



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

11th Annual International Symposium on
Religion & Theology
25-30 May 2026, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Ori Z Soltes & Olga Gkounta

2026

Abstracts
11th Annual International
Symposium on Religion &
Theology
25-30 May 2026, Athens, Greece

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Ori Z Soltes & Olga Gkounta

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 11th *Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology* (25-30 May 2026), organized by the Athens Institute.

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

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of the Athens Institute 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. Athens Institute 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 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 the Athens Institute'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, 2016-2026*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2026	49	22	Soltes and Gkounta (2026)
2025	51	18	Fagiano and Gkounta (2025)
2024	46	18	Fagiano and Gkounta (2024)
2023	42	17	O'Meara and Gkounta (2023)
2022	41	18	O'Meara and Gkounta (2022)
2021	18	11	Papanikos (2021)
2020	24	10	Papanikos (2020)
2019	18	12	Papanikos (2019)
2018	18	12	Papanikos (2018)
2017	25	14	Papanikos (2017)
2016	45	22	Papanikos (2016)

It is our hope that through Athens Institute'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, Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 7 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 Athens Institute 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 Religion & Theology. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute'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 11th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 22 different countries (Austria, Canada, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Türkiye, 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.

Ori Z Soltes & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**11th Annual International Symposium on Religion &
Theology, 25-30 May 2026, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of the Athens Institute.

1. Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.
2. Dr. Ori Z Soltes, Head, Arts & Culture Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.
3. Dr. Robert Bishop, Head, Philosophy Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Wheaton College, USA.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**11th Annual International Symposium on Religion & Theology, 25-30 May
2026, Athens, Greece**

PROGRAM

Monday 25 May 2026

08:30-09:15

Registration

09:15-10:00 Opening Speech and Welcoming Remarks

Speaker: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

09:45-11:30 Session 1		
<p>Session 1a Moderator: Robert Bishop, Head, <u>Philosophy Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Professor, Wheaton College, USA.</p>	<p>Session 1b Moderator: Scott Rubarth, Associate Professor, Rollins College, USA.</p>	<p>Session 1c Moderator: Ori Soltes, Head, <u>Arts & Culture Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.</p>
<p>1. Sara Brill, Professor, Fairfield University, USA. <i>Title: Extended Minds in Plato and Aristotle.</i></p> <p>2. Ryan Drake, Associate Professor, Fairfield University, USA. <i>Title: Charm and Counter-Charm in Plato's Republic.</i></p> <p>3. Cecilia Li, Assistant Professor, Huron University at Western University, Canada. <i>Title: A Fork in the Road: Politics as the Master Art in Plato's Gorgias.</i></p>	<p>1. Thomas Lockhart, Associate Professor, Auburn University, USA. Jennifer Lockhart, Associate Professor, Auburn University, USA. <i>Title: Constitutivism and the Goodness-fixing Kind Objection.</i></p> <p>2. Marta Nagy, Associate Professor, University of Szeged, Hungary. <i>Title: Anytime, Anything, Anyone – Forms of Apparent Reality in Aristotle's Rhetoric and the Phenomenon of Deepfakes.</i></p> <p>3. Ronald Weed, Associate Professor, University of New Brunswick, Canada. <i>Title: Aristotle on Vice: Dishonouring Vices.</i></p>	<p>1. Emese Mogyorodi, Associate Professor, University of Szeged, Hungary. <i>Title: The Pursuit of Truth and the "Usefulness" of Greek Philosophia in Modern Democracy.</i></p> <p>2. Samuel Piccolo, Assistant Professor, Baruch College, CUNY, USA. <i>Title: From Anxiety to Wonder: Aristotelian and Native American Philosophy.</i></p>
11:30-13:00 Session 2		
<p>Session 2a Moderator: Cecilia Li, Assistant Professor,</p>	<p>Session 2b Moderator: Ori Soltes, Head, <u>Arts & Culture Unit</u>,</p>	<p>Session 2c Moderator: Samuel Piccolo,</p>

<p>Huron University at Western University, Canada.</p>	<p>Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.</p>	<p>Assistant Professor, Baruch College, CUNY, USA.</p>
<p>1. Jennifer Lockhart, Associate Professor, Auburn University, USA. <i>Title: The Role of Beauty in Aristotle's Ethics.</i></p> <p>2. Wisam Abdul-Jabbar, Assistant Professor & Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Qatar. <i>Title: Averroism and Intercultural Philosophy: Toward a Deliberative Pedagogy.</i></p> <p>3. Vivian Feldblyum, Assistant Professor, Auburn University, USA. <i>Title: An Aristotelian Account of Victim-Blaming.</i></p>	<p>1. Jeffrey Koperski, Professor, Saginaw Valley State University, USA. <i>Title: Skepticism about the Multiverse.</i></p> <p>2. Alexandru Popovici, Professor, Romanian-American University, Romania. <i>Title: The Philosophy of Multilevel Reality and the Morphosynthetic Method: A New Approach to Hegel's Theoretical Works.</i></p> <p>3. Piergiuseppe Sancetta, PhD Student, University of Edinburgh, UK. <i>Title: A Philosophical Analysis of Multi-time Wave Functions.</i></p>	<p>1. Robert Earle, Wilson Ethics Fellow & Assistant Professor, University of Northern Iowa, USA. <i>Title: Classical Rule and Act Utilitarianism: Applying 20th Century Terminology to the Philosophies of Bentham and Mill.</i></p> <p>2. Xavier Mao, Professor, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), India. <i>Title: A Critique of Macintyre's after Virtue.</i></p>
<p>13:00-14:30 Session 3</p>		
<p>Session 3a Moderator: Jennifer Lockhart, Associate Professor, Auburn University, USA.</p>	<p>Session 3b Moderator: Xavier Mao, Professor, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), India.</p>	
<p>1. Scott Rubarth, Associate Professor, Rollins College, USA. <i>Title: Fate without Fatalism: On the Absence of Resignation in Marcus Aurelius' Meditations.</i></p> <p>2. Danielle Ravitzki, Independent Scholar; MA Graduate, Columbia University, USA. <i>Title: Family, Forgiveness, and Justice: Challenging the Moral Obligation to Forgive in Families.</i></p>	<p>1. Ori Z Soltes, Teaching Professor, Georgetown University, USA. <i>Title: From Plato's Cratylus to Panini: The Problem of Language for Philosophy.</i></p> <p>2. Jinmei Yuan, Professor, Creighton University, USA. <i>Title: The Role of Continuity in Set-Based Thinking: Discovering the Nature of Numbers Taught by The Nine Chapters on Mathematical Art in Ancient China.</i></p> <p>3. Magdalena Wolska-Augustyn, Graduate Student, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. <i>Title: Interactivism Imagined: Imagination as a Procedural Cognitive Capacity in Interactivist Model.</i></p>	
<p>14:30-15:30 Lunch</p>		

<p>15:30-17:00 Session 4 – Microsymposium on “Environmental Philosophy: Ethics, Technology & Ways of Living” I Moderator: Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva, Deputy Head, <u>Philosophy Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Teaching Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA.</p>	
<p>1. Robert Bishop, Professor, Wheaton College, USA. <i>Title: An Ethic of Createdness and Creation Care.</i></p> <p>2. Kenneth Shockley, Professor and Holmes Rolston III Endowed Chair in Environmental Ethics and Philosophy, Colorado State University, USA. Ben Hale, Professor, University of Colorado Boulder, USA. <i>Title: Intervention, Indeterminacy, and Manufactured Risk in Geoengineering the Earth: Lessons from the Chariot of Helios.</i></p> <p>3. Alessandro Moscaritolo Palacio, Assistant Professor, Marist University, USA. <i>Title: Environmental Philosophies of Some South American Indigenous Peoples: Conflict, Mestizaje, and Cosmopolitics.</i></p>	
<p>18:00-20:00 Session 5 – Visit Aristotle’s Lyceum</p>	
<p>Organized by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Robert Bishop (Head, <u>Philosophy Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Professor, Wheaton College, USA) ○ Dr. Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva (Deputy Head, <u>Philosophy Unit</u>, Athens Institute & Assistant Teaching Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA) <p style="text-align: center;">It requires pre-booking</p>	
<p>20:30-22:30 Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance) Tuesday 26 May 2026</p>	
<p>09:00-10:30 Session 6</p>	
<p>Session 6a Moderator: Jeffrey Koperski, Professor, Saginaw Valley State University, USA.</p>	<p>Session 6b Moderator: Olga Gkounta, Researcher, Athens Institute.</p>
<p>1. Tennyson Samraj, Professor, Burman University, Canada. <i>Title: Belief Quotient as the Matrix of Doxastic Intelligence.</i></p> <p>2. David Laraway, Todd A. Britsch Professor of the Humanities, Brigham Young University, USA. <i>Title: Factual Belief, Religious Credence, and Unamuno’s Puzzle of the Pious Skeptic.</i></p> <p>3. Takashi Sasaki, Adjunct Lecturer, Kansai University, Japan. Title: The Will to Believe or the Will to Doubt: William James and Bertrand Russell on Faith, Science, and Epistemic Attitude.</p>	<p>1. Maria Majorie Purino, Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of San Carlos, Philippines. <i>Title: Buddhism and A.I. Grief Bots: Heideggerian Thanatology Perspectives.</i></p> <p>2. Charles Louis Jayme, Dean of Studies & Vice Rector, San Carlos Seminary College, Philippines. <i>Title: Interconnectedness: A Moral Imperative in the Light of Murray Bookchin’s Social Ecology.</i></p> <p>3. Silvia Fazzo, Associate Professor, University of Eastern Piedmont “Amedeo Avogadro”, Italy. <i>Title: The Communion of Saints and the Shared Intellect: From Aristotle’s Nous to the Experience of Artificial Intelligence.</i></p> <p>4. Maria Rosaria D’Acierno Canonici Cammino, Associate Professor, University of Naples Federico II, Italy. <i>Title: Nietzsche: A Musician, A Poet, A Philosopher.</i></p>

10:30-12:00 Session 7	
<p>Session 7a – Microsymposium on “Environmental Philosophy: Ethics, Technology & Ways of Living” II Moderator: Xavier Pavie, Professor, ESSEC Business School, France.</p>	<p>Session 7b Moderator: David Laraway, Todd A. Britsch Professor of the Humanities, Brigham Young University, USA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva, Teaching Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, USA. <i>Title: Ecocide and Epistemicide: The Aral Sea as a Clash of Soviet Technofix and Situated Ecological Wisdom.</i> Don Thomas Deere, Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University, USA. <i>Title: Édouard Glissant’s Decolonial Landscape and Abyssal Racial Reason.</i> Jomilin John, Researcher, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. <i>Title: Reimagining the Philosophy of Collective Responsibility as Response-able Stakeholderism.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Zoltan Gyenge, Professor, University of Szeged, Hungary. <i>Title: Time, Moment and Eternity Kierkegaard’s Theory of Time.</i> Jonah Tyan, PhD Candidate, National Central University, Taiwan. <i>Title: The Structure of Meaning at Work: Existential Analysis of Care Through Being and Time.</i> Juanita Meyer, Associate Professor, University of the Free State, South Africa. <i>Title: Ethics of Being: Towards a Theological Framework for Pastoral and Spiritual Care in Africa.</i>
12:00-13:30 Session 8	
<p>Session 8a Moderator: Jomilin John, Researcher, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.</p>	<p>Session 8b Moderator: Alice Reininger, Independent Researcher, Austria.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Xavier Pavie, Professor, ESSEC Business School, France. <i>Title: From Subject to Citizen-Actor: Reinventing Democracy through Civic Innovation and Creative Resistance.</i> Eduardo Ruiz Vieytez, Professor, University of Deusto (Bilbao), Spain. <i>Title: Local Policies on Religious Minorities: Practical Experiences Applied in Spain.</i> Esma Kayar, Associate Professor, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye. <i>Title: The Methodological Debate between Aristotle and Eubulides.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Asimina Galanopoulou, PhD Student, University of Cyprus, Cyprus. <i>Title: Pain as a Disciplinary and Self-Disciplinary Practice in St. Augustine, M. Foucault and Post-Structural Feminist Thought.</i> Alina Pelteacu, PhD Student, University of Bucharest, Romania. <i>Title: Augustine’s Theological Hermeneutics of Incarnation: A Paradigm for Healing in the Era of Excarnation.</i> Grigol Bendeliani, PhD Student, Tbilisi Theological Academy and Seminary, Georgia. <i>Title: The Processes of Raising and Educating Children in Georgian Ancient Monasteries.</i>
13:30-15:00 Session 9	
<p>Session 9a Moderator: Ronald Weed, Associate Professor, University of New Brunswick, Canada.</p>	<p>Session 9b Moderator: Jinmei Yuan, Professor, Creighton University, USA.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nadja Furlan Stante, Professor, Science and Research Centre of Koper, Slovenia. <i>Title: Emotion, Gender, and</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ullrich Kleinhempel, Research Fellow, University of the Free State, South Africa. <i>Title: The Genesis of Hesychasm by the Neoplatonic Reception of Yoga in Antiquity –</i>

<p><i>Relationality: From Biblical Narratives to AI-Mediated Life.</i></p> <p>2. Jennifer Ang, Associate Professor, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore. <i>Title: Limits of Artificial Moral Reasoners.</i></p> <p>3. Matt Matherne, Adjunct Faculty, Saint Edward's University, USA. <i>Title: The Epistemic Value of Outsourcing to AI.</i></p>	<p><i>Common Features, the Reception, and Consequences for Interpretation.</i></p> <p>2. Alice Reininger, Independent Researcher, Austria. <i>Title: The Unheard Cry of Laocoön.</i></p> <p>3. Alexandru Socaciu, PhD Candidate, University of Bucharest, Romania. <i>Title: The Mission of the Military Priest: A Small Canonical, Patristic, and Biblical Analysis for the Current Context.</i></p>
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15:00-16:00 Lunch

16:30-19:30 Session 10

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

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 the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:30

Closing Remarks by Gregory T. Papanikos: "Wine, Words, and Wisdom: An Ancient Athenian Dinner Symposium" followed by an Ancient Athenian Dinner

Wednesday 27 May 2026
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Thursday 28 May 2026
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 29 May 2026
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Saturday 30 May 2026
11:00-13:00 – The Academic Discussion continues in the downtown open agora

Wisam Abdul-Jabbar

Assistant Professor & Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Hamad Bin
Khalifa University (HBKU), Qatar

Averroism and Intercultural Philosophy: Toward a Deliberative Pedagogy

This presentation introduces the Averroesian curriculum marked by Aristotelian thought as the locus classicus of culture. It posits a deliberative pedagogy conducive to intercultural thinking, fosters culturally responsive education, and responds to students' need to be intercultural speakers. Drawing on Averroes's philosophical thought, this presentation contributes to deliberative pedagogy, a dialogical form of reasoning whose aim is to find pragmatic alternatives that serve the collective and individual good with attention to the question of utility. It examines how a culture's aptitude for intermediacy determines its dialogical capacity. Once integrated into a culture's educational apparatus, it enhances its internal ability to interact with the abstruse and unfamiliar when encountering other cultures. The presentation introduces the intermediacy model as an example of intercultural deliberative pedagogy, and explains how Averroes's understanding of *rawiyya* resonates with deliberative education. For Averroes, intercultural dialogue is an Aristotelian disavowal of a monocentric takeover of the public space and education.

