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NICHOLAS RESCHER, Distant Posterity: A Philosophical Glance along Time's Corridor

Moralists tell us to care for the interest of others. Epistemologists enjoin us to achieve consensus with others. But accommodating these "others" will be a real problem—seeing that most of them will live beyond our reach and outside our knowledge in their distant future. Philosophers do not seem to worry about distant posterity and yet cannot but acknowledge its relevancy for their concerns. This paper tries to identify and to clarify some of the many important issues that arise here.

SYLVAIN DELCOMMINETTE, Plato on Hatred of Philosophy

Since its inception, philosophy has aroused both fascination and hostility. What is it about philosophy that provokes such contrasting emotions? Plato's works offer a valuable opportunity to explore this question, not only because of the dialogue form, which makes it possible to present a range of attitudes toward the practice of philosophy, but also because of Plato's persistent efforts to define, describe, and defend philosophy as a radically unique activity. In this paper, the author collects and organizes the evidence in order to show that, although Plato presents a wide array of motives for hostility toward philosophy, these are all grounded upon some form of ignorance that is a source of pain. The author also shows how, in well-disposed individuals, a special kind of ignorance can become a source of love rather than hatred, and how these people experience a special kind of pleasure—the very pleasure of practicing and loving philosophy.

JEFFREY J. FISHER, A Plausible Doctrine of the Mean

While Aristotle is often lauded, especially by virtue ethicists, for his focus on and insight into virtue, a central aspect of his conception of virtue—the doctrine of the mean—is often derided as false if not indeed absurd. The reason for this disparity in reaction to Aristotle is that the doctrine of the mean has been severely misinterpreted as stating that there are a variety of parameters in which one must achieve a mean. Such a doctrine is false, but it is not Aristotle's. In this paper, the author gives a more accurate account of the doctrine of the mean than has heretofore been given. According to this account, the doctrine simply states that virtue disposes one to feel one's passions with an appropriate intensity. The author closes by considering Hursthouse's famous criticisms of the doctrine of the mean, and he shows that they fail to be reasons for rejecting the doctrine.

JOHN F. CORNELL, Promethean Metaphysics: The Idea of a More Perfect Being in Descartes's *Discourse on Method*

The proofs of the existence of God in part 4 of Descartes's *Discourse on Method* may yet surprise us. These arguments appear to be crafted with such ambiguity that their deeper import has rarely been suspected. This essay proposes that, in spite of the text's conventional

appearance, Descartes exposes the error of scholastic metaphysics, namely, that it mistakes the perfectibility of the human mind for a transcendent perfect being. Superficially, the thinker's "idea of a more perfect being" serves to ground the traditional theology; but surreptitiously, this idea refers to human possibility and supplies the metaphysical basis for scientific progress, freed from theology altogether. This ironic result is obtained not by speculating on Descartes's irony directly, but by submitting the "idea of a more perfect being" itself to the Cartesian test of truth and falsehood. In that light, the text's proofs of God reveal their skeptical, philanthropic intent.

VICTORIA I. BURKE, *The Emergence of the Concept in Hegel's Science of Logic*

In this article, the author charts the development of G. W. F. Hegel's concept (*Begriff*) in the *Science of Logic* (1812–1816). She shows that Hegel could not possibly arrive at the concept until the end of Book II, after his treatment of the categories of modality, especially contingency. The concept is only graspable by thought in the first-person perspective if its content is a contingent aspect of an infinite externality. This Hegelian form of modernization in the *Science of Logic* implies that there are no natural truths.