



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

# Abstract Book

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on  
Philosophy  
22-25 May 2023 Athens, Greece**

**Edited by  
William O'Meara & Olga Gkounta**

2023



Abstracts  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual International  
Conference on Philosophy  
22-25 May 2023, Athens, Greece

Edited by  
William O'Meara & Olga Gkounta

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## Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Philosophy (22-25 May 2023), organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with ATINER's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of ATINER's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of ATINER and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. ATINER was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to ATINER's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

**Table 1.** *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2011-2023*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2023	42	17	O'Meara and Gkounta (2023)
2022	41	18	<a href="#">O'Meara and Gkounta (2022)</a>
2021	18	11	<a href="#">Papanikos (2021)</a>
2020	24	10	<a href="#">Papanikos (2020)</a>
2019	74	27	<a href="#">Papanikos (2019)</a>
2018	29	17	<a href="#">Papanikos (2018)</a>
2017	46	25	<a href="#">Papanikos (2017)</a>
2016	32	15	<a href="#">Papanikos (2016)</a>
2015	62	27	<a href="#">Papanikos (2015)</a>
2014	55	24	<a href="#">Papanikos (2014)</a>
2013	38	21	<a href="#">Papanikos (2013)</a>
2012	51	20	<a href="#">Papanikos (2012)</a>
2011	65	23	<a href="#">Papanikos (2011)</a>

It is our hope that through ATINER's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, ATINER has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 6 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of ATINER for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together.

**Gregory T. Papanikos**  
**President**

## **Editors' Note**

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Philosophy. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

ATINER's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The 18th Annual International Conference on Philosophy accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 17 different countries (Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovenia, UAE, UK, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

**William O'Meara & Olga Gkounta**  
**Editors**

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Philosophy, 22-25  
May 2023, Athens, Greece**

**Organizing & Scientific Committee**

All ATINER's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of ATINER, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER & Honorary Professor, University of Stirling, U.K.
2. William O'Meara, Head, Philosophy Unit, ATINER & Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, James Madison University, USA.
3. Patricia Hanna, Vice President of Academic Affairs, ATINER & ex-Dean & Professor Emerita, University of Utah, USA.

## FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Philosophy, 22-25 May 2023,  
Athens, Greece**

### PROGRAM

Monday 22 May 2023

**08.30-09.15**  
**Registration**

**09:15-10:00**

**Opening and Welcoming Remarks:**

- **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, ATINER.

**10:00-11:30 Session 1**

**Session 1a**

**Moderator: Franklin Johnson**, Professor Emeritus, Concordia University, Chicago, USA.

1. **Atli Harðarson**, Professor, University of Iceland, Iceland.  
*Title: Spinoza, A God of One's Own and the Wisdom to Love.*
2. **Xavier Pavie**, Professor, ESSEC Business School, Paris Nanterre University, France.  
*Title: Could Philosophy of Spiritual exercise be the Key to Develop Responsible Innovator?*
3. **Steven Burik**, Associate Professor, Singapore Management University, Singapore.  
*Title: Lao-Zhuang Daoism as Postmodern Philosophy.*

**Session 1b**

**Moderator: Sonja Weiss**, Assistant Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

1. **Mark Wells**, Professor, Montreat College, USA.  
*Title: Soren Kierkegaard on the Mediation of Christ.*
2. **Man Baker**, Professor, Zayed niversity, UAE.  
*Title: Contemporary Judicial Ijtihad through the Interpretation of Unclear Legal Terms: A Comparative Study.*
3. **Moath Alnaief**, Assistant Professor, Zayed University, UAE.  
*Title: Closure of Ijtihad Gate in Islamic Fiqh- A Critical Study.*

**11:30-13:00 Session 2**

**Session 2a**

**Moderator: Atli Harðarson**, Professor, University of Iceland, Iceland.

1. **Anthony Cunningham**, Professor, St. John's University, USA.  
*Title: Ethics, Strength & Consolation.*
2. **Abduljaleel Alwali**, Professor, United Arab Emirates University, UAE.  
*Title: Implementation of Codes of Ethics in Higher Education Institutions in the United Arab Emirates: Evidence the Code of Ethics of Ministry of Health.*

**Session 2b**

**Moderator: Paul Carron**, Associate Professor, Baylor University, USA.

1. **Alexandru Manafu**, Associate Professor, York University, Canada.  
*Title: Transformations following Near-Death Experiences: An Epistemological and Ethical Inquiry.*
2. **Sonja Weiss**, Assistant Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.  
*Title: "The Way Up and the Way Down" in Plotinus' Metaphysics of Love.*

<p>3. <b>Scott Rubarth</b>, Associate Professor, Rollins College, USA. <i>Title: The Role of Teleology in Stoic Ethics.</i></p>	
<p><b>13:00-14:30 Session 3</b></p>	
<p><b>Session 3a</b> <b>Moderator: Mark Fagiano</b>, Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA.</p>	<p><b>Session 3b</b> <b>Moderator: Zane Ozola</b>, PhD Student, University of Latvia, Latvia.</p>
<p>1. <b>Michael Berman</b>, Associate Professor, Brock University, Canada. <i>Title: An Ordinal Apologia: A Defense of Ryder.</i></p> <p>2. <b>Lior Levy</b>, Senior Lecturer, University of Haifa, Israel. <i>Title: Masks and Persons: Reading Fanon on Race, Technology and Political Dignity.</i></p> <p>3. <b>Jinmei Yuan</b>, Professor, Creighton University, USA. <i>Title: Thinking through Sets: Exploring How Chinese Pictographic Language Shapes Chinese Logic.</i></p>	<p>1. <b>Andrew Ward</b>, Fellow, University of York, UK. <i>Title: Kant and Hume on Freedom and Moral Responsibility.</i></p> <p>2. <b>Sandra Kroeker</b>, Teacher, Brock University, Canada. <i>Title: Go(o)d is Number: Plotting the Divided Line &amp; the Problem of the Irrational.</i></p>
<p><b>14:30-15:30 Discussion + Lunch</b></p>	
<p><b>15:30-17:30 Session 4</b></p>	
<p><b>Session 4a</b> <b>Moderator: Mr Konstantinos Manolidis</b> (ATINER Administrator).</p>	<p><b>Session 4b</b> <b>Moderator: Ms Olga Gkounta</b>, Researcher, ATINER.</p>
<p>1. <b>Francesco Allegri</b>, Adjunct Professor, University of Siena, Italy. <i>Title: A Plurality of "Heads of Virtue": Richard Price's Normative Ethics.</i></p> <p>2. <b>António dos Santos Queirós</b>, Professor, Lisbon University, Portugal. <i>Title: Revisiting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights _ UDHR: From the Fallacies to a New Generation of Rights.</i></p> <p>3. <b>James Downey</b>, Associate Professor, Hollins University, USA. <i>Title: Privacy: Dualism and Private Language.</i></p> <p>4. <b>John Murungi</b>, Professor, Towson University, USA. <i>Title: On the Origin of Philosophy and its History.</i></p> <p>5. <b>Chin-Tai Kim</b>, Professor, Case Western Reserve University, USA. <i>Title: A Critique of Plato's Philosophical Synthesis in his Middle Period.</i></p>	<p>1. <b>Tonci Kokic</b>, Full Professor, University of Split, Croatia. <i>Title: Similarity of Dualism in Ancient Greek and India: Plato and Jain.</i></p> <p>2. <b>Ettore Barbagallo</b>, Research Fellow, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau, Germany. <i>Title: Is Consciousness An Illusion? A Phenomenological Take on the Problem of Consciousness.</i></p> <p>3. <b>Mahesh Ananth</b>, Associate Professor, Indiana University, USA. <i>Title: Empedocles and Plato on Light: Aristotle's Rapid Fire Rejoinder.</i></p> <p>4. <b>Verena Gottschling</b>, Professor, York University, Canada. <i>Title: How to Plan Urban Environments.</i></p>
<p><b>20:00-22:00</b> <b>Athenian Early Evening Symposium (includes in order of appearance: continuous academic discussions, dinner, wine/water, music and dance)</b></p>	

Tuesday 23 May 2023

<p><b>09:30-11:30 Session 5</b> <b>Moderator: Mr Konstantinos Manolidis</b> (ATINER Administrator).</p>	<p><b>08:00-11:00</b> <b>Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ke Zhao</b>, Lecturer, Shanghai University, China. <i>Title: What Does Leo Strauss's "Be Alert to the Art of Writing" Mean? A Study Based on Strauss's Study of Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise.</i></li> <li>2. <b>Eric Litwack</b>, Research Fellow, University of Sheffield &amp; Syracuse University London, UK. <i>Title: Chatbots, Robots, and the Ethics of Automating Psychotherapy.</i></li> <li>3. <b>Dorota Tymura</b>, Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Poland. <i>Title: Cynic Parrhesia in the Activity of Antisthenes of Athens.</i></li> <li>4. <b>Elisa Ravasio</b>, Independent Researcher, Italy. <i>Title: Mosse and Arendt: Two Perspectives on Totalitarianism and Democracy.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by ATINER exclusively for the conference participants.</p>

<p><b>11:30-13:00 Session 6</b></p>	
<p><b>Session 6a</b> <b>Moderator: Jinmei Yuan</b>, Professor, Creighton University, USA.</p>	<p><b>Session 6b</b> <b>Moderator: Mark Wells</b>, Professor, Montreat College, USA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Michael Coyle</b>, Professor, California State University, Chico, USA. <i>Title: Justice Ethics: From Retributive to Restorative to Transformative.</i></li> <li>2. <b>Tennyson Samraj</b>, Professor, Burman University, Canada. <i>Title: Jurisprudence: Study of the Rule of Law in a Republic.</i></li> <li>3. <b>Claudia Simone Dorchain</b>, Researcher, Institute of Economy and Psychology, Germany. <i>Title: The Magical-Sophistic Delusion: Third-Wave-Feminism and Its Philosophical Roots.</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Daniel Galily</b>, Assistant Professor, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria <b>Tatyana Vasileva Petkova</b>, Assistant Professor, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria. <i>Title: Philosophy of Law or Philosophy of Reason – The idea of a Treaty establishing a Constitution for the European Union.</i></li> <li>2. <b>Matt Matherne</b>, PhD Candidate, The University of Texas at Austin, USA. <i>Title: Do the Wise Always Succeed? A Split-Level Reading of Euthydemus 278-282.</i></li> <li>3. <b>Saladdin Ahmed</b>, Visiting Professor, Union College, Schenectady, USA. <i>Title: Spatiocide, Urbicide, and Nationalism.</i></li> </ol>