Research Aim

This presentation explores intercultural philosophy teaching for conflict-resolution by infusing pedagogies peculiar to Islamic thought. It draws on Averroes' philosophical thought to identify instructional strategies to improve Islamic school curricula in diaspora. Born in 12th-century Andalusia (modern Spain), Ibn Rushd, known in Latin as Averroes, was a philosopher, chief judge, and court physician. This presentation proposes Averroism as an intercultural pedagogical model, marked by *Rawiyya* (intermediacy) and *Tadabbur* (deliberation). Within the Averroesian context, I posit a deliberative pedagogy, which contributes to conceptualizing a new social contract in education marked by conflict resolution.

Theoretical Framework

This presentation introduces the Averroesian curriculum marked by a deliberative pedagogy. Drawing on Averroes's philosophical thought, this presentation contributes to deliberative pedagogy, a dialogical form of reasoning whose aim is to find pragmatic alternatives that serve the collective and individual good with attention to the question of utility. Averroism emphasizes intercultural, conflict-resolution competencies through the intermediacy model as a tool of intercultural deliberative pedagogy, and the Islamic notion of Tadabbur, Arabic for 'to deliberate' and 'carefully consider' the outcomes.

Findings

From an Averroesian perspective, conflict-resolution teaching is evaluated by its readiness to incorporate intermediacy and deliberation as intercultural pedagogies. For example, addressing tensions entails successfully reconciling the Aristotelian tradition with the Islamic worldview. This act of reconciliation, if achieved, would have significant educational implications. This presentation resonates with reconciling tensions as it considers how students' intellectual heritage can be part of the learning process. It provides an opportunity for students to engage with diverse philosophical and educational views, which helps mitigate tension. It also diversifies the dissemination of knowledge and pedagogical practices, paving the way for a socially equitable and diversified classroom.

Jennifer Ang

Associate Professor, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore

Limits of Artificial Moral Reasoners

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has not reached a level that can respond to everyday situations that humans face. Early founder of AI, John McCarthy (1989) explains that a thinking human in general is in the “common sense informatic situation” where known facts are incomplete, and there is no a priori limitation as to what facts are considered relevant. The everyday phenomena to be considered are also not decided in advance, and the consequences of actions cannot be fully determined. Ethical situations are almost similar in kind. Ethical predicament can arise within any situation, and factors that are morally relevant are context and agent-dependent. Furthermore, what are considered appropriate moral motivation and morally acceptable action depend on one’s particular agential relations with others, and judgements are made without a full picture of possible consequences of each alternative.

Yet, AI systems with logic-based approach perform tasks in our everyday life and some of these systems give rise to new ethical situations while others result in ethical consequences that they are unable to respond to. AI programmers also treated ethical phenomenon as predictable trolley scenarios with clear consequences, and the recent Peter Singer AI chatbot purports that it can deal with ethical dilemmas by carrying out ethical discussions and offering insights from a utilitarian perspective. It is imaginable that chatbots with different normative ethical positions can also be created, but should we?

This paper aims to discuss three issues with believing that human moral intelligence can be replicated in artificial moral reasoners. Firstly, the fact that AI systems lack the ability to be attuned to the context of complex moral situations will mislead moral agents to think that there can be discrete right and wrong rather than alternative moral responses. Secondly, there is a psychological distance when moral judgements are made out-of-sight, making it difficult for moral agents to make morally responsible choices. Lastly, if a logic-based moral judgement antedates human emotions in moral judgement, it promotes an ethics that regard people are self-sufficient and independent autonomous rational agents rather than relational and interdependent in their agential relations (with related obligations and duties to others).

Grigol Bendeliani

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The Processes of Raising and Educating Children in Georgian Ancient Monasteries

Christianity has made a great contribution to the spread of education and literacy throughout the world. From ancient times, there were schools in the church space. It is the idea of education and teaching methods of these schools that became the basis for many modern educational institutions. Even today, the motto of Oxford University is the words of a biblical psalm: "The Lord is my light" (Ps. 26.1).

The work studies the activities of ancient Christian educational centers. Thanks to the activities of Christian educational centers many children received excellent education.

The relevance of the research is due to the fact that educational activities in houses near monasteries were a historical event that had a great influence on the cultural formation of the nation. This educational practice is the basis for schools established in various parts of the world, which, in turn, is the predecessor of modern educational systems.

Like other parts of the world, monasteries in Georgia were also educational centers, where the active process of education took place.

Therefore, we have taken for analysis ancient hagiographic monuments and monastic typicons, which help us in researching this issue.

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the complex study of the issue; in particular, we have discussed the problem from historical, theological, and pedagogical perspectives. We also compare the process of raising children in Georgian monasteries with monastic education in other countries.

The study of the issue has shown us that monasteries had special rules regarding the upbringing and education of children, which were written about by Christian fathers as early centuries.

In addition, we have presented information preserved in the life of the 11th century Georgian monk Giorgi Mtatsmindeli, about how he raised 80 orphans and what kind of pedagogical methods he used. Here we are talking about the monastery founded in Bucharest by the Georgian bishop, as well as the rules in the Georgian monastery in Bulgaria, how children were raised and educated there.

We have taken the hagiographic monuments and monastic typicons for analysis, which help us in researching the mentioned issue.

The conclusion presents how the Church cared for the upbringing and education of children and what kind of pedagogical methods were used. Then we draw a conclusion on how a teacher can establish correct communication with a student, transfer knowledge and form him as a good citizen.

The report is part of a doctoral project entitled "The History of Church Educational Centers in Georgia and Their Pedagogical Peculiarities."

Robert Bishop
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An Ethic of Createdness and Creation Care

One implication of the Christian doctrine of creation is that all of nature is God's project, one that begins with a "very good," though incomplete, creation moving towards its completion in new creation (Bishop et al. 2018). Yet our human tendency is to treat nature instrumentally, as raw materials for our needs and desires, a posture that has contributed to a series of environmental crises, including pollution and global warming.

While virtue ethics and deontological ethics may offer important resources for loosening our instrumentalism toward one another, they offer more limited guidance for understanding and breaking our instrumental grip on creation itself without significant revision. By contrast, an ethic of createdness provides a broader framework for understanding what it means to do good and to act rightly within a creation oriented toward becoming new creation.

This presentation will explore an ethic of createdness in which moral thought and action are oriented by understanding creation as gift and as project—as the overflow of trinitarian love moving towards its eschatological completion. Seeing ourselves as creature called to participate in this grand project orients current thought and action in light of creation's future. Eschatology is not simply about a distant future but provides practical orientation for how to live with and within nature now. Such a future-facing orientation, I argue, offers a way to loosen—and potentially break—the grip of instrumentalism on our relations with the natural world.

Sara Brill

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Extended Minds in Plato and Aristotle

In Aristotle's famously capacious model of 'what is up to one,' humans are responsible for all actions of which they are the source; mature adults should conceive of themselves as, "a source and begetter of actions just as much as of children" (EN 1113b18-19). By figuring human action in the terms of reproductive generativity, Aristotle not only offers a key to his ethical theorizing, he also stakes a claim in this generativity, drawing the cultivation of character (with its aspirations for self-sufficiency and self-mastery) further into the circuit of shared human life. Indeed, at a culmination point in his discussion of friendship, Aristotle presents the pinnacle of virtuous friendship as sharing in the performance of good deeds (EN 1169a32-4), offering up to another who is another self, the 'children' of rational choice; in this Aristotle envisions such a melding of character as to constitute a shared agency reflected in action and way of life.

Signs of this intimacy are found in Aristotle's account of other vivid forms of shared life, that is, sharing not only in pleasure and pain, sorrow and joy, but also in one's most precious activities, including, drinking together (*sumpinousin*) for those who love drinking, or playing dice together (*sugkubeuousin*), or exercising and hunting together (*sungumnazontai kai sugkunegousin*), or, for those so inclined, philosophizing together (*sumphilosophousin*) (EN 1172a5, see also EE 1245a22). While he does not use the word, the intimacy of *sumphilosophhein* is figured throughout Plato's extant dialogues as well and in multiple registers, including the erotic and familial: in the bond of shared parentage of idea-children in the *Symposium*, for instance; in the task of making oneself and one's beloved godlike in the *Phaedrus*; in the famous image of Socratic meutics from the *Theaetetus*; all ways of describing an intimate contact with truth and the transmission of this contact with others.

I argue that, for both thinkers, these potent forms of being-with redound upon agency, simultaneously demonstrating the generativity of thought while diminishing the differences between individual thinkers, producing a vision of melded minds as an expression and effect of leading a philosophic life. This paper thus explores the alignment of action and birth, of ethical agency and generativity, for what it can tell us about the shared or collaborative dimension of human ethical agency for both Plato and Aristotle.

Maria Rosaria D’Acierno Canonici Cammino
Associate Professor, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

Nietzsche: A Musician, A Poet, A Philosopher

The dispute concerning the relationship between poetry and philosophy has always been a crucial issue among scholars, and still occupies a large interest. The discussion concerns the idea that feelings and concepts are two separate fields, because what one can say in philosophy could find no place in poetry. Thus, a poet and a philosopher belong to different spheres. But, is that true under Nietzsche’s perspective? We all know Nietzsche’s eclectic nature. He has balanced his life between being a philosopher, a poet and first of all a musician and a composer. His first very young friends were musicians (Gustav Krug, Wilhelm Pinder), who had a great impact on his life up to when he met Richard Wagner, who at last deluded him. With great suffering at last, he decided to leave the idea of becoming a professional musician, so that he accepted to apply for the doctorate in philology at the University of Leipzig. His love for his mother tongue drove him toward a deep linguistic analysis which brought him to search the best style to express his philosophical thoughts, as we read in a letter to Erwin Rohde (Nice, February 22, 1884). In this way we think that the search for the best linguistic expression was a way to link poetry to philosophy.

“My style is a *dance*, a play of symmetries of all kinds and a leaping over and mockery of these symmetries. That goes as far as the choice of vowels.–Forgive me! I will be careful not to confess this to anyone else, but you did once—I think you are the only one—express delight in my language.–By the way, I have remained a *poet* within every limit of this term, despite having already *browbeat* myself thoroughly with the antithesis of all poetry.” (*Selected letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Oscar Levy eds.). Doubleday, Page & Company, 1921: 173-74, Archive).

In this essay, even though Nietzsche alternates between praising poets at the expenses of philosophers, or vice-versa, we want to elucidate his attitude toward poetry and philosophy, in order to attempt an answer to this dichotomy. We may say that Nietzsche faced this problem in all of his works, but mainly in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In opposition to Plato, who wanted poets out of his Republic, because art is far from the truth, while philosophy represent the love for truth, Nietzsche, notwithstanding in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, devaluates both poetry and philosophy, is one who recognizes poetry as much as the same as philosophy.

“They (the poets) muddy their waters”, Zarathustra says, even including himself among the poets. Philosophers are “pure receivers.” They have overvalued wisdom in comparison to life.

My Happiness A poem by Nietzsche
*Since I grew weary of the search
I taught myself to find instead
Since cross winds caused my ship to lurch
I sail with all winds straight ahead*

“They all muddy their waters, that they might appear deep,” Zarathustra says, condemning poets’ obscurantism (Z p. 111). But unlike in the immaculate perceivers section, Zarathustra includes himself among those whom he is scolding: “Zarathustra too is a poet”; “who among us poets has not adulterated his wine?” (Z p. 110-111)

With the figures of Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer in mind, Zarathustra’s enigmatic remarks in the section “On Immaculate Perception” are more intelligible. Zarathustra lambasts philosophers (here: ‘pure perceivers’) for their lack of self-knowledge concerning the escapism of their desire for truth. He speaks to an imagined audience of philosophers when he says: Fishman p. 5).

Art is therefore seen as twofold far from the truth, whereas philosophy is the love for truth. Nevertheless, this does not hinder Plato from expressing his philosophical arguments by means of dialogues and myths.

That phrase – “**filth and wretched contentment**” – is a powerful bit of existential critique, often associated with Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It’s not just poetic; it’s philosophical dynamite.

