

## Editorial

It is a great pleasure, first of all, to announce that Shawn E. Klein is now serving as a new Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Reason Papers*. He joins us in this endeavor as someone with valuable prior editing experience. Having expertly managed the editing of *Harry Potter and Philosophy* (Open Court, 2004) and *Steve Jobs and Philosophy* (Open Court, 2015), he now serves as the Editor of *Studies in the Philosophy of Sport*, a new book series from Lexington Books. Many people perhaps know him best as The Sports Ethicist. If you've not yet read his thoughtful commentary on a wide variety of issues about and controversies in sports, pay a visit to his blog at: <http://sportsethicist.com/>, or listen to his podcasts at: <http://sportsethicist.com/the-radio-show/>. Irfan Khawaja has taken on the task of Book Review Editor.

Now on to an overview of our latest (somewhat delayed) Fall 2015 issue. Several of the contributions to this issue of *Reason Papers* grapple with the difficult justificatory and methodological issues involved in ethics. A set of articles comprises a symposium on David Kaspar's book *Intuitionism*.<sup>1</sup> According to Kaspar, the only way successfully to fend off both moral skepticism and subjectivism is to *explain* "the intuitive principles" (e.g., "Murder is wrong," "Promises should be kept"). This is accomplished not by appeal to some "supreme principle of morality," such as those offered by utilitarianism or deontology. Kaspar argues that this is achieved only by intuitionism, which "holds that we know moral truths about moral facts in the world. Access to such truths, access to such facts, is not the product of any moral theory . . . . [M]oral truth is revealed by what we really think about morality" (p. 10). Irfan Khawaja, Moti Mizrahi, and Matthew Pianalto evaluate Kaspar's thesis from different directions. Khawaja critiques intuitionism from a foundationalist-empiricist perspective, which maintains that moral claims are justified only when they are properly "based on forms of experience that derive from sensory evidence" (p. 13). He ultimately argues that Kaspar's theory identifies moral beliefs (which, *contra* Kaspar, are not self-evident) rather than moral knowledge, and so fails to offer an adequate justificatory approach for moral claims. Mizrahi critiques Kaspar's theory not from an alternative theoretical basis as Khawaja does, but by reconstructing and challenging the main arguments that Kaspar offers for his account: "an inference to the best explanation, an argument from the analogy between mathematical knowledge and moral knowledge, and an argument from the epistemic preferability of the intuitive principles" (p. 26). He focuses especially on intuitionism's conflation of moral belief with moral knowledge, arguing that beliefs are not necessarily truth-tracking. Pianalto challenges

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<sup>1</sup> The symposium on David Kaspar's *Intuitionism* was originally an Author-Meets-Critics session. It took place at the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, Staten Island, New York, on June 21, 2014, and was organized by David Kaspar and Irfan Khawaja with the assistance of Meg Ventrudo, the Museum's Executive Director.

Kaspar's view that we have an intuitive grasp of "moral kinds" in an *a priori* way. This view is problematic, argues Pianalto, on two counts—the object of moral knowledge and the manner of knowing. He suggests, instead, that intuitionists should attend to the roles played by experience and particular, contextual judgments in forming moral beliefs.

In a review of Mark Murphy's *God and Moral Law*, Richard Burnor also emphasizes the crucial role that explanation plays in ethics—but from a religious perspective, with a special focus on examining natural law approaches. Issues of philosophical (including moral) methodology are taken up in Brendan Shea's review of Daniel Dennett's *Intuition Pumps*, which is largely devoted to examining the proper and improper place of "intuition pumps" and metaphors in reasoning as well as how philosophy relates to the sciences. Timothy Grisillo homes in on a specific form of moral reasoning—argument by analogy—when he challenges how Walter Block and Jakub Wisniewski use an analogy in a running debate over abortion.

Other contributions take up issues in political philosophy, including the legitimacy of the state, what kind of state is worth defending, and the place (if any) for religion in a liberal political society. Stephen R. C. Hicks muses about the fate of liberalism—that is, "the social system that makes foundational liberty of the individual in all areas of life" (p. 108). Here, he explains fifteen reasons why liberalism is valuable, inviting feedback from readers (as this first of a two-article series is part of a larger project on the topic). In "Politics After MacIntyre," Philip Devine examines the prospects for the survival of religious virtue communities—à la Alasdair MacIntyre—under a liberal political society. Although MacIntyre himself thoroughly rejects liberalism, Devine is wary but hopeful that liberal political principles would make possible the sustained existence of such communities. In a review of Michael Huemer's *The Problem of Political Authority*, Danny Frederick takes to task the arguments for Huemer's anarchic conclusion that "[n]o state is legitimate, and no individual has political obligations" (p. 178).

The proper relationship between political and economic institutions is perennially debated; this issue of *Reason Papers* provides a forum in which such a debate is continued. Richard M. Salsman tackles public choice economics in his "Common Caricatures of Self-Interest and Their Common Source." Although he lauds this school of economics in certain regards, he criticizes its proponents for accepting various false characterizations of the self (hence of self-interest) and for endorsing means-end rationality. Salsman urges public choice economists to integrate proper conceptions of self and self-interest as well as a substantive notion of rationality whereby we can reason about both ends and means. What's ultimately at stake, he argues, is the possibility for politicians—armed with the correct view of human nature—to become statesmen who work to protect individual rights and economic freedom. Alex Abbandonato reviews John Tomasi's *Free Market Fairness*, which challenges the market-friendly paradigm found in Salsman's article. Abbandonato is sympathetic to Tomasi's attempt to reconcile liberalism's defense of economic freedom with socialism's concern for "social justice."

Controversy can ensue, though, even when theorists agree that there should be little or no intersection between politics and economics. This can be seen in Brian Simpson's Objectivist-grounded rejection of Chris Leithner's Austrian approach to economics.

Continuing our practice of including contributions about art and culture, we have four that can broadly be considered cultural analyses and two film reviews. An important aspect of American culture is its veneration of heroes and heroism—especially the individualist variety where the underdog succeeds in the face of tremendous obstacles. In a book-ending of American history, we have, on the one hand, Robert Begley's analysis of Lin-Manuel Miranda's sensational Broadway hit *Hamilton: An American Musical*, and, on the other hand, Gregory Wolcott's review of Shawn Klein's edited collection *Steve Jobs and Philosophy*. Both reviewers (as well as the works they review) do justice to the complex greatness of Alexander Hamilton and Steve Jobs, real-life heroes who excelled in different domains.

Also part of American culture is a self-critical idealism, so there is an important role for the social critic to play. Two such works of social criticism are reviewed here. Peter Saint-Andre reviews Kurt Keefner's *Killing Cool: Fantasy vs. Reality in American Life*, which eschews fantasy-laden desires to be "cool" for a more satisfying reality-oriented way of life. Patrick Webb reviews Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, which places under a microscope thorny issues of race and criminal (in)justice in America. These cultural critics aim not to displace American values, but to encourage individuals and institutions to live up to them—to keep us grounded as we reach for the stars.

In the first of this issue's film reviews, Gary James Jason offers the final installment of his three-part series on the depiction of egoists and egoism in classic films. His previous pieces analyzed positive and negative portrayals of egoism in classic cinema. Here, he focuses on Nietzschean portrayals of egoism in the films *Compulsion* and *The Moon and Sixpence*. Finally, Matt Faherty critiques (from a free-market perspective) Andrew Morgan's 2015 documentary *The True Cost*, which blames the fashion industry, consumerism, and markets for environmental degradation and the oppression of Third-World workers.

We hope that you enjoy reading the thought-provoking ideas found in this issue of *Reason Papers*.

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