13:00-15:00 Session 7	
<b>Session 7a</b> <b>Moderator: Tennyson Samraj</b> , Professor, Burman University, Canada.	<b>Session 7b</b> <b>Moderator: Daniel Galily</b> , Assistant Professor, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria.
1. <b>Denis Fiset</b> , Professor, University of Quebec, Canada. <i>Title: Aristotle's Catharsis and the Origins of Psychoanalysis.</i>	1. <b>Paul Carron</b> , Associate Professor, Baylor University, USA. <i>Title: Animals as Marginal Moral Agents.</i>
2. <b>Rick Jarow</b> , Professor, Vassar College, USA. <i>Title: Smrti: On Memory and Desire.</i>	2. <b>Justin Stone</b> , Professor, Valencia College, USA. <i>Title: A Need for a Transcendental Power.</i>
3. <b>Stephen Neale</b> , Distinguished Professor, CUNY Graduate Center, USA. <i>Title: Meaning &amp; Focal Meaning.</i>	3. <b>Mark Fagiano</b> , Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA. <i>Title: Pragmatic Conceptions of Democracy as a Way of Life.</i>
4. <b>Zane Ozola</b> , PhD Student, University of Latvia, Latvia. <i>Title: Broken Mirror.</i>	

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15:00-16:00 Discussion + Lunch

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19:00-20:30

**Ancient Athenian Dinner** (includes in order of appearance: continuous academic discussions,  
dinner with recipes from ancient Athens, wine/water)

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**Wednesday 24 May 2023**  
**An Educational Visit to Selected Islands**  
**or**  
**Mycenae Visit**

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**Thursday 25 May 2023**  
**Visiting the Oracle of Delphi**

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**Friday 26 May 2023**  
**Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounio**



**Saladdin Ahmed**

Visiting Professor, Union College, Schenectady, USA

### **Spatiocide, Urbicide, and Nationalism**

Biopolitics continues to invent new ways to divide human society into the privileged and the ruled, housed and dehousing, included and excluded bodies, and right holders and “bare life” (per Agamben). Above all, the global regime of biopower, even when it claims a position of the police of universal human rights, deploys deeply racist mechanisms to treat entire populations as masses of bare lives, as opposed to subjects or right holders. There are sophisticated regimes of segregation in place to distribute rights qua privileges peculiarly determined according to citizenship (immigrants as bare life), birthplace (non-natives as bare life), racialization (the negatively racialized as bare life), and capital (the impoverished as bare life). Often biopower applies its murderous mechanism by exposing the condemned to fatal conditions instead of killing them at once, which is also alluded to in Foucault’s famous lecture on biopolitics. This paper focuses on the homeless, including those who are dehousing and the stateless populations, because they are among today’s most visible *homines sacri*. To break up this proposition, we need to go back to the time Foucault designates as the beginning of the age of biopower, namely the end of the eighteenth century. Foucault recognized that moment as the birth moment of the most murderous states, which are also the most racist states. During the last two centuries, capitalism and its biopolitical institution, the State, have caused such destruction that can only be measured in geological terms, which is why environmentalists were compelled to come up with the term Anthropocene.

**Francesco Allegri**  
Adjunct Professor, University of Siena, Italy

### **A Plurality of “Heads of Virtue”: Richard Price’s Normative Ethics**

Although little known, Richard Price’s *A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals* (1758) is one of the most relevant texts of eighteenth-century moral philosophy. H. Rasdhall described it “as the best work published on Ethics till quite recent times” because it “contains the gist of the kantian doctrine without Kant’s confusions” (Hastings Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, 1907, 2 vol., vol. I, 81, note); C.D. Broad pointed out in this regard that “until Ross published his book *The Right and the Good* in 1930” there existed “no statement and defence of what may be called the ‘rationalistic type’ of ethical theory comparable in merit to Price’s” (Charlie Dunbar Broad, “Some Reflections on Moral Sense Theories in Ethics,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 45, 1944-45, 131-166, 131); and W.D. Hudson considered *A Review* “probably the best statement of the case for rational intuitionism which has ever been written” (William Donald Hudson, “Ethical Intuitionism,” in *New Studies in Ethics*, 1974, 2 voll., vol. I, 229-303, 232).

These evaluations are fully confirmed by reading the text, in which it is possible to find, among other things, many anticipations of distinctions and categories of the moral philosophy of our own times. Just to give some examples, in *A Review* we find a first differentiation between metaethics and normative ethics; the criticism of naturalistic fallacy and the *open question argument* (made famous by G.E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica*), with which Price (like Moore) intends to refute all attempts to reduce moral concepts to concepts of a non-moral nature; the distinction between the moral properties of the agent from the moral properties of the action (the virtue of the act and the virtue of the agent); and so on. Price’s *Review* is not inferior to the greatest classics of XVIII century Anglo-Saxon ethics, such as Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* or Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, albeit much less popular.

So far, little space has been devoted to Price’s normative ethics, despite it being one of the most relevant topics in *A Review*. This is the task I will try to accomplish in my paper, which is aimed at analyzing and discussing the major lines of Richard Price’s theory of moral obligation, expounded mainly in the seventh chapter of his work. Even on this issue the Welsh philosopher turns out to be an undoubted forerunner of problems and solutions that characterize contemporary

ethics. In fact, as I will argue in my talk, Price in normative ethics (1) develops a model of criticism of utilitarianism that will become extremely widespread in the twentieth century; (2) emphasizes the plurality of basic ethical principles of an adequate theory of obligation and does not minimize the problem of their conflict; (3) anticipates to some extent the idea that such principles are to be conceived as *prima facie* or *pro tanto* duties, a thesis that is asserted decisively in the works of W.D. Ross.

**Moath Alnaief**

Assistant Professor, Zayed University, UAE

## **Closure of Ijtihad Gate in Islamic Fiqh - A Critical Study**

This article critically analyzes the dominant opinion prevailing regarding the foundation of Islamic jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) which states that absolute independent juristic interpretation (al-ijtihād al-muṭlaq al-mustaqill) is no longer possible. Therefore, based on the belief that this level of interpretation requires the creation of a unique method for deriving legal rules (istinbāt), a method that arguably ended with the founders of the primary schools of law. This research inspects a new interpretive method which was not developed by late scholars. Consequently, the article uses legal reasoning as an interpretive method to criticize the previous opinions regarding Islamic Jurisprudence by using both textual and rational evidence. For instance, the preservation of religion and the continued renewal of convenient sources requires scholars to reach the highest level of interpretation (ijtihād). In addition, a connection to the legal reality of the time and rulings were necessary to adapt them, an issue dependent upon direct derivation of rulings from religious texts or the freedom to implement secondary forms of evidence. Therefore, this research concludes that the founders of the traditional law schools did not develop their foundations independently. Instead, they did so through constructive investigation and analysis. Their interpretations conformed to the Prophet's (SAW) Companions. Such a process continued and future independent scholars followed their footsteps. In addition, the legal reality in every age saw the rise of individuals who positively impacted the renewal of the foundations of jurisprudence by interpreting Prophetic hadīth which required advanced interpretative skills.

**Abduljaleel Alwali**

Professor, United Arab Emirates University, UAE

**Implementation of Codes of Ethics in Higher Education  
Institutions in the United Arab Emirates:  
Evidence the Code of Ethics of Ministry of Health**

Academics, business leaders, lawmakers, and others are increasingly recognizing the importance of professional ethics in the global economy. As a result, efforts have been made to promote professional ethics by focusing on one part of professional ethics, the Code of Ethics. Because there are many professional bodies with ethical codes in place (Doctors, Lawyers, Accountants, Vets, Nurses, Engineers, Diplomats, Officers, Pilots, and Professors), there are many codes of ethics. The aim of this research is to critically examine the codes of ethics adopted by the Ministry of Health at United Arab Emirates in order to identify main ethical issues and what activities they implement to respond to these issues and how it applies in the institutions of higher medical education.

*Purposes*

To assist professionals and leaders in higher education institutions in the following ways when using the Code of Ethics:

- Determine what behaviours are appropriate.
- Encourage the adoption of high professional standards.
- Use the Code of Ethics as a metric for members to assess themselves.
- Establish a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities.
- Apply the code of ethics in a variety of situations.

**Mahesh Ananth**

Associate Professor, Indiana University, USA

## **Empedocles and Plato on Light: Aristotle's Rapid Fire Rejoinder**

Aristotle's most extensive accounts of the nature of light [*phōs*] are located within his *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*,<sup>1</sup> a remarkable set of treatises focused on a complex mélange of reflections on the physical, biological, and philosophical aspects of psychology. Although there is a burgeoning secondary literature on Aristotle's own theory of light, there is less of a scholarly engagement with his critical reply of the theories of light offered by his predecessors. Yet, enroute to his considered view on the nature of light (*phos*), Aristotle offers a set of critical replies to both Empedocles and Plato. A close assessment of this exchange reveals that, although it appears that Aristotle is not very charitable with respect to his rejoinder, his allowances are present. This becomes apparent when he ultimately argues that Plato's account (and indirectly Empedocles' rendering) of interacting lights should be rejected on the grounds that natural cohesion (*sumpageis*) is not possible.

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<sup>1</sup>*Parva Naturalia* is the title that ranges over a set of specific essays on various bio-psychology topics (e.g., memory, dreaming, sleep, perception, and ontogenetic development ranging from youth to old age). *On Perception (Sens)* is the particular text in which light is discussed and will be the primary essay of the *Parva Naturalia* explicated and evaluated in this analysis. All translations of *On Perception* are from Miller (2018).