Don Thomas Deere
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Édouard Glissant's Decolonial Landscape and Abyssal Racial Reason

The colonial grab for the surface of the earth marks a long history of racialized dispossession. In this process, colonial powers convert land into territory to be divided up and possessed. Possession for some meaning dispossession for the rest. This history was framed by a discourse of legitimation, projecting lines between white European space and non-white spaces across the globe. With these projections, spaces beyond European lines were empty, free to be possessed and converted into territory. Boaventura de Sousa Santos describes this as the abyssal reason of coloniality, which also ascribes emptiness, a lack of reason and rights, to the people who inhabit these spaces. I refer to this here as *abyssal racial reason* to mark the ways in which the dispossession of land is also intimately connected with the dispossession of the self and subjectivity. The racialized subject is abyssally emptied of determination, while the colonizer takes over the unique power of determination and possession. Here, we also get the generation of a new kind of colonizing subjectivity with the unique power of possessing land and turning it into territory and, also the power of determining and racializing the colonized (non-white) other who is robbed of their own determinacy.

In my presentation, I focus on the question of a decolonial response to this history in its legacy of dispossessing land and self-determination through Édouard Glissant's notion of landscape. Landscape is a fruitful site to think about how an alternative mode of relating to land, self, and environment is formulated in the wake of coloniality. With the notion decolonial landscape, I do not mean one singular or unified landscape but a multiplicity of landscapes and localities from which historically racialized and colonized subjects challenge this abyssal racial regime.

Ryan Drake

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Charm and Counter-Charm in Plato's *Republic*

Plato's most famous and most extreme criticisms of poetry take place primarily in the *Republic*, both in Books 2 and 3, but especially in Book 10. A central notion within this critique is that of the power that poetry has in bringing about a state of enchantment (*kēlēsis*) on the part of the audience, which works to "mutilate" one's thinking capacity. Though Socrates sets his philosophical bent over and against the charms of poetry, with its exploitation of the musical elements of rhythm, harmony, and words to "possess" those exposed to it, he himself claims also to be subject to its enchantments, most notably the poetry of Homer.

I wish to provide, first off, an articulation of just how this stated mutilation constitutes, for Plato, an active incoherence within the soul as informed by the tripartite structure for which Socrates argues. While most enchantments as found in the dialogues are complex in character, poetic possession is especially so, given that it involves not just a submission of the soul's lowest parts to pleasures from which we would flee outside of fiction, but that it also involves special forms of otherness within the soul as part of its overall effect. Dazzled, dazed, and inhabiting the world of another, the soul in the grips of poetry can be bent to hunger for its own suffering, to find beauty therein, and hence to 'aestheticize one's own life,' as G.R.F Ferrari puts it.

Though these observations about Plato's text are not especially novel, what I wish to offer in my paper is a fresh reading of the strategy Socrates proposes for counteracting the seductions of the poetic, even tragic, outlook engendered by mimetic performances. In the middle of Book 10 he insists that both law (*nomos*) and reason (*logos*) are to be utilized as a therapy for those in danger of the soul's submission. Yet this therapy – a sort of *pharmakon* – is unusual from the point of view of the traditional understanding of Socrates' linguistic philosophical practice. He notes that his therapeutic strategy is a form of violence committed upon the soul as a way of 'possessing' the soul's lower parts so as to neutralize them in the face of law and reason. These latter conform to the argument Socrates gives as a way of holding out against poetic enchantments. However, for them to operate, as he says, as a 'countercharm', they must themselves become a kind of music and must be sung ever again if one is to retain possession of one's soul as a cohesive entity. My argument, accordingly, is that if philosophy is to overcome its rival in vying for the souls of the citizenry, philosophy must take on

aspects of its counterpart; it must become, as it were, properly dialectic in charming the soul in a different direction. The question becomes, in turn, not one of submission or dominance within the soul of a healthy individual, but rather a matter of to which powers the soul must render submission.

Robert Earle

Wilson Ethics Fellow & Assistant Professor, University of Northern
Iowa, USA

Classical Rule and Act Utilitarianism: Applying 20th Century Terminology to the Philosophies of Bentham and Mill

Even prior to Richard Brandt's introduction of the "act" versus "rule" utilitarianism terminology in 1959, philosophers had been attributing those positions to the classical utilitarians Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, respectively. Urmson (1953) set the precedent for interpretation of Mill as what we now call a "rule utilitarian" and JJ Smart (1956) followed suit, albeit using the now antiquated terminology of "restricted" (as opposed to "extreme") utilitarianism.

The tradition of considering Bentham to be an act utilitarianism and Mill a rule utilitarianism continues to the present. This holds of the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entries on "Utilitarianism: Act and Rule" and the general "Ethics" entry in that reference collection.

Here, the evidence for those associations (widely recognized to be anachronistic) is scrutinized more closely. In particular, to be discussed here are Bentham's focus on legislative action, and Mill's emphasis on exceptions to rules, such as in his famous cases of withholding information from a "malefactor" or of bad news from someone dangerously ill.

Moreover, inquiry is made into whether the rule and act utilitarianism is a natural distinction, such that it may logically be brought into discussion of previous thinkers. Alternatively, the distinction can be seen as having arisen in a dialectical context, not foreseeable or straightforwardly applicable to previous works within the normative tradition.

Silvia Fazzo

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The Communion of Saints and the Shared Intellect: From Aristotle's Nous to the Experience of Artificial Intelligence

This paper proposes a reinterpretation of the *communio sanctorum* (communion of saints) in light of Aristotle's theory of the *nous*, understood as a shared and participated intellect. In *De anima* III, 5, Aristotle describes the intellect as "separate, impassible, and unmixed," which becomes "in act" through participation. On this reading, the *nous* is not a private faculty but a universal mode of intelligence that individuals access and actualize.

The contemporary experience of artificial intelligence—beyond devices and software—offers a striking analogue: it reveals how intelligence functions as a collective patrimony of humanity, extending across persons, communities, and generations. This shared intellectual experience can be seen as a natural prefiguration or pedagogical step toward higher truths about participation and communion.

In the Catholic Catechism (arts. 946–962), the communion of saints is linked to the Mystical Body of Christ and to the Eucharist as participation in divine life. Yet many faithful construe "Communion" as an individual devotion rather than a shared spiritual reality. By recovering Aristotle's insight into the participatory nature of intellect, we can illuminate how the experience of shared intelligence in our age may prepare human understanding for the theological mystery of the *communio sanctorum*—a reality of unity, participation, and love that transcends human cognition. This convergence between Aristotelian metaphysics, Christian theology, and the epistemology of AI opens new paths for dialogue between philosophy, theology, and education.

Vivian Feldblyum

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An Aristotelian Account of Victim-Blaming

In the modern day, the phenomenon of victim blaming has taken center stage in discourse concerning rape culture, sexual assault, and the more general objectification and subjugation of women in patriarchal culture. However, this phenomenon is wide-ranging, both in the past and present; we have seen people blame victims for poverty, for school shootings, for domestic violence, and even for the genocide.

This paper is an inquiry into the moral psychology of victim blaming. When we use the phrase “victim blaming”, we typically take a critical stance towards the person doing the blaming. The victim blamer is *inappropriately* blaming the victim for their own victimhood, which is a problem because it diverts responsibility for a wrongdoing from the perpetrator to the victim. So, one line of inquiry here concerns delineating which sorts of cases constitute an inappropriate blaming of the victim and why. A second line of inquiry concerns why human beings have a *propensity* to blame the victim – why is victim blaming a recurring phenomenon in the reactions of people to the suffering of their fellow human beings?

My aim in this paper is to sketch out a broadly Aristotelian account of victim-blaming. So, I will answer the two questions above together, and argue that cases of genuine victim-blaming are – on an Aristotelian view – a result of a lack of the virtue of courage on the part of the victim-blamer. Specifically, I will argue that victim-blaming involves reacting to a particular kind of fear having to do with the suffering of others – *eleos* (sympathy or pity) – which Aristotle discusses in his account of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II. On his view, pity is a kind of imaginative fear one feels for another person who is perceived in some sense as a victim.

To that end, I will first explain Aristotle’s account of pity from *Rhetoric* II, and then flesh it out beyond that text by considering the causal role it plays in Aristotle’s philosophy of action. This is crucial because I must explain how an emotion like pity can affect a resulting action (such as victim-blaming). Here, I argue that for Aristotle all emotions – including pity – are desires, which means they can trigger action by way of the faculty of imagination.

In the second part of the paper, I will turn to Aristotle’s account of courage and explain how it links up to the account of pity I have outlined. I will then apply this philosophy of action in an analysis of victim blaming, and argue that victim blaming is a result of lack of courage –

the virtue concerning fear – on the part of the blamer. On Aristotle's account, courage is the mean between two extremes: rashness (lack of fear of things one ought to fear) and cowardice (being ruled by one's fear, even in cases where fear is an appropriate reaction). Following this structure, I argue here that there are *two* kinds of bad cases with victim blaming, one from cowardice and one from rashness.

Nadja Furlan Stante

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Emotion, Gender, and Relationality: From Biblical Narratives to AI-Mediated Life

This paper explores the intersections of emotion, gender, and relationality across historical, theological, and technological contexts, drawing on Christian feminist hermeneutics and theological ecofeminism. The first part analyzes the enduring influence of Cartesian dualism in Western culture and the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has historically structured binary hierarchies – male/rational versus female/emotional – and shaped understandings of moral responsibility, ethical action, and God’s creation. However, biblical narratives reveal a more nuanced interplay of reason and emotion: women such as Deborah, Ruth, and Pharaoh’s daughter demonstrate strategic thinking, moral decisiveness, and emotional intelligence, while men like David openly express grief, longing, and anger. These examples challenge rigid dichotomies and theologically emphasize that the human capacity for empathy, compassion, and ethical action is a gift and expression of the *imago Dei*, transcending gender differences.

The second part situates these insights within contemporary debates on human-technology entanglement. Through the lens of theological ecofeminism, the paper analyzes the figure of the emotional cyborg – humans whose emotional lives are increasingly mediated or simulated by artificial intelligence. In this context, critical questions arise: how are historically ingrained gendered stereotypes of emotion – women as emotional, men as rational – transferred to AI systems that mimic, interpret, or simulate emotions? What are the implications of this transfer for human relationships, empathy, and theologically grounded capacities for compassion? What impact does the hybridization of emotions (human + AI) have on ethical, empathetic, and inclusive practices? How can theological perspectives on the *imago Dei* illuminate questions of empathy and moral responsibility in technologically mediated relationships? More broadly, does technology enhance or erode human capacities for emotional literacy and empathy? How are the boundaries between human and machine, and between rational and emotional dimensions of humanity, being redefined?

By bridging biblical perspectives on emotion with posthumanist critiques of affective computing, the paper highlights continuities and contrasts between historical and emerging frameworks for understanding emotional life. It proposes a reimagined conception of

relationality – one that resists rigid binaries and embraces both human and technological contributions to ethical, empathetic, and inclusive modes of connection, grounded in the theological understanding of humans as created in the image of God.

Asimina Galanopoulou
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Pain as a Disciplinary and Self-Disciplinary Practice in St. Augustine, M. Foucault and Post-Structural Feminist Thought

The presentation will focus on the influence of pain as a disciplinary or a self-disciplinary practice on the formation of the female subjectivity. The analysis of this influence concerns the works of the medieval Christian philosopher Saint Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis, 354-430 AD), the modern philosopher M. Foucault (1926-1984) and the feminist theories that were developed based on the work of M. Foucault (S. Bordo, A.L. Barkty, A. Balsamo).

The medieval philosopher S. Augustine through his work, demonstrates that the experience of physical pain morally elevates the status of women. In Augustine's work, through the martyrdom of Christian women, physical pain is linked to the production of truth, since they bear witness to the Christian faith. In the cases of female Christian martyrs (Perpetua & Felicity) described by Augustine, women demonstrate masculine virtue "virilis virtus" through the experience of physical and mental pain. The martyrs surpassed the model of "feminine weakness", thus transcending gender stereotypes that want women weak and men strong and the equality of men and women is recognized, inaugurating an early feminism. This deconstruction of male and female capabilities occurs at a time when there was social tolerance towards the beating of women by their husbands within the context of the dominus-ancilla marital relationship, making evident the subordination of women and their coercion to patiently experience pain through beatings by their husbands.

M. Foucault in his work connects pain and truth as S. Augustine did in the past. Physical and mental pain coexists with punishment, giving examples from the 17th and 18th centuries when the female body was subjected to torture aimed at the compliance of the subject itself or the purification of society. The legal and penal practices impose power on the body. The 'power-truth relations' are articulated on the body and establish the 'power-knowledge relationship'. Then, the medical-scientific discourse intervenes with the aim of healing the body and the soul. Regulatory practices of confinement and social exclusion, as well as intense medical intervention, are also directed against women with the aim of restricting their sexuality, which is considered pathogenic. The state applies medical pharmacology, standardizes healthy habits, while

science produces discourse about physical pain. These reasons are internalized by women and 'biopolitics' is gradually applied voluntarily to individuals, as if imposed by self-will.

Subsequently, the research demonstrates that post-structuralist feminist discourse was based on Foucault's theory, emphasizing that the woman of the postmodern period voluntarily embeds practices of self-discipline and experience pain with the aim of improving her external appearance (physical exercise, plastic surgery) and experiencing pleasant emotions (Bordo 1993: 143-160). It is thus demonstrated that in postmodernity pain becomes a means of self-formation, empowerment or even self-intentional oppression.

