

Conference Program



COMIUCAP CONFERENCE 2019

**Truth, Lies, Fake News &
Moral Education**

28-30 May, 2019



COMIUCAP

HOSTED BY

School of Philosophy & Theology, The University of Notre Dame Australia

Tuesday 28 – Thursday 30 May 2019

Level 1, 22 City Road, Chippendale, NSW 2008

The Organisers gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of the Conference by the
Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia



Welcome

I would like to warmly welcome you to the COMIUCAP Conference, "Truth, Lies, Fake News and Moral education", being held here, at the Sydney (Broadway) Campus of the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Many centuries ago, St. Augustine recognised that the search for truth is in fact the search for God, since God is the Truth. Post-modernity, having rejected both God and modernity, as a consequence has rejected both truth and reason. In rejecting the idea of truth, knowledge is rejected, and what we are left with is a sceptical stance in which everything is seen from an idiosyncratic, personal position.

There are no facts which can be appealed to in order to ground a claim to knowledge, since these, themselves, are contested, and indeed, a fact is only a particular interpretation of events seen from a certain vantage point. Since there is no God, there is no vantage point transcending the human world which can be appealed to in order to adjudicate between interpretations.

The outcome is that news with which an individual disagrees with is fake news, and alternate facts can be summoned to explain an event. Lies no longer exist since there are always alternative facts to be presented. No moral approbation attaches to breaking promises or denying responsibility for an action, since everything can be explained away from a subjective point of view. Another's remonstrations that an individual has broken a promise can be denied and the other accused of trying to coerce the person through oppressive bullying into accepting the other's opinion.

In this conference, we will be discussing different ways in which the concept of truth can be retrieved, and what this means for moral education.

I look forward to the coming days of discussion.

Jānis (John) Ozoliņš

COMIUCAP Vice-President (Oceania),

Conference Organiser

COMIUCAP Conference 2019: Truth, Lies, Fake News and Moral Education
 Level 1, Lecture Theatre, 22 City Road, Chippendale

Day 1: Tuesday 28 May

9:00am – 10:15am	Registration and refreshments Building NDS17, Level I, Logos Rooms Lecture Theatre 22 City Road, Chippendale	
10:15am – 10:45am	Welcome to Country Opening address – Rev. Prof. Joao Vila-Cha SJ	
10:45am-12:00pm	Keynote address – Between Truth and Falsity: Discoursing the Ancient Chinese Alternative to <i>Episteme</i> and <i>Doxa</i> Professor Emeritus Alfredo P. Co	
12:00pm – 1:30pm	Lunch (Catholic Mass available at St Benedict's Church 12:35pm-1:05pm)	
1:30pm – 2:15pm	Concurrent paper Session 1	
	Building: NDS17, Level 1, Lecture Theatre, 22 City Road	Building: NDS15: Room 102 School of Law, Level 1, 29 Shepherd Street
	The Happy Manifesto – Three Rules For Happier Students Dr Phillip Cortez	Truth's Tensions Dr Penny Rush
2:15pm-3:00pm	Concurrent paper Session 2	
	Building NDS17, Level 1, Lecture Theatre, 22 City Road	Building: NDS15: Room 102 School of Law, Level 1, 29 Shepherd Street
	A Camusian Perspective On Journalism and How Fake Can a News Be Carl Jayson Hernandez	The Struggle for Truth and the Path of Wisdom: Some Reflections on St. Bonaventure's <i>De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam</i> Professor Moses Aaron T. Angeles
3:00pm – 3:30pm	Afternoon tea	
3:30pm – 4:15pm	Session 3	
	C.S. Lewis and Patrick Deenan on Aquinas's <i>acedia</i> and <i>curiositas</i> Christian Stephens	
4:15pm – 5:00pm	Session 4	
	Authority and Education in the Time of Fake News Levine Andro Lao	
5:00pm-5:45pm	Session 5	
	An Integral Understanding of Truth as the Event of Adequation: A Retrieval of St Thomas Aquinas' .. Bai Ziqiang	

COMIUCAP Conference 2019: Truth, Lies, Fake News and Moral Education
 Level 1, Lecture Theatre, 22 City Road, Chippendale

Day 2: Wednesday 29 May

9:30am – 10:45am	<p>Keynote address Higher education and the pursuit of truth: Breathing new life into an old ideal Professor Peter Roberts</p>
10:45am – 11:00 am	<p>Morning tea</p>
11:00am – 11:45am	<p>Session 6</p>
	<p>Aquinas' <i>Distinguo</i> as means towards the Truth: A Thomistic Synthesis of Creation and Evolution Reuel Rito Seno</p>
11:45am – 12:30pm	<p>Session 7</p>
	<p>Lying as Unnatural Vice Jeremy Bell</p>
12:30pm – 1:45pm	<p>Lunch (Catholic Mass available at St Benedict's Church 12:35pm-1:05pm)</p>
1:45pm-2:30pm	<p>Session 8</p>
	<p>Nietzsche: truth, perspectivism and his concern with <i>Bildung</i> Dr Steven Stolz</p>
2:30pm – 3:15pm	<p>Session 9</p>
	<p>Li, Yi, And Duty: The Categorical Imperative and <i>Tien Xia Da Tong</i> Anton Rennesland</p>
3:15pm – 3:30pm	<p>Afternoon Tea</p>
3:30pm – 4:15pm	<p>Session 10</p>
	<p>Recovering Truth: Countering the Downward Transcendence of Integral Reality Helena Pasztetnik</p>
4:15pm – 17:30pm	<p>Session 11</p>
	<p>Accuracy and Precision Messaging: A Preliminary Assessment Alfred Charles Co</p>
6:00pm – 8:00pm	<p>Conference Dinner Venue: Andiamo Trattoria, 9 Kensington Street, Chippendale Tel: 9280 0081</p>