**Man Baker**

Professor, Zayed University, UAE

## **Contemporary Judicial Ijtihad through the Interpretation of Unclear Legal Terms: A Comparative Study**

This article studies a collection of legal terms and their interpretation by Jordanian courts in matters related to the Šarī‘a. It outlines the method through which the meaning of terms is determined by returning to Islamic foundations of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh), a source specified by Jordanian law which can be used to define legal terms as well as the context, scope, and application of legal texts. The article examines a set of judicial interpretations (iğtihād) of terms which have carried different points of view in both courts of first instance and appeals. The methodology of the study combines between theoretical discussions derived from Islamic foundations of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) and the application of interpretive principles through a focus on determining the purpose of the legislator. The article highlights the role of the contemporary Muslim judiciary in developing personal status law through the interpretation of terms that carry multiple meanings and explores the essential principles relied upon in this process, establishing a path for future legal reform.

**Ettore Barbagallo**

Research Fellow, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau, Germany

## **Is Consciousness an Illusion? A Phenomenological Take on the Problem of Consciousness**

The focus of my talk will be the question whether consciousness is an illusion or not. The importance of tackling this problem on a philosophical level depends on the fact that the tenet that consciousness is an illusion is more and more common and widespread in contemporary neuroscience and in neuroscientifically founded philosophy. I think that this tenet is based on a misunderstanding about consciousness and a flawed definition of the relation between consciousness and the brain. The brain and the nervous system are almost unanimously seen as the fundamental precondition of consciousness. This assumption depends on the conception of consciousness as the inner show that takes place or should take place inside the head of an individual (see Daniel Dennett's famous image of the "Cartesian theater"). My claim is that it is nearly inevitable to state that consciousness is an illusion if we previously accept that consciousness is the show inside the head of the individual. In my talk, I will first propose a phenomenological concept of consciousness that makes it hard to label consciousness as an illusion; secondly, I will show that the most fundamental precondition of consciousness is not the brain (or the nervous system), but life and the living being's body.



**Michael Berman**

Associate Professor, Brock University, Canada

### **An Ordinal Apologia: A Defense of Ryder**

Justus Buchler develops his ordinal ontology in his *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*. In 1980, Peter H. Hare and John Ryder engaged in a bit of philosophical theology with the publication of their essay, "Buchler's Ordinal Metaphysics and Process Theology." Ryder and Hare's essay deploys Buchler's thought as a means to address a particular question in philosophical theology, namely the existence of God as a creator *ex nihilo*. Their essay has three sections with Hare opening the question of whether Buchler's ordinal metaphysics can be used to explain the notion of God as a creator *ex nihilo*, which is followed by Ryder's Buchlerian analysis and conclusion "that whatever ordinal metaphysics may recognize God as having, it does not include God as a creator *ex nihilo*," and then Hare closes with a rebuttal of Ryder's judgment by drawing upon further implications of Buchler's philosophy as well as a novel proposal for "divine proception." The contention here is that Hare's rebuttal goes too far, relying on a vague notion of a "superhuman complex" that does not adhere to Buchler's ordinal metaphysics, but also overlooks a fundamental premise of this general ontology that already has a way to account for God, even as a creator *ex nihilo*, as a natural complex. In this regard, Ryder's initial account already anticipated a response to Hare's argument despite the former's conclusion. This essay will revisit Ryder's conclusion and show that there is another conclusion available to the philosophical theologian that still adheres to Buchler's metaphysics.

**Steven Burik**

Associate Professor, Singapore Management University, Singapore

### **Lao-Zhuang Daoism as Postmodern Philosophy**

This paper is an attempt to first show how Lao-Zhuang Daoism can be reinterpreted or reinvented as postmodern thought, and second to show how it could be considered as a 'supplement' to post-modern thought, and thereby could be used to iron out some of the criticisms against postmodern thought, and/or address some of the perceived weaknesses in postmodern thought. Daoism is generally understood to have arisen at least to a large extent as a criticism of the flaws and limitations of mainstream thought in Classical China, that is of Confucianism/Ruism. Although it also challenges other ways of thinking directly or indirectly (Moism, Legalism), its main target has always been Confucianism. Of course, but in a totally different context, we could say that post-modern thought, by which I understand the tradition running roughly from Nietzsche, through Heidegger, to Derrida, can similarly be identified as a countermovement to the dominant tradition in Western philosophy.

Two questions arise from this reinterpretation: First, in how far we could actually speak of a mainstream philosophy in the form of Confucianism/Ruism in Classical China? Second, the postmodern idea of the 'supplement' suggests that the dominant tradition was missing out on something, and the question is then whether we should actually try to fit Lao-Zhuang or post-modernism into this dominant tradition, or understand it as an ever present challenge to the tradition from the outside.

**Paul Carron**

Associate Professor, Baylor University, USA

## **Animals as Marginal Moral Agents**

This essay puts forth a criticism of Mark Rowlands's account of animals as moral subjects. Rowlands inventively argues that animals are moral subjects (2012; 2019b) – creatures that can act on morally laden emotions – and more recently even persons (2019a), but not moral agents. I argue that Rowlands arrives at this conclusion by equivocating on the definition of morality. Rowlands claims that there are two main categories of moral motivation, Kantian and Humean.<sup>2</sup> Put succinctly, the Kantian view is that for an action to be moral, the individual must be able to scrutinize their moral motivations and choose to accept or reject various moral motivations. In other words, moral action requires critical scrutiny and freedom. The Humean view is that a moral action is an action motivated by an emotion with moral content. The individual need not be able to scrutinize or choose their motivation. Rowlands adopts a Humean position to argue that animals are moral subjects but then denies that animals are moral agents because they cannot meet the Kantian requirements for moral agency.

In this essay, I will argue that Rowlands should adopt a consistent, Humean reactive-attitudes account of moral motivation and agency: reactive attitudes are constitutive of moral responsibility (Strawson 1962; Watson 2004). Reactive attitudes express the demand for reasonable regard, and both the ability to express that demand and the expectation that other members of the moral community can also express that demand. Empirical evidence suggests that some animals engage in normative practices and have at least naïve expectations about how other members of the community should behave (de Waal 2014; Andrews 2020). What these animals might not possess is the theory of mind necessary to engage in normative reciprocity. I conclude that we should better understand these animals as *marginal* moral agents (borrowing a concept from Shoemaker 2015) rather than mere moral subjects.

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<sup>2</sup>Rowlands notes that “These labels function not so much to pick out specific theories or accounts of moral motivation, but rather, general, underlying pictures of such motivation— they limn the general contours of the sort of thing moral motivation must be. Because of their generality, each label can subsume accounts and figures that would not, in other contexts, be regarded as Kantian or Humean at all” (2019b).

**Michael Coyle**  
Professor, California State University, Chico, USA

**Justice Ethics:  
From Retributive to Restorative to Transformative**

In this paper I trace the development of the argument for an ethics of justice in the discipline of Justice Studies that travels from a focus on retributive justice, to restorative justice, and then to transformative justice. Restorative justice and transformative justice share much, such as the issues we think and do not think about when we do retributive justice: restitution, accountability, justice without law or lawyers, future-oriented justice, justice as everyone's work, justice as teaching, justice as healing, and more. Additionally, while both look onto each other with a sense of some shared values and connections, there is also a deep difference in focus. Retributive justice and restorative justice, as their names suggest, are invested in responding and restoring for the 'crime'/harm; they want to handle the 'crime'/harm that happened. Transformative justice always desires a response and restoration to transgression/harm, but it is much more deeply concerned with what will come to define and direct all matters concerning transgression/harm; it wants to handle what gives us the structure of the society we live in.

**Anthony Cunningham**  
Professor, St. John's University, USA

## **Ethics, Strength & Consolation**

The history of philosophy includes many fascinating takes on how human beings *should* live and what sorts of people they *should* be. For such commands to be relevant, people must be capable of living up to them, just as it only makes sense to say that someone should leap a physical hurdle if human beings can actually leap that high. While few philosophers have suggested that living an upright, virtuous life is easy, most have assumed that human beings can always muster the strength to be good, provided that their will is resolute enough. Thus, Socrates may not have expected many (much less most) people to gather the requisite strength to be good – to function adequately and to remain sufficiently intact as a virtuous person – but he believed that such virtue rendered people fundamentally impervious to the vagaries of chance. He insisted that no real harm could come to a good person, since the only true harm would be a corruption of character, and anyone who suffered such a fate would be complicit in the undoing. Likewise, Immanuel Kant firmly believed that there was always at least one right action to perform in every conceivable situation, and moral agents could always choose to do the right thing. So doing might be difficult, potentially requiring the sacrifice of happiness or even one's life, but even in such unfortunate situations, the consolation of living an upright life would be most important.

I contend that this belief in such ethical invulnerability – where character is incorruptible and one can always do the right thing – is a philosophical fantasy. Human beings can suffer *moral injuries* through no fault of their own, where they are forced by circumstance to do things that run counter to their deepest loves and commitments in life. Moreover, when they suffer such injuries, their vulnerability needn't stem from any form of culpable weakness or vice. Good people can *break* in the sense of being rendered less functional and less intact *because* they are good people. Contrary to what philosophers like Socrates or Kant would have us believe about the invulnerability of good character, good people are inherently breakable in some key respects because they are good. Unlike physical strength, where more is always better, psychological strength has limits that are deeply connected with being creatures who care and who live in a world where things that matter can tragically clash. Not only is Socrates and Kant's consolation a figment of philosophical wishful thinking, but the

fantasy obscures important elements of admirable character. Human beings must be strong in all sorts of ways to live up to our attachments and commitments, but at our best, we are also breakable. While we should always root for people to mercifully avoid the sorts of tragic choices that can break them, we shouldn't yearn for any kind of invulnerability that would come at the expense of aspects that are best and most beautiful about us.

**Claudia Simone Dorchain**

Researcher, Institute of Economy and Psychology, Germany

## **The Magical-Sophistic Delusion: Third-Wave-Feminism and its Philosophical Roots**

According to its definition, "**feminism**" means a socio-legal movement that aims at equal human and civil rights for women, and therefore ideologically grows out of the substratum of humanism and the Enlightenment with the demand for the completion of real state recognition of female human dignity. However, the socio-legal movement of feminism has not been homogeneous across the eras, but has historically taken place in three thoroughly heterogeneous waves.