Zoltan Gyenge

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Time, Moment and Eternity Kierkegaard's Theory of Time

“What we call the moment, Plato calls τὸ ἐξαιφνης [the sudden]. (...) Thus understood, the moment is not properly an atom of time but an atom of eternity. It is the first reflection of eternity in time, its first attempt, as it were, at stopping time.” (S. Kierkegaard: *The Concept of Anxiety*, (KW VIII.), Edited and Translated by Reidar Thomte, Princeton University Press, 1980. 88.)

These lines were written by Kierkegaard in his work, 'The Concept of Anxiety'. But what do they mean? It means that, according to Heidegger, time is the “bad conscience of metaphysical systems”. Time is now fundamental (Kant). Or an infinite succession, “unendliches Nacheinandersein” (Hegel)? The existentialist approach, whether it be Sartre, Jaspers or Heidegger, is based on Kierkegaard's concept of time. Without going into detail, Heidegger's conception of time ('Dasein', or 'being-there') is also based on existence in the present moment. The temporal situation of each individual raises the problem of how the totality of time and the timelessness within it affect their existential situation, and how they influence their relationship with themselves and with the outside world. This formulation of the question of time differs radically from previous conceptions (Plato, St. Augustine, Kant, Schelling, and Hegel), but Kierkegaard always defines his own position in relation to them.

Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva

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Ecocide and Epistemicide: The Aral Sea as a Clash of Soviet Technofix and Indigenous Ecological Wisdom

This paper explores the environmental and philosophical implications of the Aral Sea disaster through the lens of ideological conflict between Soviet technocratic rationalism and the indigenous ecological worldview of Central Asian peoples, particularly those historically rooted in the Indo-Iranian cultural sphere now identified as Uzbeks. The Soviet Union's large-scale irrigation projects, driven by a belief in human domination over nature and the pursuit of cotton monoculture, led to one of the worst ecological disasters of the 20th century. This paper argues that the drying of the Aral Sea was not merely an environmental failure but a manifestation of ideological violence – an erasure of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural identity, and sustainable lifeways.

Charles Louis Jayme

Dean of Studies & Vice Rector, San Carlos Seminary College,
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Interconnectedness: A Moral Imperative in the Light of Murray Bookchin's Social Ecology

This paper delves into the concept of interconnectedness through the lens of Murray Bookchin's social ecology. Bookchin emphasizes the interconnectedness of social, ecological, and economic systems, advocating for a holistic understanding of these relationships to address the environmental crises we face today, such as, climate change, biodiversity loss, among others. These are effects from hierarchical and exploitative social structures that alienate us from the natural world and from each other as well. I argue that interconnectedness is not only a foundational aspect of ecological and social systems but also a crucial moral imperative that can guide our interactions with the whole of creation by fostering harmonious relationships not only among human persons but also between humanity and that of the entire ecosphere. This paper further discusses the implications of interconnectedness for ethical decision-making and environmental stewardship, drawing on Bookchin's critiques of capitalism, hierarchy, and individualism. By embracing the interconnectedness of social, ecological, and political factors, this work advocates for a holistic understanding of interconnectedness that can inform sustainable practices, foster community resilience and cultivate an equitable society while nurturing our ecology.

Jomilin John

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Reimagining the Philosophy of Collective Responsibility as Response-able Stakeholderism

Contemporary profit-goal-oriented business culture often presumes a narrow model of human agency: employees are expected to be perpetually available to serve corporate objectives while pursuing individual self-interest within the wage relation. This frame is ethically and ecologically impoverished because it suppresses relations of care and obligation to more-than-human entities—such as environments, infrastructures, and multispecies communities through which business is made possible. Situating this within capitalist imaginaries of the worker as a machine and nature as an externality, the paper critiques dominant notions of collective responsibility toward these entities, drawing on Donna Haraway's relational concept of *response-ability*—the situated transformative capacity to notice and respond within entanglements of humans and nature. The analysis synthesizes parts of business ethics, i.e., labour ethics, stakeholder theory, etc., with environmental ethics to argue for a differentiated approach to accountability.

This critique identifies weaknesses in robust accounts of collective moral agency, such as those associated with Marion Smiley, insofar as they risk reifying “the corporation” as a responsible subject and thereby naturalizing diffuse accountability. Aligning with Max Weber's view that collective responsibility is conceptually unstable—purportedly collective actions typically resolve into patterned aggregates of individual conduct, and groups do not literally form intentions required for action-ascription—the paper shows how corporate cultures nonetheless instrumentalize a demoralizing surrogate of collective responsibility. This dynamic is most evident in greenwashing: under the banner of ‘ecological collective responsibility,’ corporations externally issue false, misleading, unsubstantiated, or inflated claims about the environmental sustainability of their products, services, operations, or overall practices. Internally, individuals who privately recognise such misleading claims are structurally compelled (through hierarchy, incentive design, and reputational threat) to publicly affirm to executive decisions. Here, the “collective” functions less as an agent than as an alibi: a rhetorical technology for laundering accountability while tightening compliance.

In response, the paper proposes ‘*response-able stakeholderism*,’ against the ‘symmetric responsibility’ rhetoric by differentiating obligations by

power, benefit, causal contribution, and practical capability, assigning primary duties to individuals based on their *response-ability* within their spheres, in their different levels of roles they play to causally influence institutions and other collective entities as part of the larger suite of moral responsibilities. We should also recognise the various ways in which we might indirectly shape the state of the world. Institutions and collective entities are not mere mereological compositions of individuals but instruments through which broader ends, such as ecological justice, can be pursued. Even amid challenges in enacting alternative institutions and policies, individuals hold a *response-ability* to prevent aggregate harms and shared culpability by shaping the world directly and indirectly. This approach loosens the grip of human-centred assumptions about agency and value by resisting the narrowing effects of universalising humanist and individual profit-maximising standpoints.

Esma Kayar

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The Methodological Debate between Aristotle and Eubulides

In my presentation, I evaluate Aristotle's logical method by examining the challenges that the Megarian philosopher Eubulides raised against it. I elaborate on my evaluation from two aspects. The first concerns the method itself, and the second addresses how this method relates to the underlying philosophical problem. Plato describes the term *antilogike* as potentially originating with Zeno of Elea. I show that, alongside the *elenchus*, the later improvements of Zenonian method laid the groundwork for self-refuting paradoxes. Plato differentiates his method of dialectic from *antilogike* through a concern for truth. Aristotle, however, believes that Plato's dialectic is insufficient as a method and not able for attaining truth and knowledge. Instead, Aristotle proposes the syllogism and his specific term *antiphrasis* which could be seen as a form of refutation to replace *antilogike* in his account of truth. I assert that Eubulides attacks Aristotle's method and understanding of truth through his paradoxes because Aristotle underrated the importance of self-refutation as it appears in these paradoxes. I will discuss how, behind the method of paradox, there lies the fundamental problem of existence and truth.

Ullrich Kleinhempel

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The Genesis of Hesychasm by the Neoplatonic Reception of Yoga in Antiquity - Common Features, the Reception, and Consequences for Interpretation

For more than a century it is assumed that central features of Hesychasm are derived from Yoga, mediated by Sufism. If Hesychasm and Yoga are understood as systemic complexes of theory and practice – as presented by Palamas – then the agreement between the ‘eight steps of Yoga’, presented by Patanjali, and similar elements of ‘significant practice’ in Hesychasm, are important. Their agreement can be shown to be mediated by Neoplatonic theory, esp. of theurgy – which is to be found in Palamas’ theory of Hesychasm, and in the Vedantic interpretation of Yoga by Shankara, and their respective predecessors. This indicates a reception of the ‘Yogic complex’ by the Neoplatonists, and from here into nascent Hesychasm in Late Antiquity (by conversion or familiarity). Its area is probably the realm of Alexandria, the node of trade and philosophical -spiritual encounters with India.

Essential factors are: the long tradition of encounters with ‘Brahmanic Yogis’ – thus the standard motif – by learned visitors, from Alexander the Great up to the Islamic conquest of Egypt, with affirmation of special closeness between Platonic and Brahmanic philosophies. Cynics and Neopythagoreans were also presented as being close to Brahmanic Yoga, in this context. Plotinus’ high regard for Indian philosophy, and the agreements between Neoplatonism and Vedanta, have been noted. The spiritual practice of Yoga was respected in Greco-Roman society for centuries, and regarded as model. This, together, indicates that the ‘yogic features’ of Hesychasm are not the result of random, pragmatic adoption of some practices, like the breathing method, the inner and outer silent meditation in certain postures, etc., but that they have been adopted and understood as a coherent, significant complex. This was possible on the basis of Neoplatonic understanding of Yoga, and its Hesychast reception. Early Christian testimonies of high esteem for Brahmanism and Yoga, support the assumption of reception into Christian Orthodox spiritual practice and theory. Tantric features in Hesychasm – like ‘mantra payer’ and ideas of ‘energetic centers’ – support the assumption of reception in Late Antiquity, in particular. (The assumption of mediation by Sufism can thus be rejected.)

This process is presented in my dissertation: *Syncretism and the Indian Ocean. The Genesis of Hesychasm by the Neoplatonic Reception of Yoga in Antiquity* (2024). It has implications for the understanding of Hesychasm.

They comprise its historical roots in processes of inter-religious, philosophical, and intercultural encounters and reception, the understanding of Hesychasm as a complex of philosophically (and spiritually) significant practices, and the theological interpretation of elements of Orthodox Hesychasm on these religious and philosophical backgrounds.

Jeffrey Koperski
Professor, Saginaw Valley State University, USA

Skepticism about the Multiverse

The multiverse has become a prominent topic in contemporary physics and philosophy. Eternal inflation posits that while inflation ended in our observable universe, it continues forever in other regions, constantly generating new pocket universes. Combined with the string theory landscape, this framework promises to explain cosmological fine-tuning by realizing different physical constants across universes. Inflation has impressive empirical credentials, successfully predicting specific statistical properties of the cosmic microwave background and explaining observable correlations between causally disconnected regions. However, both philosophical analysis and technical examination reveal severe problems for eternal inflation and the cosmological multiverse it generates. This paper is a survey of those problems.

While objections based on unfalsifiability are common, they get far more attention than they deserve. The inability to test multiverse hypotheses does not make them unscientific, though it remains an explanatory vice. More decisive problems emerge from physics itself. Eternal inflation requires fine-tuning of initial conditions and inflaton potential parameters – one problem it was meant to solve. Fine-tuning is not explained but relocated to the inflationary mechanism itself. The measure problem demonstrates that probability theory fails when dealing with infinite domains, undermining probabilistic explanations of fine-tuning. The Boltzmann brain problem generates a *reductio*: if eternal inflation is true, we are almost certainly unreliable Boltzmann brains rather than standard observers, which would undermine the rationality of our beliefs including belief in the multiverse itself.

Technical problems prove equally serious. The trans-Planckian problem shows that eternal inflation begins from sub-Planckian initial conditions where quantum gravity dominates, yet the models assume classical spacetime. No mechanism explains how quantum fluctuations in the inflaton field transition to the classical stochastic variables required by structure formation. This quantum-to-classical transition is simply presupposed rather than derived from first principles. Recent swampland conjectures from quantum gravity suggest that the stable de Sitter vacua required for eternal inflation may be fundamentally impossible, making the infinite multiverse "an artifact of an inherently ill-posed theory."

These arguments demonstrate that multiverse theories rest on unsubstantiated assumptions and generate conceptual difficulties that would doom purely philosophical proposals. In the end, the multiverse hypothesis should continue to be met with skepticism.

David Laraway

Todd A. Britsch Professor of the Humanities, Brigham Young
University, USA

Factual Belief, Religious Credence, and Unamuno's Puzzle of the Pious Skeptic

Neil Van Leeuwen's *Religion as Make-Believe* (2023) lays out a theory of religion grounded in a distinction between factual beliefs and what he calls religious credences: the former are held involuntarily, are sensitive to evidentiary pressures, provide a substratum for drawing inferences across both religious and non-religious domains, and help explain the actions that an agent undertakes. The latter, in contrast, are better understood as expressing a suite of attitudes toward propositional claims that are akin to the stance one takes up while playing a game of make-believe. That is, one voluntarily entertains propositions bearing religious content as if they were factually true and in so doing gains admittance to a community of believers bound by a common set of attitudes towards shared traditions and practices that supervene upon non-religious factual beliefs but are in critical respects independent of them.

Van Leeuwen argues in passing that a theory of religious rationality that explains how religious adherents can hold mostly true factual beliefs alongside credences that are factually untrue also sheds light on the phenomena of (1) religious hypocrites who falsely represent themselves as holding genuine religious beliefs for reasons of personal gain as well as (2) conflicted or aspirational believers, who are aware that the factual content of their credences is false but nevertheless identify as believers and whose lives are otherwise indistinguishable from their earnest but less enlightened peers. I argue in this paper that while Van Leeuwen offers a mostly satisfying account of the nature of religious credence, he does not fully capture the ways in which members of the latter group's self-identification as religious may be expressed not in spite of their first-order doubts but rather because of them. Such a case is imagined by Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno in his 1931 novella, *San Manuel Bueno, Martyr*, which elaborates what I regard as the Puzzle of the Pious Skeptic. Unamuno's titular protagonist, a parish priest, leads a life that outwardly exemplifies Christian precepts even as he inwardly regards himself as an atheist, unable to assent personally to the religious credences which he explicitly endorses to his followers. Unamuno suggests that the protagonist may actually be mistaken in his second-order beliefs about his own religious credences and that his first-order doubts are not an obstacle to be overcome but instead play a constitutive

role in binding him to a religious community whose credences he does not believe himself to share. Unamuno's framing of the puzzle of the constitutive power of doubt thus exploits crucial aspects of the asymmetry between first-order credences and second-order beliefs about one's credences, suggesting that the satisfaction of the criteria that determine whether one properly belongs to a community of believers or not may be best determined not from a first-person perspective but from a third-person vantage point that is unavailable to the pious skeptic.

