

VOLUME LXXIX, Number 1

September 2025

Philosophic Esotericism and the End of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, LEO TROTZ-LIBOFF

By investigating the different types of philosophic esotericism (the deliberate concealment of philosophical views) described in Cicero's *De natura deorum*, this article offers a new answer to the question of why Cicero endorses Balbus's Stoic theology at the end of the work. For Cicero this modified form of Stoicism provides a new "myth" for Rome that is salutary for politics and esoterically preserves the genuine, that is, Platonic, activity of philosophizing. By contrast, Cicero rejects the Academic speaker Cotta's esotericism because both Cotta and his Epicurus take traditional religion to be a complete fiction, which thus becomes an exoteric screen for their esoteric agnosticism and atheism respectively. In Cicero's view, this conventionalist position renders preferences for regime-types arbitrary and does not uphold a natural basis for the Roman mixed regime. For this reason, Cotta's traditionalism is an inadequate model for preserving the republic as Caesar's dictatorship undermines its institutions.

Verbal Injustice: Thomas Aquinas on Abuse with Words, ELISABETH UFFENHEIMER

Abusive language is one of the most disruptive and cruel forces in human society. Thomas Aquinas's discussion of the topic in the *Summa Theologiae* (II-II, q. 72–76) has not received the attention it deserves. Verbal abuse is, according to him, not only a sin against charity: It is essentially an act of injustice in so far as it infringes on one's right to be recognized in one's socio-verbal dignity (honor, good name), and neglects the duty to respect that which makes a person's social life possible. The use of language is a moral and social act. In this article the different verbal injuries are analyzed consecutively (insult, detraction, talebearing, derision, and cursing) and the ideas supporting Thomas's thought on the subject are discussed.

Hegel on Bridging the Gap between Freedom and Family: Women, Love, and the Challenge of Liberalism, JOSHUA GOLDSTEIN AND WILLIAM LLOYD GREGSON

In Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* a gap exists between his promise of freedom and his description of the family. Hegel's promise is to show the family as an integral aspect of a choice-worthy and free life, yet his description of this familial life appears to disqualify it as a sphere of freedom. By focusing on, rather than avoiding, the very source of the gap—the place of woman within ethical life—this article seeks to bridge this gap by recovering two liberatory strategies that, the authors argue, Hegel inscribes into his account of the family. The first liberatory strategy is negative, and concerns woman's liberation from fixed identity. The second, positive, strategy concerns the overlooked diversity of ways that familial freedom, as rightfully ethical love, can be concretely lived. The authors argue that bridging this gap speaks to contemporary perplexities concerning the elements, satisfactions, legal-institutional boundaries, and reasons we attribute to the modern family as well as rethinks the meaning of identity and diversity within the family in ways that provide a compelling alternative to more outwardly flexible liberal theories of the family.

The Flowers of *Being and Time*: Nature and Heidegger's Abandonment of His Earlier Project,
ROBERT J. DOSTAL

The author argues that within the frame of the project of *Being and Time* Heidegger could not establish an appropriate ontological account of nature. The article shows how the concept of nature is implicated in Heidegger's abandonment of the project. It also shows how the published text of *Being and Time* points to its own inadequacy in this regard, and it examines Heidegger's attempt to develop the project in the lectures and publications in the immediate years after the publication of *Being and Time*. Flowers are an example of nature that Heidegger provides early in the text of *Being and Time*.

Radical Empiricism and Animal Farm Naturalism, JOHN J. STUHR

This article first develops an account of metaphysical thinking as hypothetical or abductive reasoning. As part of this account, it explains disagreements among different schools of metaphysical thought as rooted primarily in temperament, preferences, attitudes and similar practical differences. Second, after explaining the significant similarities between radical empiricism and naturalism, particularly nonreductive emergent naturalism, the article highlights the differences between these theories on the issue of whether reality is independent of experience or always dependent on and related to experience, thought, and language. It then examines two major naturalist criticisms—the claim that reality must be independent of experience because there was reality before any experience and the claim that scientific inquiry presupposes a reality independent of inquirers. Both criticisms are shown to fail in ways that result in naturalism having to take up a stance similar to that expressed by Orwell in *Animal Farm*—namely, that all realities are equally real but some are more real than others. The article concludes by showing how efforts to avoid this problem turn naturalism into radical empiricism itself.