The first wave (around 1882-1945), figuratively exercised through protests by the so-called suffragettes and many vehement socialists such as Clara Zetkin, aimed at equal political civil rights for women, admission to elections and universities, thus basic opportunities of participation. The second wave (around 1949-1990), inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's work "The Other Sex", aimed at full legal, social and professional equality for women as a logical continuation of the first wave and, in the course of the student protests in the 1960s and 1970s, raised the slogan that even the private sphere is always political. The **third wave** (since the mid-2000s), on the other hand, no longer seems to have a clear goal, already confuses itself linguistically in pluralisms, wants to formally recognize the third gender, justify 250 chairs and centers in Germany alone, introduce gender German, break up gender ideologies - or does it want to create such ideologies in the first place? A critical look from the perspective of philosophy at the justification traditions of "third wave" feminism and the intellectual precursors in the debatable work of Judith Butler, "Gender trouble", who is still readily, and repeatedly, quoted by gender ideologues today.

Third wave feminism feeds on two philosophical sources that are problematic in their apparently unquestioned validity: Existentialism and Sophistry. **Existentialism** is the philosophical tradition of seeing human existence as a generally undefined starting point of a being that is open to interpretation, which is defined more precisely by its own will alone. **Sophistry**, in Plato's time, was often not solid knowledge in the service of finding the truth, but rather eristic dialectics (rhetorical tricks), as they had already been used in antiquity as a means of deliberately confusing the opponent and building up one's own ego.

Existentialism claims that existence precedes defined being, and some sophistry understands language as the immediate material

manifestation of the predicated, combined they build up the philosophical underpinnings of today's third-wave-feminism: acts of linguistic magic thus gain a supposed reality that would, however, have to be critically discussed.



**António dos Santos Queirós**  
Professor, Lisbon University, Portugal

## **Revisiting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights \_ UDHR: From the Fallacies to a New Generation of Rights**

The resolution of the UN was adopted on 10 December in 1948(A/RES/217). The research' route of the article analyzes the historical conditions where the UDHR was drafted. And intends to analyse and to debate if the political speech that crossed the cold war and emerged again, in the context of geostrategy conflicts, respects the substance of the original document. This research pathway determine and debate five fundamental questions:

The connection between the articles of UDHR agreement and labor rights, economic democracy, and, on the other hand, political liberty, the right of nations to decide from themselves and the imperative of universal peace.

If the articles of UDHR are compatible or not with the political nature and evolution of liberal democracies and socialist regimes. If propaganda of the Cold War and the geopolitical confrontation, they subvert and distort the principles of the original UN Human Rights or defend those principles. If people around the world really know and are conscientious of UDHR principles and articles, or those propaganda created a phenomena of global alienation.

At last, what means a new generation of human rights.  
That methodology will be supported by the case study of the United States of America and People Republic of China.

**James Downey**  
Associate Professor, Hollins University, USA

**Privacy:  
Dualism and Private Language**

One famous objection to Dualism is that souls could not be individuated, so that there could possibly be more than one soul per body, for instance. Thus, without criteria for individuation, it is concluded that the idea of souls is meaningless or impossible. Another famous objection to the idea of souls is that it implies the possibility of private mental language, which is held to be impossible. Both of these objections seem to be found in Wittgenstein's Investigations, and they are certainly expressed in other works.

I suggest that Dualism should accept the possibility of multiple souls, indistinguishable by their occurrent streams of consciousness. But, I argue that this entails the possibility of shared meanings for mental items, including the meaning of a soul's reference to itself.

So, I conclude that those two famous objections to Dualism are in fact logically contrary. If multiple souls are possible, then private mental language is not. If private mental language is possible, then multiple souls are not. I believe that multiple souls are possible, and that therefore dualism does not imply the possibility of private mental language.

**Mark Fagiano**

Assistant Professor, Washington State University, USA

## **Pragmatic Conceptions of Democracy as a Way of Life**

The paper will explore the concept of democracy, provide a different way of thinking about it, and address some current challenges to democracy as a system of electing officials, conducting government, and making decisions – a system currently under threat. To what extent is this manifestation of democracy encouraged and sustained by democratic behavior? If democracy as a system is failing around the world, perhaps this is a failure in education, perhaps the fault lies with the fact the people don't really know how to live democratically or how to practice the habits – or art – of democratic living.

My main argument will revolve around the idea that most people believe democracy simply involves the act of voting to elect officials and this shortsightedness is part of the reason why democracy is being threatened today. Democracy is a systematic process of ruling and electing, but it is also a way of living life and as a way of living life, it involves the practice of democratic habits. In my paper, I will draw from American pragmatists who speak of “democracy as a way of life,” describe the habits necessary for practicing democracy as a way of life and explain the necessary connection between democratic living and democratic rule.

Instrumental to my argument will be the inclusion of my latest VR project that will facilitate a pluralistic understanding of democracy. My experience creating VR simulation and computer-assisted instruction (especially XR technologies), will allow me to share with you how virtual experiences could more adequately and efficiently teach the habits of democracy as a way of life and as a moral ideal.

**Denis Fisette**

Professor, University of Quebec, Canada

### **Aristotle's Catharsis and the Origins of Psychoanalysis**

My contribution to this conference is part of a research project that I am currently leading on a segment of the history of philosophy in Austria which takes place between the arrival of Franz Brentano in Vienna in 1874 and the beginning of the Vienna Circle in the 1920s. My approach is based on the Philosophical Society of the University of Vienna (1888-1938) which I use as a framework in my analysis of the main philosophical debates that took place during this period and that historians of ideas call Vienna fin de siècle. My working hypothesis is based on the idea that this organization was instrumental in the unprecedented development of philosophy during this period. One of the important debates which marked this period, and which involves several philosophers et scientists involved in the Philosophical Society relates to the Aristotelian notion of catharsis in its relation to the cathartic method employed by Breuer and Freud in their 1895 work *Studies on hysteria* and which, as Freud confirms in several of his writings, is at the origin of his psychoanalysis. The starting point of this controversy is a lecture delivered by Alfred von Berger in 1896 "Aristotle's catharsis theory in light of modern neurology" in the Philosophical Society, the text of which is taken from his contribution to the new translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* edited in 1897 by the well-known historian of ancient philosophy Theodor Gomperz. Berger seeks to elucidate the Aristotelian notion of catharsis in light of modern neurology and argues that the treatment of hysteria by the cathartic method in Breuer and Freud's work "is highly appropriate for explain the effect of catharsis in theatre", for example. Berger's lecture triggered a debate that bears both on the interpretation of the nature of catharsis in Aristotle, the characterization of tragedy and theater in general in terms of catharsis as well as the justification of the use of this notion in the field of neurology. The aim of my communication is to discuss the philosophical issues of this debate and of my research project in general.

**Daniel Galily**

Assistant Professor, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria  
&

**Tatyana Vasileva Petkova**

Assistant Professor, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria

## **Philosophy of Law or Philosophy of Reason - The Idea of a Treaty Establishing a Constitution for the European Union**

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the feasibility and necessity of an EU Constitution. Briefly, the history of the draft constitution is as follows: The draft treaty aims to codify the two main treaties of the European Union - the Treaty of Rome of 1957 and the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992, as amended by the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) and the Treaty of Nice (2001). The debate on the future of Europe is believed to have begun with a speech by German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in Berlin in 2000. The process began after the Laeken Declaration, when the European Convention was set up, chaired by former French President Valerie Giscard d'Estaing, with the aim of drafting a constitution. The draft contract was published in July 2003. . After lengthy discussions and debates over the proposal for qualified majority voting, the final text was approved in June 2004 and signed by representatives of the Member States on 29 October 2004. The failure of the treaty in France and the Netherlands is a serious blow to the European Union because these two countries are considered to be loyal supporters of the European project. The text of the treaty was subsequently rewritten by the Amato Group, officially the Active Committee on European Democracy (ACED), a group of high-ranking European politicians. During the German presidency of the Union, a new treaty was proposed - the Treaty of Lisbon - to replace the original draft Constitution. On 12 June 2008, the Lisbon Treaty was also rejected in a referendum in Ireland. But let's look beyond history. Why does the EU need a Constitution and how can the Constitution be the roadmap to a progressive future for the EU? The answers to this question can be found through analysis in several directions (these are the main points of the article): historical reflexivity; socio-cultural analysis of the philosophical concepts of philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, John Locke and Thomas Jefferson the modern constellation through the prism of Jürgen Habermas and the decision to make a text as a Constitution the starting point of an entire community like the EU.

**Verena Gottschling**  
Professor, York University, Canada

## **How to Plan Urban Environments**

Though urban planning was introduced in Greek Philosophy, these days Philosophers don't attend the debate, a gap to be filled. Urban Planning is about the ways a city should be structured. The question typically asked is normative: what is good urban planning? However, the question I address is about the criteria used to evaluate and judge the appropriateness of urban planning, the meta-question about the underlying criteria and the criteria's properties. Hippodamus, the father of urban planning, suggested a symmetrical grid as a city layout, because of its clear city framework and aesthetic superiority. Aristotle criticized Hippodamus, he argued for a non-grid structure and non-centrality. In medieval times, we mostly find a centralized circular system, however, the form and layout of a city was not carefully planned. The industrialization resulted in fast growing urban centers and metropolis, in the 1920s, the challenge was to repurpose existing naturally grown cities. Modernist ideas dominated urban planning. Utopists like Le Corbusier developed in two steps his ideas on urbanism, he introduced suburban structures (Radiant City, 1935). Housing was initially assigned economic position, later assigned according to family size. Modernist industrial style introduced the idea of socially affordable healthy housing in smaller living quarters, whereby living in apartments also means less resources and space required per person. Contrasting with Utopism and industrial style (Bauhaus), Aalto suggested that urban planning should be driven by the psychological needs of people, but did not specify these psychological needs. Nonetheless, he opened the doors to organic architecture. Nowadays dominant issues are how to repurpose existing city-quarters and developments of new urban hubs and living quarters (like New York's Hudson Yards or Toronto's Smart City). These are attempts to provide the higher density required for jobs and homes in modern cities but avoid the pitfalls of suburban spread and increased traffic. Residential density is a goal: people can go grocery shopping, run errands, and spend leisure time in the same neighborhood and on foot. Moreover, apartments all share the same waste, sewage, and electric systems, making urban life more efficient compared to suburban life. These modernist ideas are combined with goals for public traffic hubs, and a digital connected city. How the Covid pandemic will change urban planning is not yet clear, some planners

already think about repurposing parking structures, shopping malls or stop planned developments.

