



Editorial

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This serves as my final issue as Founding Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Ethics*. From now on, I will be listed as the journal's Founding Editor. Since 1995, I have felt honored to serve in this capacity, publishing some of the valuable works of many philosophers. I want to take this opportunity to give special thanks to Keith Lehrer without whom this journal would not exist. It is only fitting that one of his articles was published as the first one in the inaugural issue of this journal in 1997. Another of his articles will close this special issue and is devoted to his conception of higher-order compatibilism. Lehrer contributed other articles to this journal, and readers are encouraged to read each one of them.

The Journal of Ethics was founded, has consistently served, and hopefully will continue to serve the analytic philosophical community of ethicists. I trust that my successor will serve the best interests of this journal well, and that s/he will continue to ardently place special emphases on the areas of ethics I have stressed from the outset: Moral responsibility theory, philosophy of the black experience, including race, racism and social justice, and that it would continue to seek out and publish the finest analytic work in ethics from the most distinguished of analytic philosophers as well as publish the unsolicited submissions of philosophers whose work satisfies the highest standards of analytic acuity and scholarship. Examples of such philosophers who have contributed some of their best work to this journal currently serve on the Distinguished Editorial Board whom I would like to thank at this time for their dedicated service to this journal. I would also like to thank the hundreds of referees who served this journal so well by giving of their time and efforts to provide extremely helpful comments on various submissions to this journal. Among the most prolific referees for this journal include John Martin Fischer, Ishtiyaque Haji, Michael McKenna, Jan Narveson, and Burleigh Wilkins. "A journal is only as excellent as its excellent referees," as I have said for many years. These Distinguished Editorial Board members also contributed important articles to this journal, for which the journal is quite grateful.

I also hope that the new editor will continue my tradition of not placing any page limitations on what is published in its pages as most of us have important articles

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which deserve to be published but cannot easily find a home for them because of the obsession among most publishers and their academic journals to publish rather brief pieces due to the fact that, as far as has been explained to me by some academic publishing editors, publishers are paid among other factors by the number of articles per journal volume sold. Given this fact, it behooves publishers to have published in their journals a greater number of brief articles than lengthy ones, no matter how much this adversely effects the publication of excellent lengthy articles or the quality of published research generally. *The Journal of Ethics* should continue to serve the philosophy community of ethicists by remaining open to publishing high quality work no matter what its length as this is yet one more distinctive feature of the journal. And it should not hesitate to publish high quality philosophical papers which go against the grain of mainstream ethics, though it is increasingly difficult to procure suitable referees in various areas of ethics due to entrenched biases among ethicists. This journal must continue to stand with Plato's Socrates who urges us to follow the arguments wherever they lead us. I am confident that Socrates means for this injunction to be construed in a non-partisan manner.

Equally as important is that I wish the new editor the best of skill, dedication and luck and encourage him or her to edit with moral integrity and to attempt as I did to treat authors as s/he would like to be treated. Authors ought to be treated with dignity, respect, justly and fairly. And when errors are made, it is the duty of the Editor-in-Chief to take ultimate responsibility (with an attitude of taking strict liability) for the errors and to do all s/he can to correct them as quickly and as well as possible, providing authors with as much autonomy and authority in the process and as is possible under the circumstances. I have attempted to do this since 1995. It is the very least that an academic editor can do out of respect to authors, the journal s/he edits, and to the academic profession as a whole.

Thanks to the many readers throughout the years who communicated to me their high esteem for this journal, and to the many authors who contributed solicited or unsolicited work in order to fill its pages. And many thanks to Robert Nozick who contacted me directly and passionately, insisting that he receive a copy of this journal immediately as he liked the content of it so much, and to some other analytic philosophers who described this journal as the "*Philosophical Studies* of ethics." I considered each of these incidents early on in this journal's years to be high compliments. And they inspired me to continue my work along the same path toward excellence. I also cherished my friendship with Jerry Cohen as a result of my dealings with him as a contributor to this journal. His replies to critics of one of his books were featured years ago in this journal. Like the works of Joel Feinberg, an honorary member of the Distinguished Editorial Board of this journal, a friend and my former primary graduate school mentor, Cohen's philosophical works influenced me tremendously both as a philosopher and as a person.

This special issue of *The Journal of Ethics* features various articles. The lead article is John Martin Fischer's University Professor Lecture, "Near Death Experiences" which was given at his home institution, the University of California, Riverside, on 16 April 2018 at a gathering honoring Fischer as the 41st faculty member and only philosopher to ever be awarded the most prestigious honor that a University of California faculty member can receive within that system: the University of California

University Professor award. I was honored and privileged to be invited to attend the lecture and events afterward, and Fischer, as always, did an excellent job in presenting and defending his thesis. It is a privilege to feature Fischer's lecture as our lead article herein as we have with several of his other articles in various volumes of this journal. Each of his many articles published in this journal is highly recommended reading.

The second article is a peer-reviewed article of mine entitled, "Offensiphobia." It is a philosophical investigation of the idea held by seemingly most in higher education today that there is a right to not be offended and that higher educational policies ought to protect such a right by way of exercising a duty to censure offensive language. I herein dedicate the article to my primary graduate school mentor, Feinberg who, incidentally, at one of our very first meetings back in 1988, spent a good deal of time posing objections to *my own* offensiphobic view of the *Skokie* case which we were studying in his course on philosophy of law. Feinberg's points about rights and freedom of expression have deeply influenced that first-year graduate student at the University of Arizona.

Barbara Herman contributes her article on "Doing Too Much," an interesting work which addresses a moral concern which has been largely ignored in philosophical ethics but one which we experience often in our daily lives. Ishtiyaque Haji (with his co-author) contributes two important articles on vital topics in moral responsibility theory. The first is "Ability, Frankfurt Examples, and Obligation" and the other is "Indeterministic Choice and Ability." Each is typical incisive philosophical excellence for which Haji is well known. Following them is one of my own peer-reviewed articles on moral responsibility theory: "Moral Responsibility and History: Problems with Frankfurtian Nonhistoricism." It poses an important and seemingly novel challenge to Harry Frankfurt's nonhistoricism about responsibility in a way which renders dubious the ability of his analysis to make adequate sense of holding certain kinds of paradigmatic racists accountable for their harmful wrongdoings and simultaneously leads to a surprising moral and legal implication about some classic cases of racist harms.

Closing out this issue is an article co-authored by Lehrer, the "alpha and omega" of my tenure with this journal. I wanted to do all that I could to make sure that the academic venue which he brought into existence provides him due respect and honor at the end of my service to this journal. It is also fitting that my final issue as Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Ethics* places an emphasis on both moral responsibility theory and racism as this journal has from the journal's inception.

It is with hope for the future of *The Journal of Ethics* that I bid readers a fond "goodbye," and wish you the very best which life has to offer.