Topoi

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Editor-in-Chief: F. Paglieri

Topoi’s main assumption is that philosophy is a lively, provocative, delightful activity, which constantly challenges our received views, relentlessly questions our inherited habits, painstakingly elaborates on how things could be different, in other stories, in counterfactual situations, in alternative possible worlds. Whatever its ideology, whether with the intent of uncovering a truer structure of reality or of soothing our anxiety, of exposing myths or of following them through, the outcome of philosophical activity is always the destabilizing, unsettling generation of doubts, of objections, of criticisms.

It follows that this activity is intrinsically a "dialogue", that philosophy is first and foremost philosophical discussion, that it requires bringing out conflicting points of view, paying careful, sympathetic attention to their structure, and using this dialectic to articulate one’s approach, to make it richer, more thoughtful, more open to variation and play. And it follows that the spirit which one brings to this activity must be one of tolerance, of always suspecting one’s own blindness and consequently looking with unbiased eye in every corner, without fearing to pass a (fallible) judgment on what is there but also without failing to show interest and respect.

Topoi’s structure is a direct expression of this view. To maximize discussion, we devote most or all of this issue to a single topic. And, since discussion is only interesting when it is conducted seriously and responsibly, we usually request the collaboration of a guest-editor, an expert who will identify contributors and interact with them in a constructive way. Because we do not feel tied to any definite philosophical theme (or set of them), we choose the topic with absolute freedom, looking for what is blossoming and thriving, occasionally betting on what might - partly through our attention - "begin" to blossom and thrive. And because we do not want our structure to become our own straightjacket, we are open to contributions not fitting the "topos", and do not rule out in principle the possibility of topic-less issues.

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