I will show that (1) there are no uniform criteria to judge good urban planning, moreover, (2) they are not just simply highly context specific. Rather (3) the used criteria in given contexts are necessarily conflicting and stand in severe tension to each other. I defend a relational concept inspired by Utzon's Architectural transculturation: we need to consider place and context in urban planning. But since the aspects needed to consider differ, change and conflict, we have a continuing search for coherence between combined architectural elements, social contexts, psychological needs and cultural influences. Consequently, even at a given time absolute judgments about good urban planning are void. However, as a positive result, I will (4) show that modern claims in Philosophy of Psychology and Neuroaesthetics developed for Art (Zeki 2001, Ramachandran/Hirstein 1999) are transferable and give new insights for better characterizations for several valuable historical ideas mentioned above. In particular, we have tools to fill in the gaps in Aalto's and Utzon's approaches, and get a better understanding of the aesthetic criteria and an embodiment inspired view of how architecture and living quarters influence the well-being of humans.

**Atli Harðarson**

Professor, University of Iceland, Iceland

## **Spinoza, A God of One's Own and the Wisdom to Love**

In a book published in 2008, entitled *A God of One's Own: Religion's Capacity for Peace and Potential for Violence*, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck criticized sociological theories of secularization, according to which the importance of religion decreases with modernization. He argued that now, in the beginning of the twentieth first century, religion is not disappearing. It is, said he, changing and becoming more individualized. More and more people modify and mix religious ideas and traditions and believe in a god of their own. He also argued that religion is a double-edged sword. It can civilize people and help them to lead a better life. It can also foster bigotry, hatred, and violence. Although religion is more private now than in olden times, religious innovations have public consequences.

In 1656 Spinoza was expelled from the Jewish community in Amsterdam. He did not come back and beg for forgiveness. What he did was exceptional in the middle of the seventeenth century but, if Beck is right, quite common nowadays. He decided to stay out of organized religion, and in the years that followed he created a faith of his own.

In the autobiographical sections of his early work, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, Spinoza said that he had discovered that seeking wealth, pleasure, and esteem, did not bring freedom and happiness. To become free and happy he needed to realize his unity with God. In his main work, *The Ethics*, he developed a metaphysical theory that was both meant to be compatible with scientific knowledge and to make this unity intelligible. In the fifth and last part of the book he also tried to explain how human individuals could cultivate a type of wisdom that he described as intellectual love of God.

In the first half of my paper, I focus on three metaphysical topics in *The Ethics*. These are: Freedom and determinism; Time and eternity; Man's relation to God. In the second half I argue that what Spinoza wrote about these three topics can be read as an attempt to create a new religion. I also argue that if we care about the social consequences of religious innovations, then we should take what Spinoza said about these topics seriously as hypotheses worth exploring.



**Rick Jarow**  
Professor, Vassar College, USA

**Smrti:  
On Memory and Desire**

“April is the cruelest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and desire... ” So, begins T.S. Eliot’s iconic poem, “The Wasteland,” challenging the memory of Chaucer’s April from *Canterbury Tales*, as being a delightful month to go on pilgrimage.

Platonic teachings emphasize that you don’t create, you just remember. Might the inverse might also be true, “You don’t remember, you just create.” As the oneirocritic, Robert Bosnak, contends, you do not actually remember your dreams. You remember your memory you recreate the dream in this time. Since the challenges of post-modernism, this is no longer a far-fetched idea. The eminent historian of immigration, Deborah Dash Moore, defines history in this regard, as “a search for a plausible narrative.” “History” is not a record of what happened, but rather, is a record of what we believe happened, or what we want to believe happened.

This brings to the fore Foucault’s documenting the relationship of knowledge to power, as well as Freud’s assertion that material which is unacceptable to the ego, is disguised, in order to make them palatable. This places the notion of memory in a different light. There are incidents that occurred fifty years ago that seem as if they occurred five minutes ago. The depth psychologist and champion of the imagination, James Hillman, referred to this process as “soul-making.”

Back to T.S. Eliot: when he studied Sanskrit at Harvard, he was certainly aware that the Sanskrit word for memory, *smara* (from which *smrti*, “that which is remembered,” is derived) is also an epithet for Kama Deva, the Indian Cupid. Hence, the mixing of memory and desire. Perhaps, in this light, the study of history, which is a form of collective memory, is also a form of mass therapy, an effort to process the collective past

Hegel and Marx both believed classical India to be an inferior civilization because it had “no history,” but collections of mythologies. Maybe classical India, however, held an awareness that all memory is myth, a word which in its early Greek form literally translates as “plot.”

Jesus declares (in the Gospel story) “Let the dead bury the dead.” As the Jesus narrative exemplifies, however, burying the dead is no easy task. Perhaps our ongoing, ever-morphing narratives, allow us an oblique opportunity to connect with and process our pain. And in this

theatre of memory, the goal may not be to accumulate or catalogue what has been spoken (*itihasa*), but look a good miller, to process the grain into its essence: from what has passed, and is passing, and is to come, into what always is. Perhaps, the pilgrimage of the mind, on its endless perignation of story, is meant to ultimately take us to love, but that may be unspeakable.

**Chin-Tai Kim**

Professor, Case Western Reserve University, USA

## **A Critique of Plato's Philosophical Synthesis in his Middle Period**

*Republic*, especially the Simile of the Divided Line at the end of Book VI, is Plato's middle period synthesis of his epistemology, ontology, psychology, philosophy of education, ethics and politics. In this presentation I intend to expose some negative features of this syntheses and its inherent paradoxes.

To describe major critical points:

The synthesis contains a dehumanizing and absurd debasement of the lowest class of the ideal state of his conception, the Artisans. This point will be substantiated with argument.

The highest form of cognition, intellectual intuition, excludes morality--moral judgments of deeds and characters of human individuals, social and political practices, and normative principles underlying social and political institutions. It is supposedly a non-moral (supra-moral) form of consciousness. The objects of intellectual intuition are said to be infinitely many eternal Forms and their eternal connections but the soul or mind that is the epistemic subject existing in time can only survey a finite temporal sequence of an infinite set at a time. Intellectual intuition really can only be the epistemic subject's *apperception* of a field of experience of its own existential conditions, far from being an absorption into a comprehension of an infinity of eternal Forms with their eternal connections.

The Guardians who are capable of, and responsible for, governing the state cannot afford to be, even to yearn to be, in a rapturous mystical stasis of intellectual intuition. Essential to political life is discerning needs for timely action, courageous and responsible decision even under uncertainty for best ends, utilizing the best available theoretical, practical and technical resources. Plato evidently places the Guardians in the epistemological region of discursive thinking (*dianoia*), with a hint of cynical derogation of tired intellectuals attracted to an escape to a fantasy of the impossible.

**Tonci Kokic**

Full Professor, University of Split, Croatia

## **Similarity of Dualism in Ancient Greek and India: Plato and Jain**

The key idea of dualism assumes two incommensurable orders of being: the eternal world of ideal beings and the temporal world of material beings. Dualism is most visible in living beings who possess a mortal body and immortal soul. Ancient Greek philosophy is the place of formation of numerous dualistic versions of the worldview, from the Orphics, through the Pythagoreans, Heraclitus and Empedocles, to Plato. Plato's teaching about the world in which eternal ideas reside represents the peak of dualism (and idealism) in ancient Greece, includes the idea of reincarnation (*metempsychōsis*) according to which soul (*psykhē*) separated (*khōrismōs*) from the body (*sōma*) at the moment of death, means the separation of beings from non-beings. Similar teaching exists among the Jains who consider the soul to be fundamentally different from the body; the two are composed of substantially different kinds of particles (*aṇu*): bigger make-up bodies and smaller but very fine particles (karmic matter or dirt, karma itself) build souls. For the Jains, the soul is immortal and perfect; its original pure state has an infinite perception, knowledge, and divine blessedness. What is similar in Plato and Jain's belief, and that seems in possession of only these two teachings in the developed form, are 1) the substance that unites the immortal and the mortal, the imperishable and the perishable (Jain: karmic dirt, *aṇu*, and Greek: clay, *pēlon*), 2) separate intermediate stage between two incarnations or rebirth and 3) possibility of recall of absolute knowledge. The genealogy of these doctrines and their relationship is far from a convincing explanation: there may have been a transfer of learning or synchronicity. Up to date dilemma is still not resolved, but further studies may indicate that one of these explanations could be more likely.

**Sandra Kroeker**  
Teacher, Brock University, Canada

**Go(o)d is Number:  
Plotting the Divided Line & the Problem of the Irrational**

Plato believed that behind everything in the universe lie mathematical principles. Plato was inspired by Pythagoras (571 BCE), who developed a school of mathematics at Crotona that studied sacred geometry as a form of religion. The school's motto was "God is number." Pythagoras believed that numbers represented God in pattern, symmetry, and infinity. When Hippias told the world the secret of the existence of irrational numbers, Greek geometry was born and Pythagoras' idea of divinity in numbers died because how could God not be perfect and symmetrical!? In Plato's "Republic" he discusses something called The Divided Line, which is a map, if you will, for reaching what he calls the highest Good, which is the ultimate truth where one realizes the true state of the universe and can see the world for what it really is. Many mathematicians have attempted to plot Plato's Divided Line only to come across a litany of problems and conundrums. Some have said that it simply cannot be done. This paper discusses some of the conundrums involved in plotting Plato's Divided Line (not an exhaustive list) and explores its link to 'the problem of the irrational.' In exploring the link between the Divided Line and the 'the problem of the irrational,' the Divided Line is finally plotted!

