

# Introduction to the Special Section on the 2022 Utrecht Philosophy Graduate Conference

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The last four contributions in this issue of *Junctions* constitute a special section of papers that were first presented at the 2022 Utrecht Philosophy Graduate Conference. I would like to specifically acknowledge the work of Jülide Sezer, who together with myself served for a time as this section's managing editor and helped to start up the publication process again after a long delay, and Santiago Vrech, who was one of the organizers of the conference, coordinated the collaboration with *Junctions* and arranged the expert peer reviewers for the submitted articles. The authors were given the opportunity to expand their abstracts into full articles, to be subjected to double-blind peer review by one philosopher and one 'general' (i.e. non-philosopher) reviewer. The final four articles presented here cover a broad range of topics and strands of philosophy, including ethics, political philosophy, feminist philosophy, hermeneutics and deconstruction.

In 'Doing Justice to Poetry', Lucas Gronouwe rereads Jacques Derrida's and Hans-Georg Gadamer's essays on the work of the German poet Paul Celan, and compares their respective approaches to the interpretation of texts. What does it mean, for Derrida and Gadamer, to 'do justice to a text' during interpretation? Gronouwe concludes that their two initially divergent methods of interpretation—hermeneutics for Gadamer, deconstruction for Derrida—can in fact be synthesized and serve to complement each other in the effort to read texts in a 'just' manner.

In 'Rethinking Political Organization from a Feminist Standpoint', Roxane Pret Théodore addresses the concept of vulnerability in the works of Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero. She speculates on an alternative feminist politics, based on the ethics of care that our shared precariousness demands. If caring relations of solidarity are a possible response to vulnerability, what are the implications of this for political organization? For Pret Théodore, the answer lies not in building up resilience against vulnerability, but rather embracing it as a positive characteristic that fundamentally connects all human beings to each other.

In ‘Agnosticism and the Ethics of Belief’, Lily Tappe delves into the morality of religion, specifically the morality of believing in divine beings. Tappe makes the case for a moral evidentialism that supports the agnostic position; that is, a suspension of judgement on the existence of God or gods, motivated by the normative epistemic assumption that it is wrong to maintain a belief despite insufficient evidence. Thus, she navigates a middle ground between the authoritative claims of both theistic and atheistic convictions.

In ‘Discriminatory Desires and Disintegrated Sexual Selves’, Joost Wijffels engages with the apparent tension between sexual autonomy and the ethico-political responsibility to critically reflect on selective sexual preferences. The latter are simultaneously the reification of oppressive social structures and, in the liberal conception of sexual autonomy, the supposedly free expression of our individual desires. Wijffels argues that this tension is a myth and that the act of critically reflecting on how selective sexual preferences reproduce oppression—such as effeminophobic attitudes in gay communities reproducing homophobia—does not limit sexual autonomy, but instead enhances it.