Editorial

We are living through precarious times. A pandemic is sweeping the globe, upending daily life, leaving each of us experiencing vastly different situations – some finding themselves inconvenienced, others facing economic ruin, and still others risking their health on the frontlines fighting the disease and providing essential services to those who are sick and dying. These burdens have also given rise to an acute *visceral* awareness – in the sense of relating to our organs as well as in evoking intense, primal affects. As an invisible threat confronts us, our attention is being called to bodies with every unbidden cough, snuffle, and sneeze briefly tearing us from our *everydayness*. This viscosity, while bringing us closer to our own bodies, has simultaneously distanced us from others. We are now acutely attuned to other bodies, the spaces between them, and the haunting specter of imperceptible transmissions that could traverse those spaces. How will this sudden hyper-focusing on the visceral influence a society already well-practiced in some form of bodily distancing through social networking?¹ And how will thought itself be impacted? There is ample historical precedent for pandemics being major catalysts for shifts in philosophical and religious thought.² It would be far too premature to speculate on what may unfold, though we may begin to ponder on some of the recognizable antecedents of what will hold inevitable, though uncertain, reverberations for years to come.

The essays included in this volume, written well before these developments transpired, were never intended to speak directly to our current situation. Yet, one may find oneself arriving at the text with a set of questions and concerns informed by our present situation, seeking some illumination amidst the uncertainty of our times. For instance, how will thinking of the body be impacted in the aftermath of pervasive illness and social distancing? This JCPR

1 As exemplified by Sherry Turkle in *Alone Together*. Basic Books: New York, 2011.

2 Examples that come to mind include The Plague of Athens (430 BC) and the Classical Period of ancient Greece, Plato being born shortly after; The Antonine Plague (165–180) and the Christianizing of the Roman Empire; The Black Death (1346–1353) and the Renaissance, etc. Of course, causal conclusions should be avoided, as social upheaval and war are likely mediating influences in many cases (e.g. the Peloponnesian War following the Plague of Athens or the Pandemic of 1918 and the eventual start of World War II).

issue is bookmarked by essays concerning the body, beginning with Nibras Chehayed's discussion of Nietzsche's depiction of the dancing body and ending with Jack Pappas's exploration of phenomenology's distinction between the lived- and manifest-body as examined by Michel Henry and Emmanuel Falque. Another question that has arisen during the pandemic is how will viewing worship services through video streaming affect theology? If the world is a theological problem and religious experience can only be approached from the finitude of our lived-world, as discussed in Martin Koci's essay, how will the present upheavals of that lived-world affect our encounters with the divine? Finally, does the impact of cancelled worship gatherings differ among those who approach Scripture mediated through a communal worship celebration in contrast to those who take a *Sola Scriptura* approach, such as described by Kristóf Oltvai, who finds in Martin Luther's exegetical method a destruction of conceptual idols that allow one to arrive at Christ 'in-person' rather than abstractly? These questions are not to be imposed upon the following essays for critically analyzing *them*, but rather may provide an avenue by which these texts can begin to critically examine *our* present situation. For as much as this is a time of action, it is also a time calling for rigorous reflection.

Brian W. Becker

Lesley University

Matthew Clemente

Boston College

John Panteleimon Manoussakis

College of the Holy Cross