

## **Call for Papers**

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### ***Voice and Its Philosophical Contexts***

This issue of our journal will be devoted to philosophical questions related to the topic of “voice”, broadly conceived.

To begin with the most obvious: philosophical thoughts need to be articulated. Voice, therefore, is a precondition of all philosophy. However banal this observation may sound, it actually raises quite a few questions itself. On the one hand, one could identify the philosophers’ ultimate goal as achieving their own voice: a distinctive and unique one. Often we are able to recognize the authorship of the phrases written by Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, Spinoza, Kant, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Bergson, Heidegger or any specific author of our choice, even though we actually do not remember or are not familiar with the quoted sentences themselves. We recognize them as we would have recognized the voice of a person familiar to us. But, on the other hand, these singular and distinctive voices of philosophers are never alienated from each other. A philosophical voice, while it aims at uniqueness, always comes in plural. It is allowed to speak only by entering a dialogue with other voices. Philosophical thinking, being a strictly personal affair, is always a matter of positioning itself in the agora full of different speakers. The voice of the philosopher needs to contain the voices of other philosophers, even if they are criticized, misunderstood, or mocked. This is actually true as well for literary voices and, less obviously, for any common language. Where is the line between “mine” and “taken from outside” within my voice? Perhaps even “my own” voice is plural at its core?

There is, however, even more to this issue than just these “singular vs. plural” or “me vs. the others” rifts. Socrates claimed that some *daimon*, the innermost voice of ethical intuition, used to speak inside his head. But was it his own voice, then, or was it coming from somewhere else? And if the latter was the case, what or who was emitting this voice? A deity? Conscience? Or a higher consciousness? This problem can be put in more general terms: what is the source of philosophical voice / thinking? Who or what is speaking here, after all?

The voice seems to defy yet another well-grounded philosophical position. It comes from a body, it is then a physical and biological phenomenon. At the same time, however, it is aimed at conveying meanings which themselves are neither bodily, nor physical. Therefore, the voice belongs to both nature and culture, as we may infer. This topic was explored, among others, by psychoanalytical thinkers who identified the category of the voice with the voice of the father that separates the child from their mother and imprints in the child's psyche the sense of law and order. It is by voice that we are being introduced into the social and cultural realm. Should human voice be taken, then, as a link between mankind and the broader continuum of animal creatures or, vice-versa, should it be understood as a crucial factor for separating humans from non-humans?

It needs to be noticed that modern day technology brings another set of problems connected with the voice. More and more often we are being encouraged to talk with the AI systems implemented in our equipment of everyday use: phones, computers, cars or smart TV sets. Companies also tend to replace their phone consultants with AI-based speaking bots. These trends are quite recent but they seem to be irreversible and increasing in scale. In terms of their audio quality, the voices of these machines are close to be indistinguishable from the speech of real people, and we may expect that they reach this level soon. This may lead to establishing a completely new kind of relationship between humans and machines. As surveys show, people already tend to ask AI assistants in their smartphones questions of an existential or intimate nature. But does a machine really speak with a voice, in a manner that human subjects do, or does it simply play a voice such as a tape recorder? More fundamentally, what is the relation between voice and subjectivity? What makes a voice a carrier of subjectivity? This, in turn, leads to the questions of political nature. Taken as an expression of subjectivity, voice may speak "for somebody" or "for something". And, if so, what would this "for" consist of in the case of philosophy? And what if we replace "speaking for" with "speaking in the name of"? We expect interesting and original essays discussing these or other questions. Papers can be submitted by **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022** to: [idos.ed@uw.edu.pl](mailto:idos.ed@uw.edu.pl)

They have to be previously unpublished and they cannot be under consideration for publication elsewhere. They should be prepared for a double-blind review process. Please, make sure that your paper complies with our submission standards which are posted here: <http://idos.uw.edu.pl/submissions/>

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