Cecilia Li

Assistant Professor, Huron University at Western University, Canada

A Fork in the Road: Politics as the Master Art in Plato's Gorgias

A recurrent theme in Plato's political philosophy is the idea that politics should be the kind of knowledge that will control subordinate forms of expertise and use their products or results to promote the good. In the *Euthydemus*, Socrates claims that it was due to *politikḗ* (identified here with the kingly art) that all the other arts handed over the rule of their own products since it alone knows how to use them (*Euthyd.* 291c7–9). In the *Charmides*, the search for temperance leads to a promising answer in the reflexive 'knowledge of knowledge': a master art fit to oversee all other arts in order to produce an error-free society (*Chrd.* 171d1–172a3). Lastly in the *Statesman*, Socrates compares a ruler to an *architecton*, a master-builder who is not a worker himself but manages subordinate workers by providing understanding rather than manual labour (*Plt.* 259e8, cf. 305c10–d5). This paper argues that we also find this idea in the *Gorgias*, in a striking but neglected passage (*Grg.* 517c7–518a7) where Socrates argues that *politikḗ technḗ* is the art that is "entitled to rule all the other arts and use their products" to tend to the wellbeing of the soul (517e6–518a1). I argue that this characterization of *politikḗ technḗ* is not casual, but the culmination of one important strand of the dialogue's critique of rhetoric: the pseudo-art disrupts the rule of knowledge and the place of truth in political deliberations and decision making.

This interpretation shows that rhetoric is characteristically identified with the particular brand of politics of the successful earlier orators, especially associated with Pericles and Themistocles. Their success lies in using the practice to persuade their audience, not only through dazzling speeches as it is often noted, but through promising and supplying Athenians with what they desire, especially material things (e.g., tribute payments, ships, dockyards, walls) that gratify people's love of money, honour, and victory. The earlier orators accomplish this by actively interfering in the process of political deliberations by competing and besting the advice of experts. And in doing so, rhetoric emerges as a perverse master art: rather than using subordinate forms of expertise to promote the virtuous condition of citizens (as true *politikḗ technḗ* would do), rhetoric subordinates them for the sake of promoting the orators' own private good. In this way, the earlier orators have brought Athens to its spiritual ruin by satisfying and strengthening its appetites. True politics, then, must correct this and become the 'highest science'—a

master art fit to preside over all the arts and use them to promote the wellbeing of the soul. This interpretation will also highlight the more overtly political doctrines of the dialogue, ones that we see Plato testing in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*, and develop in substantial detail in the *Statesman*.

Jennifer Lockhart
Associate Professor, Auburn University, USA

The Role of Beauty in Aristotle's Ethics

This paper examines Aristotle's concept of the *kalon* (often translated as the "noble" or "fine"), which motivates virtuous action in his ethics. I argue against Kantian interpretations that equate acting "for the sake of the *kalon*" with acting "for duty's sake." Instead, I contend that the *kalon* as a motive differs fundamentally from duty because of its connections to erotic desire and its non-juridical nature. I suggest that misunderstanding this distinction has led to an inappropriate "moralization" of Aristotelian ethics. By recovering the dimension of the *kalon* that relates to beauty, we can better understand virtuous motivation in Aristotle. Finally, I address concerns that avoiding moralization might lead to problematic "aestheticization" of virtue.

Thomas Lockhart

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&

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Constitutivism and the Goodness-fixing Kind Objection

Constitutivism is the view that an account of what a thing is yields those normative standards to which that thing is by nature subject. Constitutivists about ethics often proceed by attempting to apply this idea to the notion of action (or agency), arguing that an account of action (or agency) can itself yield normative standards by which we may determine whether some action (or exercise of agency) is good. One might object to this by arguing that action (or agency) itself is not susceptible to an account of its nature such that this account yields normative standards. On this objection, some event either is or is not an action (an exercise of agency); there is no sense in saying that one action is, or is not, better, qua action, than another. In other words, action is not what Judith Jarvis Thompson calls a goodness-fixing kind. In this paper, we explore the merits of this Thomsonian-style objection and consider two responses: one on behalf of Kantian constitutivism (as typified by the work of Christine Korsgaard) and the other on behalf of Neo-Aristotelian constitutivism (as typified by the work of Philippa Foot). We argue for the superiority of the Neo-Aristotelian response. Essentially, we agree that action is not a goodness-fixing kind, but, we argue, following the Neo-Aristotelian, human action is. We conclude by considering the possibility that whereas action must be indexed to the life form of human beings in order to be a goodness-fixing kind, thought, more generally, can be a goodness-fixing kind without reference to the life form of human beings.

Xavier Mao

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A Critique of MacIntyre's after Virtue

This paper offers a critical examination of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981), one of the most influential works in modern moral and political philosophy. It explores MacIntyre's diagnosis of the moral disintegration of modernity, his critique of emotivism and Enlightenment rationalism, and his proposal to revive Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue ethics grounded in tradition and communal practice. MacIntyre argues that the Enlightenment project's attempt to base morality on reason alone, detached from teleology and history, has led to moral incoherence and relativism. His rejection of emotivism exposes the loss of shared moral meaning and the rise of instrumental and manipulative moral discourse in modern bureaucratic and managerial culture. As a remedy, MacIntyre calls for a return to the virtues as dispositions cultivated within social practices that pursue internal goods and sustain moral identity through narrative unity and tradition. The paper also engages critical responses by Henryk Skolimowski, Andrew Mason, and Robert Wokler, assessing both the strengths and limitations of MacIntyre's communitarian vision. It concludes that while his vision of moral renewal through local, tradition-based communities may seem utopian in pluralistic societies, MacIntyre's critique of modern moral individualism and his call for a recovery of virtue and shared moral purpose remain profoundly relevant to contemporary ethical thought.

Matt Matherne

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The Epistemic Value of Outsourcing to AI

You are probably outsourcing some of your cognitive activities to AI. As AI use becomes more widespread, many will outsource more and more of their cognitive activities to AI. A natural question arises about the value of increased outsourcing: Will it be good for us? This paper asks an epistemic version of this question: Will increased outsourcing be epistemically good for us?

However, this paper asks the question under an assumption. Suppose AI developers achieve the goal of creating AI systems that are more accurate and efficient than humans in most domains. Under these conditions, is it epistemically good for us to outsource to AI?

If truth is the only fundamental epistemic value, then it seems that it will only be epistemically good for us to outsource to AI, since under these conditions we will likely obtain the truth more efficiently by outsourcing. Call the view that truth is the only fundamental epistemic value Veritism. Veritism seems to entail that maximal outsourcing to a more reliable and efficient source will only be epistemically good for us.

Epistemologists have recently posed the following challenge to Veritism by amending Nozick's experience machine. Suppose that instead of an experience machine there is a *true belief machine* that produces only true beliefs. You have access to the machine and are able to outsource your cognitive tasks to it. Will it be epistemically good for you to do so? If Veritism is true, it is hard to see what we will lose epistemically by outsourcing. You get access to all the true beliefs you want, after all! Under our assumption, AI will be akin to the true belief machine insofar as it is more accurate and efficient than most humans. If truth is all that matters epistemically, then why not outsource?

Critics of Veritism argue that there is some epistemic good that is missing in the true belief machine thought experiment. What epistemic good is missing? One answer is that what we really want is to obtain the truth *autonomously*, not passively via the true belief machine. Another answer is that what we really want is *cognitive contact with reality*. I argue that each answer is promising yet faces lingering worries, especially when applied to outsourcing to AI: Does intellectual autonomy bear fundamental epistemic value? Can AI give us cognitive contact with reality in many domains of inquiry?

What epistemic good is missing by relying on the true belief machine and by maximally outsourcing to AI? For Aristotle, *excellent rational*

activity is the fundamental epistemic good. I develop an Aristotelian theory of epistemic value under which the fundamental epistemic good is not a state such as true belief but is an epistemic activity. Under this Aristotelian conception of epistemic value, it will not be epistemically good for us to maximally outsource to AI, since we will fail to get what is fundamentally epistemically valuable: excellent rational activity.

Juanita Meyer

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Ethics of Being: Towards a Theological Framework for Pastoral and Spiritual Care in Africa

Across the world, increasing attention is being paid to the integration of ethical principles in professional practice, which reflects a growing awareness that ethical conduct is essential to prevent harm and ensure the responsible care of those who depend on professional services. In higher education, researchers are expected to reflect critically on potential risks their studies may pose to participants and research contexts, while accredited Research Ethics Committees, such as those recognised by the National Health Research and Ethics Committee (NHREC) in South Africa, provide oversight and guidance. Within the mental health professions, similar sensitivity applies. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) provide accreditation to statutory bodies, like the Board of Psychology South Africa, which regulates and monitors the practices of psychologists, psychometrists and counsellors to ensure that their conduct meets accepted ethical standards.

Pastoral or spiritual care in Africa, however, stands in stark contrast to these regulated professions. Ministers, pastors, faith workers and spiritual caregivers provide care in deeply personal and often diverse and complex contexts, yet their work is not standardised or monitored by any statutory body. In the absence of a shared theological ethical framework, many turn to secular or psychological models for ethical conduct that only partially address the spiritual and moral nature of faith-based care within diverse cultural settings (Lartey 2003 and Osmer 2008). As a result, caregivers often navigate ethical dilemmas in isolation, drawing from personal conviction rather than from a coherent pastoral theological ethic that links moral responsibility with spiritual personhood.

Recent scandals involving religious leaders who have exploited or harmed those in their care have underscored this ethical crisis. Reports of manipulation, coercive financial practices and even sexual misconduct (The Guardian 2025; Commission for Gender Equality 2025) highlight the need for ethical accountability within religious contexts. Yet, by virtue of the right to freedom of religion and the inherent diversity of belief, the ethical accountability of pastoral caregivers cannot be measured by universal or secular frameworks, since their moral foundation is fundamentally theological rather than philosophical.

Secular ethics rest on principles of autonomy, rationality and universal applicability, whereas pastoral ethics arise from a faith-based understanding of personhood in relationship with God. Ethical responsibility, in this sense, is concerned with moral and spiritual formation shaped by calling and compassion (Browning 1996; Swinton and Mowat 2006) and embodies integrity, humility and relational presence as expressions of divine relationality (Lartey 2003; Louw 2012).

Within African and intercultural contexts, this distinction is even more significant, as moral discernment is embedded in communal frameworks such as *Ubuntu*, where ethical responsibility is rooted in sacred relationships and shared humanity (Mbiti 1990; Tutu 1999). A theological framework for a pastoral ethics of care should therefore transcend universal regulation and express an incarnational, contextual and faith-informed approach that unites spirituality, personhood and community.

This paper proposes a theology of ethics centred on the concept of *pastoribus* (Latin for 'concerning the shepherd'), which proposes that ethical pastoral caregiving depends less on correct actions than on embodying a theology of being (see Louw 2012; Van Deusen Hunsinger 2015; White 2013) as exemplified in the ministry of Jesus Christ whose body of ethics was shaped by compassion and relational presence rather than institutional authority. Drawing on African, Christian and interreligious wisdom, this paper calls for a contextual pastoral theology that restores accountability, honours relational integrity and reclaims care as not merely what we do, but who we are (Hinga 1999; Lartey 2003; Louw 2012).

Emese Mogyorodi

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The Pursuit of Truth and the “Usefulness” of Greek *Philosophia* in Modern Democracy

The paper examines the standards Greek philosophers have handed down to us for the scientific pursuit of truth as a unique human activity, in view of the growing support of STEM disciplines at the expense of the humanities in general (philosophy in particular) as well as foundational science research, since they are allegedly less (or not at all) "useful". The central issue is also highly relevant in view of current concerns about new phenomena arising from the widespread use of social media, such as fake news, conspiracy theories and fact-checking, echo chamber, confirmation bias, or epistemic subjectivism ("this is your opinion"). Does truth still matter for us? Is it a question of mere crowd-sourcing and/or power? How can philosophy, a theoretical activity by definition, survive in the modern world, where production and practical usefulness serve as ultimate standards of value in the eyes of policy makers, and when its classic concern, the pursuit of truth, is undergoing constant erosion?

Starting from the Platonic-Aristotelian concept of *philosophia*, the paper examines its prehistory and roots (in Pythagoras and Heraclitus) and demonstrates its continuity from Socrates to Plato and Aristotle. It argues that the Greek concept of *philosophia* not only laid the methodological foundations for scientific search, but also carried existential and value dimensions. First, its main concern was not intervention in nature and its manipulation or control, but gaining knowledge for its own sake, understood to change and morally improve the knower while maximizing their individual freedom. Second, by raising awareness that *sophia* is a divine privilege and human knowledge has intrinsic limitations, it laid the foundations of critical thought as a prerequisite for any genuine scientific pursuit. Last but not least, it contributed thereby to the rise and sustenance of democracy. Individuals truly aware of the fallibility of their opinions were naturally open to exposing their conceptions and discuss them with others while respecting theirs. Although an individual's freedom might thus occur to be jeopardized, societal liberty grows. For, unlike individuals encapsulated in echo chambers, citizens can exercise their freedom in community and grow together while approaching truth.

The paper concludes that in a democracy, the practice of philosophy and science in the complex Greek sense represented by *philosophia* is not

simply "useful", but vital, while underlining the primary responsibility of scientists and philosophers in pursuing and promoting it in its original sense.

