

Editorial

Philosophy is often described as the quest for truth and closely related to the faculty of wonder: To discover truth and be receptive to it, one requires a curiosity that generates questions that incite one to inquire and discover. This issue of the *Oracle* offers five essays that are well in keeping with this simple understanding of philosophy. They trace a spirit of wonder that inspire journeys that their authors have taken into deep topics. For instance, in the first essay, "The Role of Free Speech in a Democracy: A Critique of Rawls's Political Theory," Jeremy D'Souza critically inquires into John Rawls's defense of free speech. While Rawls claims seditious libel and subversive advocacy are justified acts of free speech in society, D'Souza finds Rawls's account of the latter vulnerable to criticism since there are conceivable cases in which subversive advocacy is not motivated by visions of justice but by destructive political agendas. Restraints applied to avoid such situations involve principles other than equality. Thus, D'Souza claims, Rawls's argument for free speech in a democracy is flawed, and, having broader implications, renders his theory of a justice of fairness unconvincing.

In the essay "Is Prenatal Diagnosis Discriminatory Towards People with Disabilities?" Yaman Khattab questions the ethics of the use of genetic techniques to locate disability in the fetus and of abortions of fetuses with disabilities. Upon careful examination of popular arguments advanced to justify such abortions, Khattab concludes that the use of many screening procedures and the execution of abortions that prevent the birth of the disabled are significantly motivated by negative, fictitious views shaped by society and are discriminatory.

Michael Burton wonders deeply about the issue of death, particularly Thomas Nagel's view that death is evil because it deprives the individual of future possibilities. He examines Nagel's responses to three of the main criticisms against his view and concludes that Nagel's thesis is untenable: An individual's future possibilities do not mean much if they cannot be actualized. Burton, in adopting a stoic approach, proposes that death is neither good nor evil.

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In “The Moral Functions of Resentment,” Artour Rostorotski investigates the moral significance of the resentment. In detail, he explicates and provides a comparative analysis of the views Nietzsche, Butler, Oakley, and Strawson hold on this human emotion. How these philosophers, by connecting this emotion to their understanding of free will, determinism, justice, and objectivity, arrive at a conclusion about the moral status of resentment is studied. Rostorotski finally remarks that each philosopher’s understanding of resentment is informed by his general worldview.

In the final paper, “Polishing a Crystal: Understanding Plato’s Allegory of the Cave,” Nick Purdy examines carefully Plato’s allegory of the cave as presented in *The Republic* and offers an insightful interpretation of what it reveals about the nature and role of a philosopher. Purdy interweaves in his interpretation explanations of distinctions and concepts that are central to Plato’s philosophy.

Hopefully, you will find that the essays featured here furnish answers and, if not, at least, more questions that feed your faculty of wonder.

Finally, I would like to express much thanks to certain groups whose participation has been vital to this project: To all those writers who took the time to write, polish, and submit their essays; to key supporters including Diana Sargla, the Administrative Assistant to the Master of Vanier College, who on behalf of the college provided our club with office space and most of the funding for the journal this year and the Philosophy Department who shows us great support—including financial—every year; and to all the editors for your careful selection of the final papers published here. Thank you also to Professor Henry Jackman, who, as Philosophia’s faculty liaison, has supported at every level our association’s efforts. Without all of your care Philosophia would not be able to place this issue in your hands.

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