

*Sensate Dialogue:
Loving and Suffering Levinas Through Hermeneutic Conversation*

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What does Levinas have to say that Gadamer is missing? What is Gadamer saying that Levinas is missing? How do both thinkers represent planes of sensate experience and concrete encounter that complement one another by speaking to various and necessary dimensions of the ethical event of conversation? In this paper, the authors suggest that while it is necessary to identify Levinas' ethical advantages over Gadamer's hermeneutics, it is important to avoid the temptation to reify these advantages as an essential superiority. The hermeneutic requirement of application locates the insufficiency of Levinasian ethics in the face of the concreteness of situations that call for an ethical response. Equally necessary, however, is to think of the hermeneutic ideal of conversation from the standpoint of Levinasian responsibility and sensibility. That way, hermeneutic conversation can rise to its own ethical potential, while avoiding its own tendency to abstract itself from the living situation. After weaving together these philosophical strands, we offer some thoughts about the clinical implications of thinking Levinas and Gadamer in a single breath.