



# 13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference of the NORTH AMERICAN LEVINAS SOCIETY



## Levinas, Displacement & Repair

Western Carolina University  
Cullowhee, NC, USA  
July 31-August 3

### Conference Director

James McLachlan  
Western Carolina University  
jmcachla@email.wcu.edu

### Associate Director

Sol Neely  
University of Alaska Southeast  
GWY.Ð D.ÐP (Cherokee Nation)  
sneely@alaska.edu

### CALL FOR PAPERS

The natural *conatus essendi* of a sovereign *I* is put into question by the death or the mortality of the other, in the ethical vigilance through which the sovereignty of the *I* can see itself as 'hateful,' and see its 'place in the sun' as the 'image and beginning of the usurpation of the whole world.'

~Emmanuel Levinas, "Diachrony and Representation"

**Emmanuel Levinas** writes extensively about the temptations of knowledge and the seductions of intelligibility and intentional consciousness as they enable a fascination for ontology, power, and war. For nearly 13 years, the North American Levinas Society has worked to preserve and focus this critique through social apertures that privilege questions of historical violence, transgenerational suffering, memory and repair. As a society, we have not only struggled together through difficult exegesis with Levinas' work, but we have also sought to bring such ethical critique into dialogue with other philosophers of liberation, postcolonial scholars, indigenous intellectuals, Asian American scholars, philosophers of diaspora, religious thinkers, and victims and survivors of modern national projects, ecological devastation, and global economy. For our 13<sup>th</sup> annual conference, the NALS invites participants to continue this tradition by taking up the question of "displacement and repair" across generations.

We are especially moved to take up this question of displacement on the grounds of Western Carolina University, which houses a Cherokee Center and runs a robust Cherokee Studies program. One of Levinas' most prolific exegetes, Enrique Dussel, noted at a time in his life when he could no longer identify as European, "The philosophy that we studied set out from the Greeks, in whom we saw our most remote lineage. The Amerindian World had no presence in our studies, and none of our professors would have been able to articulate the origin of philosophy with reference to indigenous peoples."<sup>1</sup> Despite the prevalence in Levinas studies to insist on the validity of counter-hegemonic critique from those on the underside of history, there is still a profound silence to the question of how we might encounter Levinas' work through indigenous inspirations in the context of the Americas. Even the most celebrated works that take up Levinas in postcolonial contexts remain relatively mute on this question. With a concern for situating wisdom in its place and "translating" intelligibility across various modalities of consciousness, however, we ought to approach Levinas with questions about displacement, usurpation, genocide, and ecocide—together with questions of repair across generations—with an ethical vigilance renewed by the very exigencies of place where concentration camps were designed and built in order to mobilize the displacement of indigenous peoples through what is called "the trail of tears."

Toward this end, the 13<sup>th</sup> annual NALS conference opens a collective concern for the question of "displacement and repair" that does not further contribute to the displacement and marginalization of indigenous histories, survivance, and intellectual traditions. At the same time, as has been customary since the founding of the Society, we also welcome papers on any topic in Levinas studies that happens to be of interest to you.

### Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Please prepare materials for blind review and send them via email attachment to the conference proposal committee chair, **Sol Neely (sneely@alaska.edu)** with the subject "NALS 2018 Proposal" before May 11, 2018. All submissions will be acknowledged, and notifications of acceptance will be sent out by May 18, 2018 along with information on conference registration.

- **Individual Paper Proposals** should be 200-300 words for a 15-20 minute presentation.
- **Panel Proposals** should be 400 words for 75-90 minute panel sessions. Please include on separate cover the session title and name of organizer or panel chair, along with participants' names, institutional affiliations, disciplines or departments.

**ALL PROPOSALS ARE DUE MAY 11, 2018.**

Please direct all inquiries concerning the conference to the conference organizers, James McLachlan (director) and Sol Neely. General questions regarding the Society should be directed to Erik Garret, NALS President (garrette@duq.edu) or Dara Hill, NALS Executive Secretary (levinassociety@gmail.com).

<sup>1</sup> See "Transmodernity and Interculturality: An Interpretation from the Perspective of Philosophy of Liberation."