

Foreword

This volume of *Das Questões* – a journal dedicated to contemporary questions that interconnect philosophy, art, and translation – is about nihilism. The process that is diagnosed since Jacobi as an incapacity to live in the pace of things themselves, to know about things in themselves, and think through things by themselves has proved to be the tip of an iceberg built by the impact of intelligibility in the world. Nietzsche thought the gradual murder of God ushers an environment where no command is unreachable. Heidegger took the age of nihilism as the age of metaphysics. Nihilism is a process that has been increasingly accelerated despite all the philosophical efforts to redirect, debunk, dissolve, and revert it. This is perhaps because it simultaneously promises comfort and challenge. Comfort comes from a tamed environment where the intelligibility of all things is captured and could be put to work on demand – an environment of pharmaceuticals, of urban amenities, of informational devices, and, above all, of artificial intelligences. Challenge comes from the endeavor to extract the intelligibility of things.

Indeed, nihilism is a project for intelligence. Nietzsche understood it as a cosmic adventure, one that will leave its traces everywhere from where the distant stars lie to the human moral fabric. The adventure will forge a hero – the free spirit. The hero will fear no established structure of power which would have a monopoly of anything; her effort is to dethrone and progressively melt whatever appeared as solid or consolidated. As such, it is a thoroughly metaphysical adventure – and perhaps the very adventure of metaphysics. Further, intelligence is perhaps itself at stake as deviating it from nihilism could require dismantling it. Heidegger found here the central challenge for thinking and this was the general form of his *Kehre*: conceive how thought could deal with things in a post-nihilistic manner.

Although Levinas was not explicitly responding to Heidegger's later texts (after his involvement with the Nietzsche archives), the idea that there has to be an Other within intelligibility can be read as a response to the idea that the artificialization of the world. Similarly, Derrida developed a philosophy of intelligibility where it can always be deconstructed through displacing it for it is intimately connected to

writing and, as such, is always subject to supplement. Further, both Levinas and Derrida embraced a claim to infinite responsibility and the precedence of justice over truth that can be taken as a starting point for a non-nihilistic account of thinking.

This volume started with a course at the post-graduate program in philosophy of the University of Brasilia. The course attempted to read Levinas and Derrida as responding to four texts of Heidegger: the Bremen lectures, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead,'" "Metaphysics as the history of being" and "Time and Being". The discussion that followed has developed into a call for papers and the present articles we collect here. Together, they contribute to the exploration of the possibilities for a consistent and convincing post-nihilism.

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