

Foreword

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Academic philosophy largely consists of reasoned engagement with past and present “interlocutors” – not always philosophers – in such contexts as conferences, correspondences, department colloquia, journals, and books. As a consequence of this, it is at its root a social enterprise. This new issue of *Corvus* is a part of that social enterprise.

For academic philosophers, there is little that is as intimidating as putting your work “out there” for others to see and critically engage. In this case, it really does not matter whether we are talking about the editorial team of a journal issue or the authors of the papers contained in the issue. Consequently, this collective effort of undergraduate philosophers is a laudable act of both determination and courage.

Editing, peer reviewing, and, of course, authoring articles (among other things) are also a part of the duties of a professional scholar. All these parts of academic life are essential, but they are also chal-

lenging. So, not only is this issue of *Corvus* an important part of the professionalization of everyone involved but it is a distinct academic achievement. As this journal is not published regularly, I particularly congratulate the editorial team on this accomplishment.

The issue's topics and discussions engage arguments and perspectives drawn from the lineage of philosophy largely rooted in Greco-Roman thought and cultures (sometimes misleadingly described as "Western philosophy"). Some engage historically significant philosophers such as Plato, Immanuel Kant, and Anne Conway or more contemporary philosophers like Peter van Inwagen and David Lewis. Others engage contemporary societal issues such as human gene editing (a relative newcomer to modern eugenics), contemporary academic misogyny, possible ableism in BDSM, and the "attention economy." This very much reflects philosophy as a discipline, anchored as it is in a rather lengthy history starting, globally, in the classical period but with an eye to how to examine our lives in order to live them better.

I choose to think that the achievement of this issue of *Corvus* and the topics that are canvassed within it reflects the success of our undergraduate program in the Department of Philosophy at Dalhousie University. This is in no small part made possible by our valued faculty members and instructors with whom I am privileged to work. Although a key part of a Dalhousie philosophy education are the courses we offer, it is by no means limited to this. A number of those involved in this issue have also attended, and I hope benefited from, our department's colloquium series. This is a treasured, decades-old tradition and very much a key part of department life. It happens on most Friday afternoons during the calendar year, come rain or shine, and affords a space for both junior and non-

junior philosophers to present their work. Each colloquium also consists of a substantial question and answer period (typically, lasting slightly longer than the presentation itself). This harkens back to my mention of the deeply social nature of academic philosophy. It provides a useful “testing ground” for arguments or analyses but also a space within which philosophers and the philosophically-minded can gather to think together about a philosophical problem or issue.

Our colloquium series is open to anyone who wants to attend. This means a typical colloquium audience comprises not only faculty, instructors, and (both undergraduate and graduate) students from the department but often fellow academic philosophers from neighboring universities and colleagues from other disciplines. A legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health measures taken to protect various members of our publics is the ongoing on-line component of our department’s colloquium series. This means that we have folks regularly participating from outside of Halifax or even Nova Scotia. For undergraduate philosophers in our program, this affords an opportunity to participate in quite a diverse intellectual community and benefit from a variety of perspectives, from both presenters (when they are not the presenters themselves) and other attendees.

This openness to all reflects the commitment to “engaged philosophy” that is very much a part of the history and current ethos of the department. Our department’s social engagement includes both the philosophical problems that we address and the way we do philosophy. Members of the department have not only presented their philosophical work through traditional publications but also through blogs, podcasts, think tanks, reports, media interviews, and even *amicus curiae* briefs. Although we pride ourselves on be-

ing firmly rooted in the relevant philosophical literature (even as we endeavor to correct and expand it), much of our work is directed towards current social issues regarding such things as race, our treatment of other animals, neurodiversity, just war, gender, and anthropogenic climate change. This ethos of engagement, not only with relevant philosophical literatures but with pressing social issues, is very much on display in the current issue of *Corvus*.

The Dalhousie Undergraduate Philosophy Society (DUPS) is the driving force behind this journal. It, too, is an important part of department life and its membership draws from both Dalhousie University and the University of King's College. Though the editorial team are directly responsible for this issue, the DUPS executive and the society as a whole should also be acknowledged. A *Corvus* journal issue is a sign of an active DUPS and this is not possible without an effective executive. So, congratulations to all of the current members of DUPS!