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Environmental Philosophies of Some South American Indigenous Peoples: Conflict, Mestizaje, and Cosmopolitics

In my paper, I examine the environmental philosophies of two South American Indigenous peoples: the Yanomami (from Southern Venezuela and Northern Brazil) and the Quechua (from the Andean highlands of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia). I advance four main theses:

1. Contrary to common assumptions about Indigenous environmental philosophy, both Yanomami and Quechua philosophies incorporate conflict and chaos. This view stems from their understanding of the cosmos as intrinsically chaotic, composed of a web of human and other-than-human persons whose intentions frequently conflict.
2. Yanomami and Quechua environmental philosophies are "mestiza" philosophies, as they acknowledge and integrate the inescapable intertwining of contemporary Latin American Indigenous culture and beliefs with the ideas and practices imposed by European colonizers. This approach seeks not to isolate what is purely Indigenous but rather to establish a dialogue between Indigenous and colonizing worldviews.
3. These philosophies champion the concept of "diversality," a term coined by Latin American liberation philosophy. Diversality offers an alternative to the Western philosophical idea of universality, which often seeks "thinking from nowhere" to find universal truths by eliminating situatedness. In this environmental context, genuine universality is conceived as a comprehensive dialogue that considers multiple competing perspectives:
 - a. The views of various other-than-human beings (earth beings and non-human animals).
 - b. The potentially diverse and sometimes opposing views of Indigenous individuals, including those influenced by the invading worldview.
 - c. The perspectives of non-Indigenous peoples.
4. Inclusive Cosmopolitics: Finally, these environmental philosophies embody a specific type of ethnopolitics: an inclusive

cosmopolitics. This practice represents a diverse and inclusive political model, as it includes non-human persons into political deliberation.

Method and Sources

My approach is ethnographically inspired, and it draws on the following core sources:

1. *The Falling Sky*, a collaboration between Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa and French anthropologist Bruce Albert.
2. *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds* by Peruvian anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena, which focuses on Quechua environmental philosophy as articulated by shamans Mariano and Nazario Turpo.
3. *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* by Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

Marta Nagy

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Anytime, Anything, Anyone - Forms of Apparent Reality in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the Phenomenon of Deepfakes

“The Greeks were both a politically minded and a litigious race, and the arts of speech were as useful a passport to influence with them as they are in a modern democracy” (Ross 2005, 284).

This is how David Ross begins his analysis of the chapter on rhetoric and politics in Aristotle's work. Aristotle considers rhetoric to be a skill that reveals the possible ways of persuasion for any given subject. The components of persuasion are the argument, the character of the speaker, and the emotions of the audience. Rhetoric deals with themes that are open to discussions and subject to consideration, and it addresses people who are unable to follow a lengthy argument. Therefore, it deals with probable things (since certainties are not subject to deliberation), uses short conclusions, and, when it uses premises that are likely to be accepted by its audience, it considers them accepted rather than deriving them from primary principles. Today, speakers may rely more on their own natural talents and experiences, although rhetoric can still dazzle audiences just as it did in the past. These people, who were persuaded in such manners, are more ashamed of this outcome than to be interested in finding out what tricks were used to deceive them. This is also the secret of the deepfake phenomenon. There is another essential element in the art of persuasion: the question of falsehood and credibility. We can very easily formulate our arguments by concealing their cause, purpose, and method. Thus, although the argument becomes false without the recipient noticing this. Based on the above-described processes, we can also say that deepfake is a probable and very dangerous method of rhetorical persuasion, as the line between fact and fiction becomes blurred. The fact that falsification is relatively easy to conceal, technically feasible, and difficult to detect makes content modification convincing, credible, and reliable, which also reduces our vigilance, and in fact, by contributing to the interaction during communication, the recipient actually approves and can even applaud the lie. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle reveals the attributes of authenticity in communication between people, while deepfake creates authenticity through technological systems. If the truth perceived by the recipient is supported by facts and data, provided by technology, in a medium, situation, and environment of perception (both sensory and cognitive) which the recipient currently trusts, then the perceived truth will be considered authentic. Deep fakes can have

serious negative consequences for democracies: created and curated deep fake news reports may be intended to damage the reputation of certain individuals, depict false events (e.g., fake terrorist attacks), or influence democratic processes such as election campaigns or other socially significant events. Deepfakes can serve as a catalyst for undermining trust in political institutions and deepening divisions between social groups, or when used by hostile governments, these can threaten national security or international relations. My presentation analyses ancient and modern parallels of the manifestations of apparent reality, serving as a warning of the dangers of accepting apparent probabilities without critical thinking.

Xavier Pavie

Professor, ESSEC Business School, France

From Subject to Citizen-Actor: Reinventing Democracy through Civic Innovation and Creative Resistance

The paper examines the transformation of the concept of the citizen, beginning with its Latin origins in *civis* and *civitas*, terms that describe an inhabitant with rights within a political community, and evolving into the modern idea of an engaged participant in public life. In ancient Greece, the citizen (*polites*) was a free individual who actively took part in city affairs, particularly through assemblies like the *ecclésia*, which embodied the principle of *isonomia*, or equality before the law. In Rome, citizenship was a legal status that granted civil and political rights, initially limited but later expanded to all free men in the Empire. The Enlightenment, particularly through the work of Rousseau, redefined citizenship as active involvement in shaping the general will, distinguishing the passive subject from the sovereign citizen who realizes political freedom through participation.

Citizen innovation emerges as a response to the shortcomings of traditional political systems, introducing initiatives that strengthen democratic participation, promote the common good, and foster inclusion. These innovations take various forms, such as participatory budgets, cooperatives, and collaborative digital platforms, all of which emphasize transparency, accessibility, and the empowerment of individuals as active members of their communities. Historical examples, like medieval communes and revolutionary clubs, demonstrate how civil society has consistently created alternative governance models, while contemporary movements, such as civil rights campaigns and local currencies, show how collective action can reshape power dynamics.

Michel Foucault's analysis of power as a relational and fluid force, rather than a fixed structure, provides a critical lens for understanding these developments. He argues that citizen innovations represent forms of resistance to the excesses of political rationality and institutional domination. Whether in solidarity-based finance, community-run clinics, or alternative education models, these initiatives challenge the concrete effects of power, such as economic monopolies, exploitative systems, and restrictive social norms. Foucault identifies three key areas of struggle: resistance to domination, opposition to exploitation, and the rejection of constraints on individual autonomy.

John Dewey's philosophy further illuminates the significance of these innovations by framing democracy as a way of life rather than merely a system of governance. For Dewey, democracy thrives on active participation, open communication, and continuous experimentation. Citizen-led projects embody this pragmatic approach, treating democracy as an evolving process where solutions are tested, evaluated, and refined through collective experience.

The purpose is to highlight the shift from viewing citizens as passive subjects to recognizing them as agents of change. By drawing on Rousseau's vision of popular sovereignty, Foucault's critique of power, and Dewey's experimental democracy, it illustrates how grassroots initiatives reimagine politics. These efforts demonstrate that democracy is not confined to formal institutions but is alive in everyday actions that prioritize human dignity, transparency, and shared responsibility. They invite a rethinking of power as a collective capacity to create a more just and inclusive society.

Alina Pelteacu

PhD Student, University of Bucharest, Romania

Augustine's Theological Hermeneutics of Incarnation: A Paradigm for Healing in the Era of Exarnation

Augustine's quest for truth, as vividly articulated in his Confessions, is deeply connected to his exploration of the meaning of human existence—a challenge the bishop of Hippo consistently addressed throughout his work. This paper investigates a fundamental aspect of human existence that Augustine emphasised: the incarnation of the spiritual, encapsulated in the claim by which Christianity stands “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14). It particularly considers the relevance of Augustine's perspective on human nature in the 21st century, especially in an era characterised by exarnation, as evidenced by the increasing digitalisation of our bodies and the virtualisation of communication and community.

This paper advocates for a return to Augustine, who sought to explain human nature as an integral unity of body and soul within his theological hermeneutics of incarnation. He argued that our task is to make the supersensible sensible. To elaborate on this idea, the discussion engages with Richard Kearney's concept of “carnal hermeneutics”, which emphasises the importance of the body and the corporeal, particularly in incarnating the spiritual. This dialogue is further enriched by John Panteleimon Manoussakis's theological hermeneutics of incarnation and his notion of “conversion to the flesh”, which he introduces in the context of Augustine's Confessions as a third form of conversion. This complements the well-established conversions of the mind and heart. Therefore, the incarnation of the spiritual emerges as the recommended therapeutic approach.

The first section explores the principles of carnal hermeneutics in relation to Augustine's reflections on humanity being created in the image of God and the location of that image within humans. Although Augustine argued that this image exists solely “in the mind alone”, he also called for a return to our hearts, where he considered the image of God resides. This raises a pertinent question: Did Augustine contradict himself regarding the location of the divine image? Can it coexist in both the mind and the heart? The subsequent section addresses these apparent contradictions, aiming to identify the core qualities of the mind and heart in which the Doctor of the Church recognised the divine image. This approach emphasises Augustine's focus on the physical body and its vital role in embodying the spiritual. Spiritualizing the body does not

provide a resolution, but complicates the issue further. The paper concludes that a more profound understanding of the relationship between body and spirit is essential in contemporary discussions. Ultimately, healing can be found and achieved through descending into the corporeal, which involves incarnating the spirit rather than attempting to spiritualize the flesh.

Samuel Piccolo

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From Anxiety to Wonder: Aristotelian and Native American Philosophy

This article proposes a dialogue between Native American and Aristotelian traditions on philosophic wonder.

Since the very beginning of the *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle writes that “it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize,” the Aristotelian tradition has placed an attitude of amazement at the world’s intelligibility at the core of our approach to it. From Thomas Aquinas to Alasdair MacIntyre, to David Roochnik and Maria Balaska, Aristotelian wonder has rejected accounts of the world that render it fundamentally disordered or unknowable, or only worth knowing insofar as we might dominate and control it.

Most work in philosophy and political theory involving Native American traditions has focused on imperial elements of Western political philosophy—ones that seek or justify that domination and control—and Native reactions to it. This focus has brought with it a certain anxiety about power and domination, which often is intensified by more general fears of environmental or political apocalypse. Drawing on contemporary Native American philosophers such as Vine Deloria Jr. and John Borrows, I argue that such a fearful anxiety—of colonial history, degradation of nature, and positive philosophy more generally—is only a small part of Native thinking. A close look at their work alongside the prophetic and spiritual traditions of Native peoples reveals any anxiety is complimented by an attitude of wonder at the world’s intelligibility and the presence of positive moral meaning within it. Engaging cross-culturally therefore requires looking beyond the anxiety of post-colonial or anti-imperial analysis. I suggest that we might look to the sense of philosophic wonder in Aristotle’s texts and the tradition he inspires to find a partner for Native traditions.

The paper has four main parts. First, I briefly outline the tenor of anxiety about power that I see in much of the existing work on Native American politics and philosophy. Second, I draw from a range of contemporary Native scholars to describe how a sense of philosophic wonder manifests in North American Indigenous traditions. Third, I argue that wonder is likewise an essential element in the Aristotelian tradition, and Aristotelians demonstrate a similar form of it to the Native Americans of the preceding section. Finally, I conclude with a full section that suggests a Native-Aristotelian fusion might helpfully contrast to a

more dominant generalized anxiety today. I argue that this attitude of wonder offers us an opportunity to break free from more materialistic or will-to-power approaches to the world, and calls us to have a certain faith or hope for relief from any given set of historical circumstances.

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The Philosophy of Multilevel Reality and the Morphosynthetic Method: A New Approach to Hegel's Theoretical Works

Hegel's major theoretical (non-historical) works, published by him ("Phenomenology of Spirit," "Science of Logic," "Encyclopedia") are explored from the perspective of the philosophy of multilevel reality and using the new author's method, called morphosynthesis. The *philosophy of multilevel reality* asserts that there is an ontological structure of reality, as a hierarchy of its domains; each higher level is more complex than the lower one, is supported by it, but possesses new properties and laws. The *morphosynthetic method* iteratively analyzes the structures of complex works, constructs appropriate graphical representations (mostly by hierarchical networks or diagrams of concentric circles), which allow hermeneutic syntheses of the meanings of the isolated or ensembles of works addressed, as well as transformations of the graphical structures.

It is shown that Hegel's works share this multilevel philosophy, both explicitly and through their structure. A triangular modular and a multi-level organization of the works is highlighted. The ternary microstructure corresponds to the dialectical epistemological relationship of thesis-antithesis-synthesis or the ontological interaction of being-nothingness-becoming. The multi-level macrostructure reflects the stages of human consciousness and those of natural or social reality. This leads to intense correspondences between these structures, revealing new meanings and allowing for new graphic representations.

Finally, an "aesthetic" structure of the works can also be detected, through certain relationships between their parts, in accordance with the Pythagorean "golden section", which could indicate Hegel's desire to fuse the Christian trinity with the ancient Hellenic beauty. This is also evident in his union between the metaphysical ontology of Aristotle and of scholastics, with Plato's dialectics.

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Buddhism and A.I. Grief Bots: Heideggerian Thanatology Perspectives

This is a thanatology paper that pursues the concept of death and dying from the East-West, particularly Buddhist and Heideggerian, perspectives. In view of this, I will explore the recent developments in technology particularly A.I. Grief Bots. These A.I. grief bots replicate personalities, and memories of the deceased, offering digital accessibility after death. Leong (2024) claims that there is a need to probe A.I.'s potential to divorce us from our humanity with grief tech raising significant issues that bear on what it means to be human, specifically implicating our embodiment, relationality, finitude, and death. At first glance, A.I. Grief Bots (Seancè A.I., Hereafter A.I., Grief Tech A.I.) seem to help us cope with our grief. But do they really offer compassion? How does A.I. Grief Bots address the essence of being human, particularly our temporality, authenticity, and finitude? How does the Buddhist three marks of existence address this issue? It is in facing these questions that this proposal is more than just a comparative philosophical approach. Apart from revisiting these core Buddhist teachings, I will attempt to reframe these basic Buddhist principles to accommodate the latest developments of A.I. Grief Bots.

