ARRUPE COLLEGE

Jesuit School of Philosophy and Humanities

# BA Honours in Philosophy

**THE THOUGHT OF EMMANUEL LEVINAS APH 591**

**DECEMBER 2015**

### THREE (3) HOURS

**ANSWER FOUR QUESTIONS AT LEAST ONE FROM EACH SECTION. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS.**

**Section A**

1. How does Levinas use the phenomenological “technique” in his philosophy of the Other? What is Levinas’ main critique of Husserl’s phenomenological method?
2. In what sense does Levinas praise Heidegger’s project and in what sense does he criticize it? Why does he ask Heidegger whether our relation with the Other is a matter of “letting be”?

**Section B**

1. According to Levinas, is ontology fundamental? Justify your answer. According to Levinas, what are the conditions of possibility for ethics?
2. Why does Levinas say that in ontology “... every relation with a being presupposes the ... forgetfulness of being” (“Is Ontology Fundamental?” 5)? Describe the relationship between ontology and the ethical, according to the thought of Levinas.

**Section C**

1. Comment on Levinas’ claim that “truth,” as the ideal of Western philosophy, leans too much in the direction of integration, anamnesis and freedom not allowing the thinker to be surprised by an encounter with the unexpected.
2. Clarify the notions of “sensibility”, “proximity” and “substitution” in Levinas’ thought and their relation to “responsibility.”

**Section D**

1. How does Levinas answer his own opening question in *Totality and Infinity* whether we are “duped by morality”? How does he relate his answer to his description of war as “the pure experience of pure being” (*Totality and Infinity* 21)?
2. Levinas criticizes Western political theory for linking the notion of justice to the notions of truth, being and freedom. By separating these notions, he presents the “work of justice” as contrary to the “work of the state”. Discuss.
3. Contrast Levinas’ notion of Western thought as narcissism with his own “Idea of the Infinite and the face of the Other” (“Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite” 108).

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**