersubjective frame of ethics, are conceptually rooted in the embodied nature of persons. She suggests that phenomenological conceptions of embodiment, in contrast to physicalist conceptions of the body, reflect on ethical features of the body. In phenomenology embodiment is not conceptualized within the dualist framework of body and mind, but it does include mental and bodily features. Emmanuel Levinas' conception of ethics seems to be fruitful for an integration of embodiment in an ethical concept of the person since he points to the genuinely ethical features of the embodied nature of a human being. The concept of embodiment in Levinas is clearly value-laden. It forms a metaphysical basis of personhood and it precedes all mental terms like reason, thinking or intentionality. In contrast to the presented ethical theories of person in analytic philosophy, Levinas explicitly denies the fundamental role of consciousness, memory, autonomy and personal identity in conceptualizing an ethical subject. He attempts to destroy the modern idea of an autonomous, rational, and self-conscious subject of experience that is identical over time by pointing to a sphere that precedes consciousness and lies beyond reflection. A fundamental pas- siveness, vulnerability and exposure to others are some of the character- istics he cites. In contrast to the self-reflective structure of consciousness, the ethical sphere is characterized by the structure of embodiment. In naming sensibility and embodment, Levinas hints at a significance that lies beyond representation and consciousness. By referring to Levinas'

philosophy, Anne Reichold argues that an integration of phenomenological reflections on embodiment might help to avoid the dualist gap between mental and physical concepts within ethics.

In 'Recognition beyond Narcissism: Imaging the Body's Ownness and Strangeness,' *Jenny Slatman* seeks to explore the way in which contemporary medical imaging of the interior body changes the experience of one's own body. An image can affect our experience of ourselves since we recognize (something of) ourselves in it and, subsequently, identify ourselves with it. However, contemporary images of the interior body are hardly recognizable, and it is not very likely that one wants to identify oneself with, for instance, an endoscopic image taken of the intestines. Jenny Slatman's thesis is that in spite of this, we do recognize something in these images, but this recognition is not exclusively based upon the visual. To found this thesis, she dwells upon the idea of 'body image' by taking seriously the double meaning of this expression. On the one hand, it simply refers to representations of the body or body parts, be it in a clinical or an artistic practice. On the other hand, it has the psychological meaning of a mental image that one has of one's own body. Psychologically, 'body image' refers to the body's unity, ownness and identity. Although these two meanings of 'body image' have to be distinguished, they do not exclude each other. It is through recognition that they are linked to each other. One's bodily identity comes into being by means of a process of identification with (ideal) images, and this process is only possible if one can recognize something from these images. Since images of the inner body, such as those provided by MRI, PET, CT, endoscopy and ultrasound, are fragmented and hardly recognizable, they cannot easily be integrated within our own mirror image of the body. To understand what kind of recognition is at stake here, it is necessary to go beyond the theory of narcissism that reduces the body image to a 'visual image'. Jenny Slatman makes clear that the body image can also be understood in terms of an 'affective image'. To explain her concept of the visual body image, she draws on Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytical conceptualizations. Furthermore her idea of the affective body image is based upon the work of Merleau-Ponty and Melanie Klein. Jenny Slatman claims that visual recognition is a form of appropriation which therefore constitutes the body as one's own body. By contrast, she understands affective recognition as a confrontation with (one's own) strangeness without appropriation. The author illustrates her idea of the affective image and affective recognition by means of an analysis of an artwork by the Lebanese artist Mona Hatoum. Hatoum's work *corps étranger* (1994) consists of a video-installation which shows endoscopic

images of the artist's own (inner) body. The work makes visible and 'palpable' one's own body's strangeness.

In her essay 'Becoming Animated', *Cathryn Vasseleu* reflects on the ethics of technically generated animation. The author suggests that to be animated is to exhibit a spontaneity that is associated with the innate volition of living beings. In giving spontaneous movement a 'life' form, the art of animation demonstrates that spontaneity is open to manipulation through externally imposed laws of figuration. Spectacles of animated states introduce the problem of seeing, or becoming aware of one's body being given foreign animation. The author considers spontaneous movement and foreign animation together, as simultaneously lived, inextricable states; becoming (being in continuous movement) and animated (altered by an outside agency). Cathryn Vasseleu begins her essay by analysing two opposing critiques of foreign animation represented by Rey Chow and Hélène Cixous in their different responses to Freud's interpretation of the woman-automaton in Hoffman's tale 'The Sand-Man'. Chow's cultural analysis indicates that animation, entrenched as a feminized ontological state, imposes its own gendered forms. Animation prevents those who embody its machinations from escaping the life of becoming-an-automaton. Cixous's literary analysis understands animation in terms of the spectral invasions that enter into any claim to self-authorization. Erupting into the scene of writing, the ghostly life of fiction becomes a mechanism for precipitating unpredictable movement. Cixous speculates about animating the mechanical doll Olympia in her analysis, a move which Chow criticizes as a godlike stance that raises the spectre of the ethnographic other. In the second section of her essay Cathryn Vasseleu takes up this problematic figure that Chow's and Cixous's critiques generate together: the woman-animator. For this she turns to Caroline Leaf, an animator who developed a technique for animating with sand. C. Vasseleu analyses the particular way Leaf creates spontaneous movement, focusing on how her sand-painting method stirs up entrenched ideologies of the relation between animator/animated image. In the final section Cathryn Vasseleu argues that Leaf has devised a medium for the technical figuration of becoming as an animated ontological state. She compares Leaf's enactment of spontaneous recurrence to Deleuze's definition of cinema, Merleau-Ponty's depiction of painting, and Irigaray's figuration of touch. The essay ends with a discussion of another animator: Lee Whitmore has successfully married Leaf's animation technique with digital-video technology in a way that allows her to make an acute observation of how spontaneity arises within the temporal immediacy of the