It is here that I return to the Buddhist three marks of existence namely, suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anatta*). How does the Buddhist three marks of existence address this issue? Apart from revisiting these core Buddhist teachings, I will attempt to reframe these basic Buddhist principles to accommodate the latest developments of A.I. Grief Bots. Further, I will revisit Heidegger's concept of temporality and death in *Being and Time* and continue with his later works particularly on his *Question Concerning Technology* where he claims that man himself has become a standing-reserve, a thing to be manipulated and formed rather than considered for its true nature, for its own intrinsic value. This insight impacts this paper as it aligns Heideggerian views on the human person in light of the recent developments of technology, such as A.I. grief bots.

Thus, Heidegger is relevant in this endeavor because he posits an understanding of our Being-in-the world, our temporality and facticity and in the process demystifying death moving forward in spite of the challenges of impermanence as well as the current and emerging technologies of our time. It will challenge and reframe Buddhist thought

through a Heideggerian thanatology framework to accommodate recent developments in technology.

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Family, Forgiveness, and Justice: Challenging the Moral Obligation to Forgive in Families

The family occupies a unique position in moral philosophy at the peculiar intersection of identity, dependency, and permanence as both the primary site of intimate human relationships and a fundamental social institution. Unlike friendships or professional relationships, family membership is usually involuntary, enduring, and constitutive of one's identity. These characteristics create strong psychological and social pressures to preserve the cohesiveness of the family at any cost. This paper examines a pervasive yet undertheorized social norm governing family relations: the normative expectation that family members must forgive one another, regardless of the severity of wrongdoing, the presence of an apology, or the impact on the victim's autonomy. I term this unyielding moral demand, unique to kinship relations within the family, the "Forgiveness Imperative". I argue that this imperative should be understood as a socially embedded norm that constitutes familial roles and relations, regulates permissible emotional responses, and redistributes moral responsibility within the family as a collective agent, thereby making it a proper object of social-ontological analysis. Furthermore, by denying victims legitimate moral recourse, suppressing dissent, and potentially perpetuating cycles of abuse, the Forgiveness Imperative can actually work as a mechanism of perpetuating injustice.

After defining forgiveness, I discuss the concept of the Forgiveness Imperative and introduce evidence of its operation within families. I then analyze the ethical and psychological consequences for personal well-being and agency that result from this imperative's enforcement. Finally, I examine instances of what is referred to in specialized literature as "the unforgivable" before addressing potential objections to my argument. Throughout, I demonstrate that unconditional familial forgiveness is neither psychologically sustainable nor ethically defensible. The paper concludes that while forgiveness may remain a moral good in a number of familial contexts, it should be reconceptualized as a supererogatory act rather than an obligatory one, particularly in cases involving serious harm, the absence of repentance, or ongoing abuse. In developing my account of forgiveness, I shall discuss the works of Charles Griswold (2007), Cheshire Calhoun (1992), Pamela Hieronymi (2001), and Jeffrie Murphy (1988), and differentiate my approach from theirs.

The argument to be pursued in this paper is outlined as follows:

(P1) Within familial groups, there exists a pervasive, often implicit, normative expectation that forgiveness be extended by the injured party, irrespective of the wrongdoer's expression of remorse or efforts toward reparation, which I term the "Forgiveness Imperative".

(P2) The family collective, through its overt or subtle mechanisms, frequently frames the injured member's withholding of forgiveness not merely as a personal choice, but as morally objectionable or as evidence of psychological maladjustment.

(P3) A sustained failure to forgive is widely perceived as directly undermining the cohesion and structural integrity of the familial unit and as jeopardizing the individual's established identity and sense of affiliation within that specific group.

Therefore, the Forgiveness Imperative, by compelling forgiveness unconditionally, stigmatizing its refusal, and tying it to familial stability and personal belonging, compromises the victim's agency and distorts the ethical nature of forgiveness, necessitating a critical re-evaluation of its normative force.

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The Unheard Cry of Laocoön

The multi-volume "*Cyclopaedia; Universal Dictionary of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature*" by Abraham Rees (1734-1825), appeared serially between 1802-1820, showed finally six volumes of plates including an atlas in addition to the 39 volumes of written text. About 1814, maybe in 1815, William Blake was commissioned to copy and engrave sheets of sculptures for this edition. Two engraved sheets with several sculptures were accepted and published in 1816. Among these copies was the group of figures of the Hellenistic Laocoön, which was familiar to the public. Since Blake never left England throughout his life to travel to Italy and study and copy the sculptures and frescoes there, as was customary among artists, he had a plaster cast of the group for his engraving at the Royal Academy in London.

Blake, however, did not see in this group of figures the superficial, what is obvious to everyone, the tragic story of Laocoön, but looked behind it. He is said to have later expressed himself to Samuel Palmer, British landscape painter, draughtsman, and etcher of Romantic period, that this group of figures was a confession of faith for him. Ten years later he engraved his own sheet of Laocoön, in which he framed the group of figures with his own texts. Less well known is that a pen and ink drawing with the same theme, with only a single line of text, was made by Blake, but in a free version, around 1825. My presentation is about this lesser-known graphic. In this free version, William Blake let Laocoön stand powerfully in an upright position, his right foot firmly anchored to the earth, his left slightly raised, his arms stretched in the air. His body is dressed in a flowing robe, one of the two snakes winds around his waist. To his left and right are the two boys, whose arms Laocoön also holds, or are they supporting him? Above the head of Laocoön are the heads of the two snakes with manes. Blake sticks to the text of Virgil "... *iubaeque sanguineae superant undas* ..." The head of Laocoön is slightly bent to the right side, his mouth is open for a silent scream

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Fate without Fatalism: On the Absence of Resignation in Marcus Aurelius' Meditations

Walter Kaufmann famously stated that Nietzsche's books are easier to read but harder to understand than those of almost any other philosopher. I argue that such a claim could likewise apply to Marcus Aurelius. The *Meditations* is at once one of the most accessible philosophical texts and at the same time, one of the easiest texts to misread. Pierre Hadot has made this point in respect to the failure to understand the genre of the work; he argues that the text of the *Meditations* needs be approached as a text in the "Spiritual Exercises" traditions, not as a text of historical psychology. In this paper, I will be applying Hadot's approach to the topic of fate and fatalism in the *Meditations*. I will show that, despite numerous passages that appear dour and defeatist, an outlook not inconsistent with elements of the emperor's troubled historical biography, a careful reading and reflection on the text shows that fate does not imply fatalism but freedom. Moreover, following the spirit of the early Stoics, I argue that Marcus' Stoicism is not only free from resignation and pessimism but entails a vigorous concept of agency and empowerment.

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Local Policies on Religious Minorities: Practical Experiences Applied in Spain

Western democratic societies manage cultural diversity insufficiently and religious affiliation continues to be a factor of social and political relevance. Religious minorities are increasingly present in urban spaces, and their demands and needs must be accommodated also at the local level to make freedom of religion effective. However, local institutions often lack the powers or the ideas to give a positive response to the religious diversity of their populations. Indeed, local entities must be considered and enhanced as active institutions for the promotion and protection of religious diversity.

This makes it necessary to study and develop specific policies that can contribute to harmonious citizen coexistence in diversity and respect for the rights of all, including freedom of religion in all its forms. Such is the purpose of the Municipalities for Tolerance program, a recent initiative that has begun to be implemented in various municipalities in Spain and could serve as an example for replication in other European countries. This program is developed in cooperation between the Spanish government, the Federation of Spanish Provinces and Municipalities and the University. These developments and instruments are being tested in Spain with the aim to support local governments in managing religious diversity. This initiative offers the city councils additional tools for a positive and inclusive policy regarding religious minorities and eventually, it could also be exported for the benefit of religious minorities in other European countries.

The first purpose of this paper is to present the theoretical and practical tools designed and applied to date in Spain on the topic and to receive expert input from other countries or contexts. A second objective is to lay the groundwork for an international research project that would lead to an extension of a similar model to other European countries. This requires first identifying academic and political institutions interested in participating in such a future European project.

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Belief Quotient as the Matrix of Doxastic Intelligence

In 2001 I defined Belief Quotient as Justified belief-decisions (JBD), now I would like to propose a comprehensive definition: BQ as the Matrix of Doxastic Intelligence. IQ defines cognitive intelligence as a ratio of one's mental age to one's chronological age (Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, 1916). EQ defines emotional intelligence as measure of interpersonal and intrapersonal competence (Daniel Goleman, 1995). BQ aims to represent Doxastic intelligence, as the strength and quality of justifications for decisions for accepting or rejecting certain beliefs. For (1) there are beliefs (roses are red), and there are volitional beliefs (choose to believe in democracy); (2) There are beliefs (I see the color blue), and there are intelligent beliefs ($2+2=4$), (3) there are beliefs, and there are decisions attached to beliefs. Some beliefs we have to believe, (the sky is blue), some believes we choose to believe (I choose to believe that governments are necessary), some beliefs require no intelligence (the sky is blue), some beliefs require intelligence ($2+2=4$). Most beliefs are about what we believe, based on whether what we believe is true or false. However, some beliefs are based on why we believe in what we believe, not whether what we believe is true or false. Beliefs related to God, freedom and the existential self are beliefs related to why we choose to believe or why we choose not to believe. This requires intelligence to ascertain justification as to why one accepts or reject certain beliefs. The Justification and veracity of whether what we believe about God, freedom and the existential self is epistemic matter. The justification and veracity for why we believe in God freedom and the existential self is an existential matter. One is a choice over whether what one believes (God, freedom and the existential self) is true or false. The other is a decision as to why we decide to believe or disbelieve in God, freedom and the existential self. Epistemic truth is usually tied up with the veracity of whether justification/evidence, is true or false, however existential truth is tied up with veracity of why we choose to believe or disbelieve. As such, we can choose to believe or disbelieve, with or without, against or regardless of evidence. This paper revisits Kierkegaard, Sartre and Pojman.

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A Philosophical Analysis of Multi-time Wave Functions

In recent years, physicists (Tumulka, 2006; Bedingham et al., 2014; Tumulka, 2020) have used multi-time wavefunctions to provide relativistic versions of flash and matter-density GRW. These (for a system of N “particles”) have N time variables, each for a “particle” of the system (its proper time). Yet, no philosophical analysis of multi-time wavefunctions has been provided. It could be fruitful to do so: multi-time wavefunctions are a key tool in these theories. Investigating their ontology, dynamics could only help in better understanding what these theories suggest to us about the physical world. In this talk, I provide an analysis of (some) tentative ontological interpretations, drawing from interpretations of wavefunctions in QM. I focus on two, in particular: wavefunction realism and the nomological interpretation. I attempt to adapt them to multi-time wavefunctions, yielding multi-time wavefunction realism and multi-time nomological realism. According to the first, the quantum state is a physical field on a $4N$ -dimensional space, taking a product of N complex four-vectors as values. The evolution of this field is unclear. The multi-time wavefunction follows a set of N Dirac laws, each one of them a first-order differential equation in the time variable (proper time) of some particle’s rest frame: N evolutions, according to distinct N proper times. There is no one objective evolution for the physical field. This is problematic, as understanding the dynamics of the multi-time wavefunction is as important as providing it with a particular interpretation. The alternative is to consider the laws in the set to be phenomenological: no real evolution takes place. However, this leads to another kind of complication: no clue is given about which stationary law the quantum state obeys; it is underspecified. According to the second, the multi-time wavefunction is a nomic entity, a component of a set of laws. If it does evolve, it is unclear how this can be, for reasons pointed out above, and it is unclear how to make sense of it as being nomic, since something nomic does not evolve. If we opt for the more plausible option, that it does not evolve, it is unclear what we mean when we say it governs matter in motion, as in the case of merely phenomenological dynamics, there would be no matter *in motion*. The proposal loses its point, as the multi-time wavefunction is not nomological if it does not govern anything. In the end, a realist interpretation of multi-time wavefunctions represents a hard challenge,

that may lead us to reconsider an instrumentalist position in relativistic contexts.

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**The Will to Believe or the Will to Doubt:
William James and Bertrand Russell on Faith, Science, and
Epistemic Attitude**

William James, in works such as *The Will to Believe* (1896) and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), addressed the question of whether faith can be justified in an age of science, where religion risks being relegated to the past. He argued that religion remains a genuine matter of choice for modern people, and that even in an age dominated by science, faith can be rationally defended. More than a century later, some thinkers still find his argument relevant. For example, in *The Varieties of Religion Today* (2002), Charles Taylor highly values the contemporary significance of James's theory of religion, arguing that James elucidated why the conflict between faith and unbelief in modern culture inevitably reaches an impasse: (1) each side rests on fundamentally different premises, (2) neither side is likely to lose its appeal, and (3) humans seem incapable of acting without taking sides.

However, can James's argument—which Taylor applies to contemporary social analysis—also be understood as having epistemological significance? This paper examines that question, focusing on James's discussion in *The Will to Believe*.

The "Ethics of Belief," as articulated by William Clifford and criticized by James, holds that one should never accept any hypothesis as true until sufficient evidence compels belief, and that this rule applies morally as well as scientifically. In contrast, James contends that there are multiple paths to truth and that one's attitude in forming beliefs can itself affect one's grasp of truth. Excessive skepticism or hostility toward a hypothesis may, in some cases, prevent the recognition of truth. Hence, religious belief requires different treatment from scientific belief.

