

LIVING WELL TOWARDS OTHERS:

The Development of an Everyday Ethics Through Emmanuel Levinas and Alfred Schutz

Yvonne Haigh BA (Hons) Murdoch University

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch

University, 2003

Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with what it means to live well towards others. It develops a form of everyday ethics that emphasises how existing in the world and being ethical are entwined. To develop this approach to ethics this study employs Alfred Schutz's phenomenological descriptions of everyday world and Emmanuel Levinas's concept of the ethical. The purpose of the thesis is to develop an understanding of ethics that operates at the everyday level of human-to-human contact. This form of ethics is significant in that it indicates that being ethical is an important aspect of human life. My intention is to show that ethics is always more than simply the institution of codes of conduct that govern the way people act. The significance of the thesis is that it contributes both to ways in which ethics can be understood and to the manner in which ethics can be operationalised at an institutional level.

My thesis has four specific aims. First, to examine the conditions and characteristics that constitute the everyday world as understood in Alfred Schutz's work. Second, to explore Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of the ethical. My third aim is to synthesise these theorists' ideas through my heuristic device, Echoes of the Other. This device will allow me to extract the conditions for and features of an everyday ethics. My fourth aim is to point to an *in situ* illustration of this approach to ethics. This will be drawn from my observations at the Western Australian Police Academy.

My argument is that synthesising Levinas's and Schutz's ideas will enable the development of an everyday ethics. This will highlight the ways in which ethics functions at the micro levels of human life. This study contributes to approaches to ethics, and specifically, ethics derived from Levinas's ethical relation. This approach can be of use to people interested in ethics, phenomenology, the works of Levinas and Schutz and those concerned with developing ways to live well towards others.

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Yvonne Haigh

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Ian Cook of the School of Politics and International Studies at Murdoch University who provided me with guidance, encouragement and the capacity to believe in myself. Without his support I would not be the person I am today.

I would also like to thank David Savat, my colleague and computer adviser. Over the course of four years David not only “fixed” every computer problem I encountered, he also provided me with support and some light relief when it was needed. I would also like to thank the wonderful group of “polgrads”, Jim, Stuart, Tael and a few others who have come and gone. These people helped make this experience fun at times and supportive when it was necessary. Thanks must also go to Gaye Mckensie and Liz Boase for the coffees and the laughter. I would also like to thank Sargent Di Wilkins and Senior Constable Keryn Macey of the Western Australian Police Service for making me feel welcome and answering all of my questions. Finally, I want to thank my partner, Mario Schmack for understanding what it means to be driven.

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE - ALFRED SCHUTZ AND THE EVERYDAY WORLD	41
PART ONE: PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE EVERYDAY LIFE WORLD	44
PART TWO: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EVERYDAY WORLD	55
PART THREE: THE STRUCTURE OF THE EVERYDAY WORLD	62
PART FOUR: EVERYDAY HUMAN RELATIONS	84
CHAPTER TWO - LEVINAS: ON BEING ETHICAL	101
PART ONE: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ETHICAL EXPERIENCE	104
PART TWO: THE HUMAN FACE OF ETHICS	129
PART THREE: THE ETHICAL COMMUNAL DIMENSION	155
CHAPTER THREE - SCHUTZ AND LEVINAS – ECHOES OF THE OTHER	171
PART ONE: THE EVERYDAY AND THE ETHICAL	172
PART TWO: ECHOES OF THE OTHER	184
PART THREE: ECHOES OF THE OTHER – SOCIAL STRUCTURES	189
PART FOUR: THE OTHER IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS	216
CHAPTER FOUR - LIVING WELL TOWARDS OTHERS	238
PART ONE: EVERYDAY ETHICAL CONDITIONS	239
PART TWO: AREAS OF CONSTRAINT AND EXPANSION	254
PART THREE: LIVING WELL TOWARDS OTHERS	268
CHAPTER FIVE - METHOD	289
PART ONE: WHAT IS PHENOMENOLOGY	291
PART TWO: PHENOMENOLOGY AS RESEARCH	297
PART THREE: PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROCESSES	301
PART FOUR: PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS	312
CHAPTER SIX - CASE STUDY:	320
THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN POLICE SERVICE	320
PART ONE: THE RESEARCH PROCESS	321
PART TWO: POLICING – AN OVERVIEW	324
PART THREE: PRESENTATION OF DATA	333
PART FOUR: A SUMMARY	383
CONCLUSION	388
BIBLIOGRAPHY	399