instant replay. Rather than conforming to the laws of animation, the author concludes that these three woman-animators – Cixous, Leaf and Whitmore – express a desire to actively participate in both analysing and reinventing the medium itself. In the process, they each translate a 'naturalized' condition of becoming animated into a heterogenous, cultural form of life.

In Part 4 of the book with the title 'Otherness and Ethical Perspective' the question of thinking itself as an ethical challenge is approached. What is necessary to conceive of thinking as ethical? Christina Schües and Veronica Vasterling focus specifically on two instruments of reflexion: contemplation and judgement. *Christina Schües*' article, 'The Contemplative Conditions of a Moral Action', is directed toward the Kantian question 'what shall I do?' in reference to some aspects of discourse ethics which emphasize the problem of legitimizing norms and moral decisions by way of rational arguments. The focus on the Kantian question and its transformation into discourse ethics is motivated by an interest in the aspects of moral thinking that seemingly necessitate a person to act morally. Christina Schües attempts to show that not every kind of thinking is adequate for answering the question of how to think morally and, moreover, that discourse ethics has to be enlarged with the functions of insight, such as hermeneutic, situational, generative and normative insight, and complemented with a weak notion of responsibility in order to adequately show how a person turns her moral thinking into a moral action. The notion of insight is taken to be an act of thinking which can be based on intuition; it refers to the grasping of a phenomenon, a situation, a relation or a need of an other human being. Insight provides the missing link between the general moral norm and the concrete situation and needs of the other; it also elicits the *urge* somebody must feel in order to *actually act*. The concept of responsibility, which has to complement discourse ethics, is implemented in the concept of an asymmetrical and generative subject–subject relation between human beings. Consequentially, morality is directed towards the initiation and caring of human relations. In order to initiate human relations within the framework of morality, responsibility must rely on personal insight, that is, a reflection in regard to the needs and rights of other human beings and their and our relations. To think about, to have insight, in-seeing, can be the first step toward taking the initiative to stop the course of events and to become active in order, for instance, to help. Personal insight is not based simply on reflective judgement, that is directed towards considerations of right and wrong, and which can come to the conclusion 'something must

be done' or 'one must do something'. Rather, the sentiment of '*I* must do something' is based on assuming responsibility and taking initiative, which are grounded in moral discourses *as well as* the personal insight in its manifold functions. Insight turns the moral consideration into an initiative to act *with* and *for* other human beings. In the last article of the volume 'Plural Perspectives and Independence: Political and Moral Judgement in Hannah Arendt', *Veronica Vasterling* considers judgement, a very important topic in Hannah Arendt's conception of human existence. Arendt's well-known notion of plurality – it is not human kind but human beings, in the plural, who inhabit the earth – is fleshed out in her phenomenological analyses of action and judgement, two activities that constitute the humanness of human life. Judgement would have been the topic of the third part of the trilogy, *The Life of the Mind,* but Arendt died before finishing her book on the mental activities of thinking (Volume I), willing (Volume II) and judging. There are, however, lectures on the topic of judgement and various references and discussions pertaining to the topic throughout her work. It is not so much the lack of material as its inconclusiveness that constitutes the main problem for assessing Arendt's notion of judgement. Against what appears to be the standard interpretation of this notion, Veronica Vasterling argues that there is a shift in Arendt's work that makes for distinct and apparently contradictory features of judgement. Political judgement, with its requirement of representativeness, takes centre stage in the earlier work, while moral judgement, with its requirement of independence, appears to become a central concern in later work. Though Arendt herself does not refer to it in these terms, the distinction between political and moral judgement is implicit in her work. The reason to foreground this distinction is that it helps to clarify the tension between the apparently disparate features Arendt attributes to judgement. An important common source for both types of judgement, however, is Kant's *Critique of Judgment* or, rather, Arendt's specific appropriation of it. Therefore Veronica Vasterling discusses the distinction between moral and political judgement against the background of Arendt's interpretation of Kant. She concludes that good (political and moral) judgement not only requires the independence of *critical thought,* but also the representativity of the *erweiterte Denkungsart* (enlarged thinking). When we lack the imagination to engage with the viewpoints of others in the process of forming a judgement, our judgement may be critical and independent with respect to the prevailing powers, but it will not be convincing – not even to ourselves – because of its subjectivity. One of the most important phenomenological insights of Arendt's philosophy