One difficulty in assessing James's argument lies in his reliance on Clifford as a foil—since Clifford cannot respond, a fairer examination must include critical supplementation. This paper therefore engages Bertrand Russell's critique of James. In his essay collection *The Will to Doubt*, Russell contrasts his position with James's "will to believe," asserting that we should value the "will to doubt." Because our beliefs are always fallible, the pursuit of truth demands an attitude that listens to opposing views, gathers facts broadly, restrains prejudice through debate, and readily abandons erroneous hypotheses—precisely the method that has advanced scientific knowledge. True scientists

recognize that their knowledge is provisional and subject to revision, yet close enough to truth for most practical purposes. In this sense, a humble attitude of continual doubt is fundamental to the scientific spirit. Furthermore, in "Pragmatism," included in *Philosophical Essays*, Russell argues that James confuses acting on a hypothesis with believing in it—an error that, according to Russell, contradicts both common experience and the logic of science itself.

Can James's argument withstand such criticism? By examining these issues and engaging with contemporary discussions, this paper explores the coherence and limitations of James's attempt to reconcile science and religion within a pluralistic framework.

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&

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Intervention, Indeterminacy, and Manufactured Risk in Geoengineering the Earth: Lessons from the Chariot of Helios

When presented with prospects for geoengineering, one common and immediate response from critics is to invoke the so-called moral hazard problem, suggesting that providing protective interventions will encourage individual actors to increase their exposure to risk. Another common response is that climate science is incomplete, that we need to develop ever more comprehensive models. Both concerns are widely deployed, albeit theoretically underdeveloped, and in this way serve as important counterpoints to proposals that the best solution to climate change is technical.

In this paper we argue that the problem that many geoengineering technologies face is, rather, a problem of indeterminate outcomes, and that this indeterminacy has been widely overlooked in discussions of geoengineering technologies. To make this argument, we explore the role and limitation of models in understanding and anticipating future states of affairs, or what might be thought of as climate futures. We then discuss the problem of the moral hazard and try where we can to reframe it as the challenge of indeterminacy. We show that models and moral hazards are more than just epistemic complications for policymakers, but also carry with them practical concerns as well, as both engender indeterminate conditions that complicate moral analysis. In turn, these epistemic and practical concerns manifest as novel or “manufactured” risks, creating a new frontier of considerations for policymakers.

While the concerns we address are readily apparent in the context of geoengineering, they are certainly not limited to that context. To the extent that environmental deliberation involves integrating a number of agents across a variety of moral frameworks using a range of models addressing complex scenarios, the problem of indeterminacy arises.

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The Mission of the Military Priest: A Small Canonical, Patristic, and Biblical Analysis for the Current Context

In the current context of world conflicts, a reflection on the role and place of the military priest, that is, his specific mission among soldiers, is becoming increasingly necessary. If in the past, in the first Christian centuries, such a role for the priest, that of serving in the army, was unthinkable, threatened with exclusion from the ranks of the ordained, even exclusion from the Church altogether, a dark period followed, when this missionary role was increasingly exaggerated, leading to the idea of a holy war or even religious leaders who assumed, in the name of the Lord, wars of retribution or all kinds of justifications for the religious use of weapons and, ultimately, violence and crime.

In today's times, Christianity, especially its Orthodox side, has to assume an extraordinary fact, that of ensuring the presence of clergy in the army, but the analysis of this special mission must be done with a special theological and practical discernment. It is one thing not to accept violence, it is another to protect life, in its entirety, on Christian moral principles. One is the role of the fighter, morally justified or not, and another is the mission of the clergy for such people.

The analysis that we propose in this small study, wants to offer a possible solution to the conflict between Christian love and the aggressive and war-ready military environment, especially the presence of the priest or cleric in the military environment. Then, the mission of this "churchman" must be defined according to the context of current times, taking into account the vehemence of this subject in the canonical, patristic literature and biblical interpretation from the first centuries and the history and slippages of some unfortunate periods in the past regarding the assumption of ambitious decisions for various clerics, some even leaders or trainers of military armies with the so-called "religious purpose".

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From Plato's *Cratylus* to Panini: The Problem of Language for Philosophy

Plato's understudied dialogue, *Cratylus*, often still thought of as an extended joke, should be seen as a centerpiece of his concern for arriving at the truth regarding the Good and all of the concepts—justice, piety, love and friendship, to name a few—that extend from it. The *Cratylus*, like the Good itself, is a center from which multiple issues radiate. One finds allusions throughout its narrative to virtually all significant thinkers—from poets to pre-Socratic philosophers—essential to the Hellenic intellectual world; and to every major issue that Socrates discusses across the Platonic corpus.

Moreover, given Socrates' preferred means of seeking truth—through dialogue (although Plato's representation of the master in action may not always be accurate reportage of the specific details of these discussions)—language, which is the subject of the *Cratylus*, could hardly be more essential to the Socratic-Platonic enterprise. However, both Plato and Socrates are operating at a disadvantage in trying to answer the ostensive question posed by the dialogue: the key words found in the question and needed for an answer are imprecise and ambiguous, dooming the process to the *aporia* to which the dialogue arrives in the end.

Thus the ostensive query regarding the “correctness of Hermogenes' name” and more broadly the “correctness of names” suffers from ambiguity concerning what “*orthotes*” (“correctness”) means, and more fundamentally, regarding what “*onoma*” means—it corresponds to diverse grammatical concepts: “word,” “name,” “noun,” “subject.” Further, what does “*rhema*” mean—corresponding to the concepts “phrase,” “verb,” “predicate”—and what does “*logos*” mean (corresponding to a “rational argument” of indeterminate length, and also to “sentence”)? Without clarity regarding these terms, how can Socrates hope to address the issue of “*orthotes onomatos*” or “*orthotes onomaton*”?

The understanding of how words function in a sentence—grammar and syntax—exists in only a very primitive way by this time in Greek thought. That will change two generations after Plato, following Alexander the Great's conquests as far as India. The thinkers who travelled with his army returned to Hellas having encountered the system of grammar and syntax and the terminology that expresses it that

had been invented in India before the time of Socrates and Plato by the Indian thinker, Panini. The terms we currently use to identify word-use—from “preposition” to “interrogative” to “adverb” – are all English-language renderings of Latin translations of Greek translations of Sanskrit turns of phrase coined by Panini to explain the role of different kinds of words in human speech.

It is no accident that in two to three generations after Plato, the Hellenistic philosophers called Stoics begin to discuss language in a manner very different from that employed by Socrates in the *Cratylus*. Grammatically-focused treatises such as the *de Syntaxi* of Apollonios Dyskolos resonate from the new understanding and its terminology shaped by Panini, which entered Hellas and the West after Alexander and reconfigured the Western approach to language in a revolution the repercussions of which carry to the modern era and the thought of Wittgenstein, Barthes, and Derrida.

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The Structure of Meaning at Work: Existential Analysis of Care Through *Being and Time*

It is estimated that more than half of population spend half of their lifetime at work. These individuals do not merely acquire financial return in exchange of living, but also seek non-financial things such as deeper meaning at work. Phenomenologically, meaning is not something as concrete entities nor psychological states, rather is designated as the structure or horizon from which meaning becomes at all intelligible. To grasp the concept of meaning from Heidegger's theorizing, we can take both ontical and ontological levels which we interact with things and others in the world. In this sense, the meaning at work can be understood existentially on the ground of its ontological constitution. Heidegger claims the Being of human individual (Dasein) is Being-in-the-time. Moreover, he contends that the totality of Being-in-the-world constituted as a structural whole has revealed itself as care (*Sorge*), and through care the possibilities of Dasein can be understood. I conceive the meaning as the possibilities of human individuals, while the structure of meaning is the structural totality of care. In this study, I articulate the structure of meaning is constituted as three interconnected modes of Care, namely concern (*Be-sorgen*), solicitude (*Für-sorge*), and care for oneself (*Selbstsorge*). Specifically, we focus on the work-world to explicate the ontological meaning of care. The way people confront with entities in its surrounding environment as concern. In contrast, people interact with others in the work-world through solicitude mode. If the individual encounters the work-world by means of either things or others, then the individual itself is also involved in the interactions. In this regard, the care for oneself is the third mode as the care of one's ownmost possibilities. Furthermore, according to Heidegger, the concept of care can only be intelligible in horizon of time. In other words, the meaning of care is temporality. For the purpose of existential analysis, we explicate ontological modes of care and temporality separately. However, the concept of care in its totality is essentially something that cannot be torn asunder, rather it should be understood as its structural whole. We conclude that ontological structure of meaning at work provides the foundation for individuals to interpret their concrete meaning at work.

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Aristotle on Vice: Dishonouring Vices

Over the last thirty years there has been a renewal of interest in virtue theory, especially its connection to the Aristotelian tradition. But one important dimension of this tradition that has been under-appreciated is what might be called vice theory: An understanding of how vices and other sub-virtuous states operate in the failure to realize particular dimensions of well-being.

In this paper, I consider the implications of a related claim of Aristotle: Vicious extremes oppose one another, but they sometimes oppose the mean (EN 2.7 1708b10-15). This tendency is usually understood with respect to a particular virtue/vice state, i.e., the way in which wastefulness (ἄσωτία) and stinginess (ἀνελευθερία) can oppose one another, but also ally with one another to oppose the mean—generosity. (Consider the case of alternating cycles of extreme spending followed by episodes of extreme austerity). However, if we consider the relationship of particular virtue/vice states to other virtue/vice states across his ethical theory, there are other modes of opposition and alliance that are also illuminating.

I refer to “friendly vices” as vices that can mutually oppose certain areas of well-being, such as cowardice (δειλός) and irascibility (ὀργιλότης). This paper draws from key material in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics and Rhetoric to explore these particular vices as a case study of these phenomena, especially how they relate to honour in a problematic and mutually reinforcing way.

Cowardice displays a lack of concern for others and the honour they deserve, just as irascibility displays an excessive concern for my own honour. Cowardice and Irascibility are extreme dispositions that can become interlocking vices. They are prone to selfishly ally against the proper distribution of honour towards and for others and undermine the realization of goods associated with courage and the appropriate exercise of anger.

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Interactivism Imagined: Imagination as a Procedural Cognitive Capacity in Interactivist Model

This paper writes imagination into Mark H. Bickhard's interactivist framework by integrating it with anticipatory and apperceptive cognitive abilities. Building on Kant's insight that imagination mediates between sensory intuition and conceptual understanding, imagination is framed as a developed procedural capacity that introduces variation into the agent's interaction with the world.

Interactivism conceptualizes cognition as an active, anticipatory, and norm-regulated process of interaction between an agent and its environment. Within this framework, representation emerges through ongoing validation and correction grounded in functional presuppositions. Anticipation and apperception equip cognitive agents with mechanisms to stimulate and interpret perceptual inputs and explore potential motivational options.

This model aims to provide a comprehensive description of – as the title of Bickhard's recent book suggests – "The Whole Person". The paper applies this framework to characterize imagination as a cognitive process pivotally positioned between sensibility and understanding. Drawing primarily on Kant's concept of productive imagination, it argues that imagination synthesizes sensory input into coherent, anticipatory cognitive activity. This process enables agents to generate novel possibilities and project future states, reflecting interactivism's emphasis on cognition as normatively regulated interaction rather than passive reception.

Through this synthesis, imagination is understood as an emergent property of dynamic interactive processes whereby agents select, anticipate, and generate possibilities relevant to their goals and environments. It is not a fixed mental representation but a continuous, normative activity essential for flexible, adaptive cognition. The paper further explores implications of this conceptualization for contemporary debates in cognitive science and philosophy of mind, highlighting imagination's role in creativity, planning, and goal-directed behavior.

This contribution aims to stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue and inquiry into imagination as a fundamentally interactive process crucial for understanding human cognitive capacities in both philosophical and empirical terms. By integrating Kantian perspectives with interactivism's anticipatory model, the paper advances a deeper understanding of

imagination as essential to the quality of an agent's engagement with the environment and its sustained practical agency.

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**The Role of Continuity in Set-Based Thinking:
Discovering the Nature of Numbers Taught by *The Nine
Chapters on Mathematical Art* in Ancient China**

Cantor's Set Theory reveals a rich field of transfinite sets, in which both totality and individual objects within the whole could be plurally thought of as a unit. This unit may be either finite or infinite. Time and intuitive understanding gain important positions in the development of human knowledge. Set Theory provides an explicit framework for grasping the nature of numbers.

Ancient Chinese mathematicians excelled at set-based thinking, a skill enhanced by their practice with pictographic characters while engaging in Chinese language games. In dealing with an ever-changing world, understanding the concept of continuity was one of the essential principles practiced by ancient Chinese mathematicians when studying and teaching of numbers. Guided by Cantor's theory of sets, the author of this paper re-evaluates the contributions of Chinese mathematician Liu Hui 劉徽 (fl. 3rd century CE) in his explanation of integers in *The Nine Chapters on Mathematical Art*, one of the oldest texts on applied mathematics in China. The author argues that, without knowledge of modern set theory, ancient Chinese mathematicians practiced set-based thinking and used sets to clearly define positive and negative numbers, as well as the number of zero.

Having analyzed the Chinese concept of numbers, 數 *shu*, from an etymological perspective, the author demonstrates that while Cantor's naive set theory opens health discussions on the foundations of mathematics, Liu Hui had assigned two colors, red and black, as general sets representing positive and negative numbers. He applied these sets in calculations to solve everyday problems related to the nature of numbers many centuries ago. The connotation of the pictographic character 數 *shu* is rooted in the idea of sets. Chinese characters are constructed through sets—the units of radicals. The habit of thinking in sets is cultivated through learning Chinese pictographic characters.

The conclusion of this paper is that, evidently, in the history of learning numbers, practice often precedes theory. Theory of Sets offers valuable insight, with a much better understanding, into reasoning methods of ancient Chinese mathematicians, allowing for a more accurate evaluation of their contributions.

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