**Lior Levy**  
Senior Lecturer, University of Haifa, Israel

**Masks and Persons:  
Reading Fanon on Race, Technology and Political Dignity**

The figure of the mask, appearing in the title of Frantz Fanon's 1952 book *Peau noir, masques blancs*, is frequently read in the context of his work as a metaphor for the alienation of black people, who, under the pressure of anti-black racism attempt to eradicate their blackness and "whiten" themselves. In the presentation, I take a different approach to the figure of the mask in *Black Skin, White Masks*, reading masks as technologies for racialization as well as objects entangled in the European colonial project and its lingering legacies. Tracing a path from masks to persons, a path that connects the use of masks in the formation of Roman legal personalities to techniques for facial casts used by racial sciences in the 19th and 20th century, I aim to offer in the presentation a new reading of Fanon's engagement with the notion of recognition and its political horizons. Drawing on masks to reveal the nexus between technology and subject formation, the essay uses Fanon's masks as a concrete configuration of the relationship between racial formation and political dignity -- the ability to be recognized as a subject.

**Eric Litwack**

Research Fellow, University of Sheffield & Syracuse University London,  
UK

## **Chatbots, Robots, and the Ethics of Automating Psychotherapy**

Recent developments in artificial intelligence—AI—have caused considerable discussion among both philosophers of technology and psychotherapists. In particular, the question of whether or not new forms of AI will complement or even replace traditional psychotherapists has emerged as a major contemporary debate. This debate is not entirely new, as it has its origins in the Turing Test of 1950, and an early psychotherapy chatbot named Eliza, developed in 1966 at MIT. However, recent developments in AI technology, coupled with long waiting lists and variable access to psychotherapists have raised the question of machine psychotherapists in an urgent manner. Already, there are psychotherapy apps that one can download onto a standard smartphone and use in lieu of a human psychotherapist. In the near future, this simulacrum of a human therapist may be enhanced by the use of android therapists, programmed to duplicate the knowledge and behaviour of human therapists.

This raises a host of ethical questions: can such beings be equally effective, and if so, ought we to reason in a consequentialist manner in their favour so as to increase accessibility and reduce costs through technology? Would there be a psychological difference between automated therapy and human therapy, if only a subtle one? Even if a chatbot or robot therapist is transparently such, is there an element of emotional manipulation and potential dishonesty in this interaction? This paper will examine these questions, in light of both philosophy of technology and the ethics of psychotherapy.

**Alexandru Manafu**

Associate Professor, York University, Canada

## **Transformations Following Near-Death Experiences: An Epistemological and Ethical Inquiry**

Near-death experiences (NDEs) are powerful experiences reported by people who have been physiologically close to death. NDEs have a rich phenomenology which includes *affective features* – e.g., an experience of brilliant loving light, peace, (Cassol 2018); *cognitive features* – e.g., out-of-body experiences, panoramic life review (Lundahl 1993; 2001); and *transcendental features* – e.g., experiences of another realm, deceased persons, God/mystical beings. Despite the fact that about 4% of the total population in the Western world experienced an NDE (Gallup and Proctor 1982), there is no scientific consensus on what explains them. Hypotheses range from materialist – injury to the temporo-parietal junction (Facco & Agrillo 2012; Mitchell-Yellin & Fischer 2014), hallucinations (Augustine 2007), hypoxia and anoxia (Jansen et al. 1997) – to non-naturalistic, e.g., life after death (Dell’Olio 2010) or non-local consciousness (van Lommel 2006, 2013).

Regardless of their explanation, NDEs play a *de facto* role in the lives of those who have undergone them. Upon their “return”, many NDEers undergo significant transformations in attitudes and values as a result of “messages” or “lessons” received during the experience (Sartori & Walsh 2017, 1252). Consequently, they make decisions that end up having a profound impact on their lives, such as quitting their job or getting a divorce. For example, 65% of the marriages in which the NDEers were involved at the time of their NDE ended in divorce vs. 19% of those with other kind of life-changing events (Christian 2005).

**In the light of the uncertainty regarding the nature and explanation of NDEs, what role – if any – should these experiences play in the lives of those who have undergone them?**

I argue that the answer to this question is largely independent of the veracity of the NDEs, namely of their being *truthful* in the sense of being conformal to external, objective facts. I distinguish between the moral *message* transmitted through an NDE and the *vehicle* through which that message was delivered, namely the *cognitive content* of that NDE. I argue that the lessons learned as a result of an NDE can be valid quite independently of the veracity of that NDE, just like the lessons conveyed by a theatre play can be valid independently of that play’s fictional content. On the other hand, I argue that for an NDE to deserve to play an important role in one’s life it is not sufficient for it to be



deemed positive in the moment by the person who has undergone it. The answer to which I converge is that NDEs should play an important role in one's life if and only if they have a message that fosters objective positive change in variables associated with human flourishing, as these are understood by positive psychology (Seligman 2013). I conclude by addressing some of the limitations of this answer.

**Matt Matherne**

PhD Candidate, The University of Texas at Austin, USA

## **Do the Wise Always Succeed? A Split-Level Reading of Euthydemus 278-282**

At *Euthydemus* 278-282, Socrates produces an argument that has been almost universally agreed to entail that wisdom is sufficient for happiness, necessary for happiness, or both. According to these standard readings, this is because Socrates ties wisdom to correct use of one's assets. Since wisdom is necessary or sufficient for correct use and correct use is necessary or sufficient for happiness, wisdom bears the same relation(s) to happiness, *mutatis mutandis*. I propose a split-level reading of this passage. On the level of *natures*, Socrates aims to establish that a causal-explanatory relation holds between the nature of wisdom and correctness such that wisdom by nature always produces correctness; ignorance, conversely, by nature never produces correctness. However on the level of *individuals*, the causal relations are defeasible such that the wise sometimes fail and the ignorant sometimes succeed. Thus this reading does not entail that having wisdom is necessary or sufficient for correct use or for happiness. If this split-level reading is correct, then this passage, the *locus classicus* for the necessity and sufficiency theses, fails to establish either.

This passage is also of historical philosophical interest as interpreters often take Socrates to be a proto-Stoic in virtue of this passage. The split-level reading renders intelligible Stoic use of this passage for their doctrines concerning the relationship between wisdom and happiness without representing Socrates as a proto-Stoic. Further, this passage is often cited in the debate concerning whether Socrates, or anyone else, is happy. Russell Jones has recently used this passage to argue for a bleak view of Socratic, and indeed human, happiness: since wisdom is necessary for happiness and Socrates was not wise, Socrates was not happy. The split-level reading provides a model for how the unwise can be happy. The value of all goods other than wisdom depends upon whether wisdom bears a causal, governing relation to them. Yet according to the split-level reading, one need not *be* wise to benefit from wisdom; one can produce correct action that leads to happiness instead by *being led* by wisdom.

**John Murungi**  
Professor, Towson University, USA

## **On the Origin of Philosophy and its History**

For centuries, in the minds of many people, philosophy has been associated with the search for truth and the search for knowledge. In Euro-West, there is a conventional belief that philosophy originated in Greece and that in the history of humankind, the first or the original philosophers were Greeks. The qualification of this belief as Euro-Western is redundant since there is no other philosophy. In other words, Euro-Western philosophy is the universal philosophy. The philosophical question is: Are Euro-Western philosophers and Euro-Western historiographers of philosophy speaking the truth about philosophy and its history? For the most part, this question raised above has largely been ignored. I commend Professor Christos Evangeliou, a Greek philosopher for ensuring that it is ignored.

In his book, *The Genesis of Philosophy, When Greece Met Africa* Professor Evangeliou produces evidence from the ancient Greek writers to demonstrate the falseness of this belief. Those who are genuine friends of philosophy both Greek and non-Greek must part with false belief and abandon any benefit that may have accrued by lying about philosophy. It is unfortunate that this belief has not been confined to the Euro-West. Euro-Western philosophers have disseminated this falsehood in the non-Western landscape of philosophy. In doing so, they have undermined genuine philosophical conversation between Euro-Western philosophers and non-Western philosophical conversation. They have been rendered enemies of the non-Euro-Western people by Euro-Westerners. They have non-delegable responsibility to set the philosophical record straight. Non-Westerners must cease being imitators of conventional erroneous Euro-Western paradigm of philosophy's origin and its history which is mostly toxic.

I argue that true friends of philosophy must return to the archaeology of philosophy and place the origin of philosophy where it belongs. As love of wisdom, I contend that the origin of philosophy is the origin of this love. It originated at a place and at a time where and when this love originated. Such a place and such a time is bound to the origin where and when human beings became conscious of themselves as wisdom seekers. Such a place and such a time need not be placed in convention history as conceived linearly in modern Euro-Western thought. Philosophy can begin anywhere and at any time. It has its own sense of place and its own sense of time. It can begin anywhere and at

any time when one becomes a philosopher. Moreover, the history of philosophy is not bound to what modern Euro-Western philosophers such as Hegel believe is linear. Its historicity is ever present. Its duration is the duration of a philosopher as long as he or she philosophizes.

**Stephen Neale**

Distinguished Professor, CUNY Graduate Center, USA

## **Meaning & Focal Meaning**

Drawing upon mutually illuminating ideas in the work of Aristotle and Grice, I propose a *pros hen* account of meaning involving a dependency structure within which philosophically significant uses of 'mean' and 'meaning' are located. This undercuts both (a) the idea that entertaining a distinction between natural and nonnatural meaning requires treating the words 'mean' and 'meaning' as straightforwardly ambiguous, and (b) attempts to reduce nonnatural meaning to natural meaning within so-called naturalistic semantics. The route to the relevant dependency structure involves providing (1) a precise analysis of the logical grammar of sentences containing the verb 'mean', which itself involves (2) a precise analysis of the logical grammar of modal sentences used in statements of necessity and possibility, which in turn involves (3) a workable version of *focal meaning* (in roughly the sense Owen attributes to Aristotle) that both supports and is supported by (4) a worked out Gricean distinction between *timeless meaning* (or *standing meaning*, as Stampe calls it) and *occasion meaning*, i.e. a distinction between (I) the unrelativized meaning an expression has independently of any particular occasion of use and (II) the relativized meaning an expression bears only relative to a particular occasion of use. On this account, (i) Grice's distinction between natural and nonnatural meaning remains philosophically significant (by virtue of marking the endpoints of a continuum within the dependency structure), (ii) the intuitive idea that nonnatural meaning is surrogate natural meaning is retained, (iii) the words 'mean' and 'meaning' are not ambiguous, (iv) modal expressions are not ambiguous between different notions of possibility and necessity, and (v) the distinction between relativized and absolute modalities is not just retained, it is given a firm foundation.

**Zane Ozola**

PhD Student, University of Latvia, Latvia

## **Broken Mirror**

In the essay “The Decay of Lying” (1891) Oscar Wilde, reversing traditionally accepted relationships between art and reality, presents a new aesthetics: “Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life. [...] “A great artist invents a type, and Life tries to copy it, to reproduce it in a popular form, like an enterprising publisher.”

Shortly after the publication of Wilde’s essay, Western European art started a revolutionary liberation that initiated new artistic freedoms challenging and exploring the relationships between art and human reality.

Reality of the twentieth century in the West came with great hopes of human liberation, but turned out to be the century that proclaimed the end of history, the end of philosophy, the end of art, and the death of God – all the dreams European society was built on. The World Wars became the catastrophic events that defined the age, and the Holocaust – the escalation and mechanization of terror – remains one of the main reference points in the contemporary discussions of politics and ethics, as well as the subject of many artistic and cultural practices.

Art today has expanded and disintegrated into innumerable experimental practices, and, engaging with reality like never before. Being so powerful a tool, can it restore the image of the human in the age of “post-truth,” the post-historical, the post-cultural and the post-human?

Although written as a satirical speculation, Wilde’s aesthetics may provide a new perspective on European art history, as well as metaphysical relationships of art and reality today.

**Xavier Pavie**

Professor, Paris Nanterre University, France

## **Could Philosophy of Spiritual Exercise be the Key to Develop Responsible Innovator?**

Innovation is known as the introduction of new things, ideas or ways of doing something. However, the consequences of innovation could harm the planet, ecosystem, and even increase social issues. More than ever, the responsibility is a need to innovate. If responsible innovation does start to emerge in different places of the world, could the philosophy of spiritual exercise be the key to unlocking this new necessity to innovate?

Indeed, there is a need to rethink innovation through the lens of philosophy and try to rethink it using the philosophy of spiritual exercises. Pierre Hadot dedicated his research to rendering an image of philosophy as a way of life. This way of life, Hadot often underscored, was anchored to a set of spiritual exercises that were neither merely preparations for nor complements to philosophical theory. Spiritual exercises are activities which work on the human being as an aesthetic, emotional, intellectual, and bodily whole. Some examples of spiritual exercises are meditation, self-examination, memorization, asceticism, correspondence and reading, writing, physical exercise and examination of conscience. These exercises can help the innovator become more mindful of the consequences his innovation might have on the ecosystem. This is what responsible innovation is or should be. It means considering the negative aspects of a prospective innovation and being mindful of the consequences it might have on society.

Philosophy of spiritual exercises are the ultimate aid to develop responsible Innovations and how the 21st century innovator must make use of these aids to further his sensibilities and perceptions.

**Elisa Ravasio**  
Independent Researcher, Italy

## **Mosse and Arendt: Two Perspectives on Totalitarianism and Democracy**

G. Mosse e H. Arendt have two different methodological approaches to analyze totalitarianism. The former, as a historian, identify the main causes of totalitarianism in the social, political and economic crisis following the First World War. The latter, as a philosopher, tries to investigate its origins from, also, a cultural perspective.

According to Mosse, the economical and moral crisis after the Great War led to the European totalitarian regimes, because people need to be part of a great reconstruction project of their Nations. He focuses his attention especially on Italy and Germany. The latter was a Nation destroyed both politically and economically by the victorious powers, and these elements caused a certain resentment to arise in that part of the population most devoted to nationalism.

Moreover, Mosse is critical with Arendt about the notion of “banality of evil”, since he believes that Nazis were used to identify people with widespread stereotypes: Mosse does not believe they acted as cogs in a large bureaucratic machine or in an unconscious manner, but they interpreted the world through prejudices absorbed through party’s propaganda. All people who collaborated in the genocide of the Jewish were worn out by this kind of aggressive propaganda which identified the Jews as the destructive element of the German moral and political integrity. Consequently, in order to make German people to survive, Jewish had to be killed since they were perceived as a threat.

From a different perspective, Arendt analyses the phenomenon of totalitarianism and its effects on the population by following a different route of thought: she recognizes the causes of totalitarianism in ideology as Mosse also points out, but she also describes more in detail the kind of agent who acted during this tragic historical period. Therefore, she focuses her attention on both executioners and victims, showing that the mechanism of attrition and strain affected the victims as well – the prisoners of the concentration camps, who in turn become the executioners of other prisoners like them. Moreover, with regard to the Nazis, Arendt speaks about the “banality of evil” in the sense that those people did not reflect on the consequences of their actions in ethical-political terms, i.e. they do not really realize that what they were bringing to the world were both the violent murder of someone and the



deprivation of some perspectives from which to observe moral and public issues. They were depriving the world of the possibility of an actual democratic method of interaction.

To sum up, the aim of this paper is to highlight the value of democratic interaction against all authoritarian perspectives combining the two perspectives of Mosse and Arendt.

**Scott Rubarth**

Associate Professor, Rollins College, USA

## **The Role of Teleology in Stoic Ethics**

Cosmic teleology has been philosophically out of fashion for years, especially since the advent of the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the acceptance of Darwin's theory of natural selection. Although there have been holdouts, particularly in religiously motivated philosophical systems, and some signs of renewed interest in philosophers such as Thomas Nagel and others, for most philosophers the concept of the universe having an end, purpose, or providential design belongs to the dust heap of history along with phlogiston, aether, and angels. It is for this reason that Lawrence Becker, in his attempt to construct a philosophically tenable version of Stoic ethics for contemporary thinkers, removed teleology (along with its providential theological commitments) from his version of a new Stoic ethics. The objective of this paper is to assess the Stoic commitment to cosmic teleology and providence as it relates to Stoic moral theory, contrast Stoic teleology from the well-known and influential concept associated with Aristotle, and assess the cost of removing the idea from a viable Stoic ethics. In particular, I will assess whether Stoic commitments to natural law, virtue ethics, and eudaimonism offer a robust enough foundation for Stoic ethics to survive the excision of teleology and providence in framing a modern Stoic ethics.

My paper has three basic parts. In part one, I examine the historical connection between teleology and the doctrine of cosmic providence in ancient Stoicism and its relationship to their eudaimonistic ethics. In part two I contrast the historical Stoic position to Aristotle's theory which also relies heavily on teleological principles in both physics and ethics, while rejecting the idea of providence. Finally, in part three I examine the validity of a Stoic ethics liberated of both providential cosmology and teleology.

**Tennyson Samraj**  
Professor, Burman University, Canada

## **Jurisprudence: Study of the Rule of Law in a Republic**

The rule of Law advocates two fundamental underpinnings in a republic – (1) the recognition of rights and (2) the governance by Law. Recognition of rights defines: what actions are permissible and what actions are prohibited (Hart, 1961); which actions are punishable and why only illegal behavior is punishable; which rights as claims are considered as perfect rights, as such enforceable and which rights as claims are considered as imperfect rights, as such not enforceable. Governance by Law (Fuller, 1964) demands the separation and sharing of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers; directs the process of selection and election and the executive (ruler); defines the term, limits, and transfer of power from one Government to another. What is fundamental to a good republic is the constitution – the living constitution; it is the constitution that defines the rules for private and public life. As such, Jurisprudence as the study of Law is the study of the Rule of Law and the Role of Law in a republic (Meyers, 1213). A republic is a state where sovereignty resides with the people. However, the emphasis is not that anyone can become a ruler but that everyone can live free as a ruler. Both the ruler and the ruled are subject to the rule of Law. While anyone though only one could be the ruler, everyone could live free like a ruler. The French revolution deemed it necessary to state that we are born with inviolable rights and that rights can only be limited by Law, in that what we cannot do can be only be restricted by Law. “The Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen” after the French revolution (1791) did not see the need for Laws to define inalienable rights because we are born with such rights. But contemporary republics argue that both what we can and cannot do must be defined by Law as to ascertain what is lawful and what is unlawful (Meyers, 1213). Law implies obligations, and rights imply the absence of obligations (Hobbes, 1651). Laws define which rights are considered as inalienable (uncreated), which rights are considered as alienable (created); which rights are considered as absolute (having no conditions), which rights are considered as *prima facie* (having conditions); which rights are considered as fundamental (not dependent on other rights), which rights are considered as derivative (dependent on other rights); which rights are considered as positive rights (the right to receive services) and which rights are considered as negative rights (right to choose without interference); which rights are

considered as perfect rights (having legal recognition and are enforceable) and which rights are considered as imperfect rights (having legal recognition but are not enforceable).

**Justin Stone**

Professor, Valencia College, USA

### **A Need for a Transcendental Power**

Jean-Paul Sartre struggles to satisfyingly find meaning for human life with his atheistic existential philosophy. In his famous lecture "Existentialism Is Humanism" Sartre attempts to defend the removal of God and all cosmic forces from human existence. In contrast, Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism promotes meaning in human life with assistance from cosmic forces. Both existentialism and transcendentalism stress the ethical importance of self-reliance and the power of will, but the two theories diverge where Sartre attempts to replace the transcendental powers of nature with absurdity. Furthermore, both Emerson and Sartre argue for a type of deontological ethics, but Sartre provides no strong defense for duty to live ethically.

This paper is an analysis of the similarities and differences in ideas between Jean-Paul Sartre's "Existentialism is Humanism" and Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Divinity School Address" and "The American Scholar." Through focused study of these lectures, an argument will be traced for the importance of higher transcendental powers in Emerson's works and how Sartre's removal of this key element is what causes his existentialism to lack a satisfying system of ethics.

**Dorota Tymura**

Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland

### **Cynic *Parresia* in the Activity of Antisthenes of Athens**

The aim of this paper is to show the parresiastic activity of Antisthenes of Athens against the background of Socratic dialectics and to show their specific analogies and discrepancies. Socrates can be called the first parresiastic philosopher, but it is Antisthenes who is depicted as a champion of freedom of speech whose willingness to speak freely and to call things as well as people by the right names was one of the most significant features. In the ancient times of the Classical and Hellenistic periods *parresia* was identified with the activity of truth-telling. Its philosophical character, which was shaped alongside the political one, had an exceptionally ethical dimension. It was a specific verbal activity that both Socrates and Antisthenes, and also later Cynics, regarded as a mission or duty to help other people to live life worth living. Hence philosophical *parresia* is strictly connected with philosophy as an art of life.

Both, Socrates' dialectics and Antisthenes' *parresia*, required a personal, face to face contact with an interlocutor. In Socrates' case the activity of truth-telling had a more individual dimension, focusing on the interlocutor, his system of values and knowledge. During such a discourse Socrates' interlocutor was giving an account of his life, disclosing who he really was. Cynic *parresia* had a completely different character, taking the form of an almost public demonstration. Antisthenes and other Cynics preferred to address a large crowd instead of one person. For they wanted to make philosophical themes about one's way of life as much popular as possible. Therefore, they carried out their parresiastic activities in the most crowded places, often giving it the form of scandalous behavior to attract the attention of the many. The Cynics taught how to live a life worth living not by a dialectic discourse but by their own examples. That is why their activity must have been very public, spectacular and provocative to force everyone to rethink the quality of their own life.

Another aspect discussed in the paper is ethical dimension of Socrates' dialectics and Antisthenes' *parresia*. They both focused on the manner in which a person lived, his way of life. As many ancient testimonies show such philosophical activity as strictly associated with the theme of the care of oneself, i.e. care of *psyche*. The requirement of caring for the soul refers to caring for the true human "ego", which is the mind. However, in order to properly care for the soul, one must

first know oneself. And then find the means of self-care that will allow them to become the best they can be, intellectually and morally. The overriding goal is to make the soul the ruler of the body, to achieve complete freedom and independence from the sphere of emotional and sensual experiences, and in the case of Antisthenes also from all social customs, traditions or institutions, in short from all dependencies introduced by culture, society or civilization. It means also the necessity of changing one's style of life, one's relations to others and to oneself.

**Andrew Ward**  
Fellow, University of York, UK

## **Kant and Hume on Freedom and Moral Responsibility**

According to Hume, only insofar as an agent's actions are causally necessitated by prior events in the spatio/temporal world can the agent be free and morally responsible for them. Moral responsibility, he claims, is not merely compatible with our actions being thus caused but requires that they must be. Against this position, Kant argues that the freedom and moral responsibility of an agent are only possible insofar as the agent can be seen as capable of initiating its actions through reason alone and, thereby, as not causally necessitated by any prior events. Yet Kant agrees with Hume that everything that happens in the spatio-temporal world, including all our actions, must be causally necessitated by prior events. How, then, can Kant maintain - as he does - that it is nonetheless possible for us to be free and morally responsible? An attempt is made to elucidate Kant's view and to adjudicate its plausibility in the light of Hume's position.



**Sonja Weiss**

Assistant Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

## **"The Way Up and the Way Down" in Plotinus' Metaphysics of Love**

This presentation is part of a larger research project in progress, which re-examines modern theories of Plotinus' doctrine of love. Some of these theories make love the central force and even the source of the Plotinian procession from the first Principle. In reassessing different studies on the subject, I will, in this contribution, attempt to recognize the difference between love and desire which, in my opinion, is important for a correct view of the Plotinian Eros and its deviations from its Platonic model. While the nature of the Platonic Eros, which is openly appetitive, is balanced by its generative power, it seems that this feature, clearly directed "downwards" and possibly linked to a providential activity, is completely absent in the *Enneads*, leaving space for the act of contemplation. On the other hand, according to Plotinus, every contemplation results in a generation, or better, every generation is a product of the contemplation of the source. Moreover, as an agent of reversion, which secures the auto-constitution of every reality coming out of its source, Eros is thus – although indirectly – part of the procession from the One. Nevertheless, (Neo)Platonic Eros has a distinctive trait of want, which sometimes makes it difficult for us to distinguish between love and need. The latter seems to prevail particularly in the first moment of procession identified as a "movement" away from the source, while Eros appears in the subsequent moment of conversion as the anagogical force, leading "upwards" and fulfilling that need. This role of Eros raises multiple speculations about generative love, of which there are clear indications in Plato's works, as well as of diffusive and even providential love, of which the Platonic roots are less easy to discover. In my presentation, I will therefore focus on the moment of conversion in the emanation process and attempt to shed light on different aspects of the reversion "movement" toward the source.

**Mark Wells**

Professor, Montreat College, USA

## **Soren Kierkegaard on the Mediation of Christ**

In his *Philosophical Fragments* Soren Kierkegaard has two primary concerns, one is epistemological—seeking an answer to the question, “Can the truth be learned?”<sup>3</sup>—which leads him to a second concern, a theological consideration of the incarnation of the teacher—“the god-man.”

Although Kierkegaard begins his work by stating that he is interested primarily in epistemology—“Can the truth be learned?”<sup>4</sup>—he argues that the eternal truth is actually mediated via the teacher (Jesus Christ). However, Kierkegaard does not stop at showing Jesus Christ to be the mediator of revelation—eternal truth—he follows up by showing the teacher (Jesus Christ) to be the god-man who mediates the love, grace and mercy of God to human persons.

The author’s contention is that Kierkegaard, in his philosophical description of the mediation of Christ, is thoroughly evangelical, along the lines of T. F. Torrance, as he makes use of allegories and arguments that emphasize the true kenosis of the god-man and the love of God that compels God to become human in order to reveal the truth and reconcile human persons to God. In the author’s reading, the pseudonym Johannes Climacus is employed ironically since the way to truth is not an ascent, a climbing of the ladder to the divine, but rather a descent of the truth in the form of the god-man. This paper also explores Kierkegaard’s discussion of the teacher/god-man as the mediator of: 1) revelation (the truth), 2) reconciliation (unity), and ultimately 3) salvation (conversion via faith). These are accomplished by the teacher/god-man as he brings an eternal consciousness via a historical point of departure—the incarnation. Both the historical event of the incarnation and the continuing event of the incarnation of the mediator will also be explored.

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<sup>3</sup>Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

**Jinmei Yuan**

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## **Thinking through Sets: Exploring How Chinese Pictographic Language Shapes Chinese Logic**

The author of this paper argues that there is an alternative logic which was widely practiced among Chinese ancient thinkers. This logic is significantly different from Aristotelian logic. To clarify what Chinese logic looks like is the first task of this paper. The author starts with an etymologic study, which shows that Chinese characters are created according to sets – the units of radicals. The habit of thinking in sets are formed while one learns Chinese pictographic characters. If language shapes one's way of thinking, then thinking in Chinese pictographic language could naturally shape a practice of a primary logic of sets. This practice can be found not only in the School of Names and Mohists (pre-Qin logicians), but also in other schools.

The second task of this paper is to demonstrate set-thinking in Chinese ancient thinkers' teachings. Although the notion of set is simple, thinking in sets is very different from Aristotelian understanding of memberships in a totality. "All" are not determined by the membership-relation of genres and species, instead, are defined or represented by every element or member in the set during the time or in the process. In the West, Set Theory, as a separate mathematical discipline, begins in the work of Georg Cantor (1845-1918). Cantor's Set Theory discovers a rich field of transfinite sets, in which totality and individual objects within the whole could be plurally thought of as a unit. With the guide of Set Theory, the author of this paper re-evaluates three cases:

Case one: when Confucius teaches virtues, he hardly gives definitions. Instead, he points out one and another examples. The author argues that when Confucius teaches 孝 *xiao* filial piety, for instance, he treats *Xiao* as a Set  $X \{ \alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta \dots \varepsilon \}$ . " $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta \dots \varepsilon$ " are examples of filial conducts, which are elements in the Set  $X$ . Set  $X$  is defined by all of elements/conducts in the set.

Case two: Zhuang Zi has a concept, 集虛 *jixu*, an empty set. Borrowing the symbol of Empty Set  $\{ \}$  or  $\emptyset$  from Set Theory, the author argues that an empty set can be a member of any sets. When Zhuang Zi teaches knowing Dao and myriad things, the first practice in his "The Sorting Which Evens Things Out" is to "loss I" or make "I" an empty set. This is a smart way to explain how one disappears in the Universal Set Dao or is with myriad things in Dao as an empty set.

Case three: Chinese mathematician Liu Hui 劉徽 (fl. 3rd century CE) assigned two colors, red and black, to be general sets for positive and negative numbers, and he used red rods to count positive numbers, and black rods to count negative numbers. Without knowing modern Set Theory, Liu Hui had practiced set-thinking and used sets to clearly define positive and negative numbers.

Having analyzed the above three cases, author concludes: Practice is often before a theory. Chinese pictographic language provided a separated path for Chinese people to master sets and think in sets. The theory of sets provides help with a much better understanding about reasoning methods in ancient Chinese thinkers' minds, so that one can evaluate their contributions and their logic fairly. This opens a healthy discourse between ancient and modern thinkers, as well as between China and the West.

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### **What Does Leo Strauss's "Be Alert to the Art of Writing" Means? A Study Based on Strauss's Study of Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise**

Leo Strauss's reading of Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise* got changed after his rediscovery of exotericism. As early as in the comment article on Hermann Cohen's analysis of Spinoza's Bible science, Strauss put forward that the *Treatise* should not be understood on the basis of our readers' own presupposes of Spinoza's personal motives. Later, in *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (1930), Strauss indeed read the *Treatise* literally, trying to understand it on the basis of Spinoza's explicit statements. After the rediscovery of exotericism in 1930s, however, Strauss's way of interpretation got changed. Strauss became very alert to Spinoza's way of writing. Strauss found that Spinoza spoke with a view to the capacity of the vulgar and practiced exoteric writing. Some of Spinoza's explicit statements were addressed to the non-philosophic majority and were not Spinoza's true teachings. Based on this, Strauss regarded not all of Spinoza's explicit statements, but those most opposed to what Spinoza considered the vulgar view, as well as those with an implication of a heterodox character, as expressing Spinoza's true views. Strauss shows that "be alert to the art of writing" means two things. First, understand the author's explicit statements. Second, try to find whether there are teachings that are different from or even opposed to the explicit statements.

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