COMIUCAP Conference 2019: Truth, Lies, Fake News and Moral Education
 Level 1, Lecture Theatre, 22 City Road, Chippendale

Day 3: Thursday 30 May

9:30am – 10:45am	Keynote address Truth in a World of Fake News and Lies Professor Jānis Ozoliņš
10:45am – 11:00 am	Morning tea
11:00am – 11:45am	Session 12
	An Aristotelian-Thomistic Critique of the Umberto Eco's Concept of the Power of Falsity Rudolf Seno
11:45am – 12:30pm	Session 13
	<i>The Attitude of Opposition</i> as a Service to The Truth in Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy of Community Blaise D. Ringor
12:30pm – 1:45pm	Lunch (Catholic Mass available at St Benedict's Church 12:35pm-1:05pm)
1:45pm-2:30pm	Session 14
	The Catholic Martyr and Foucault's <i>Parrhesia</i> Paul Dungca
2:30pm – 3:15pm	Session 15
	The Inescapable Desire for Truth Jamin Asay
3:15pm – 3:30pm	Conference Close
6:00pm	QndA: Media and Morals, hosted by IES St Benedict's Hall 104 Broadway (corner of Abercrombie Street) Refreshments from 6:00pm Panel discussion from 6.30pm

Abstracts

Keynote address

Professor Emeritus Alfredo P. Co, Ph.D.,
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

BETWEEN TRUTH AND FALSITY: Discoursing the Ancient Chinese Alternative to *Episteme* and *Doxa*

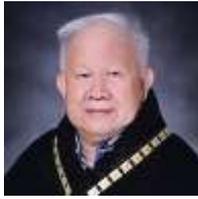
The paper takes you to the challenge of human search for Truth in reality and the discussion to an adventure in time—specifically, the axial age that sheds light on the predicament now challenging: the nagging issues of Truth, Lie, False New and Moral Education.

The paper problematizes the issue of how man understands the phenomenal world and how man rose to the search for epistemic truth from the simple, albeit 'humble' doxa. Along the discussion, we encounter various issues of language, logical categories, the dispute of reality as being or becoming, and these are all discoursed using the three ancient worldviews of Greece, India, and ancient China mediating as alternative.

The challenge of comprehending the world brings the discussion to the cogitations of ancient Greece, India, and China. The discussion reevaluates the meaning of Doxa and Episteme, and whether there is something between the two.

What do the Chinese see between doxa and episteme? What does it mean to cross the critical threshold of thought? Is it irrational thinking to veer away from the rigor of logical, epistemic, and metaphysical lexicons? At the end, this paper takes you to a more heightened, creative, adventure of thought – and takes you back to where the problems of Truth, Lies, False News and Moral Education all started.

Biography: Emeritus Professor Alfredo P. Co, PhD



Professor Emeritus Dr. Alfredo P. Co is an eminent professor of Chinese Philosophy and Comparative Philosophy at the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines. A well respected philosopher in the country, he is President of the prestigious Philippine Academy of Philosophical Research; Chair of the Technical Committee for Philosophy and Co-Chair of the Technical Panel for Humanities of the Philippine Commission on Higher Education. Alfred P. Co is Vice President for Asia of the Conférence Mondiale des Institutions Universitaires Catholiques de Philosophie and is a member of Académie du Midi. He was a Special Fellow of the Pacific Cultural Foundation of Taiwan and of the International Society for Intercultural Studies and Research (India).

Professor Co graduated with a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Santo Tomas in 1976. He holds two post-doctorates: on Ancient Chinese Philosophy from the Chinese University of Hong Kong as a special scholar, and on Comparative Philosophy in Sorbonne (Université de Paris III and Université de Paris IV) as a French Government Scholar.

He is a well-published scholar with some of his works translated into different languages such as Spanish, Polish, French, and others. He has lectured in numerous international conferences in Canada, China, France, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey, and the Vatican, among others.

In 2009, Professor Co was the first to be honored with an eight-volume Festschrift by the University of Santo Tomas in its 400-year history and is considered a milestone in the history of philosophy in the Philippines. Then in 2017, he was conferred the title Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, making him one of the only 14 to be conferred such a distinction since the university's foundation in 1611, and the first ever in Philosophy.

Keynote address

Professor Jānis (John) Tāivaldis Ozoliņš
The University of Notre Dame Australia
University of Latvia
University of Divinity

Truth in a World of Fake News and Lies

The rise of post-modernity, as well as post-structuralism has resulted in an increasingly sceptical stance about the possibility of truth. Neither, however, are entirely responsible for the rise of relativism and individualism. Individualism in the West has its roots in liberalism and its more extreme offshoot, libertarianism manifested in economic rationalism and market capitalism. Freedom is conceived as freedom from all constraints and so the only guide to how individuals should act is based on their emotional reactions at a particular time. It is the emotion felt at a particular time that validates an action and absolves individuals from responsibility, except in a vicarious kind of way, of the consequences of their actions. Expressions, such as “my truth” suggest that truth has no intersubjective dimension nor connection to an external world. The intent of this paper is to explore some of the issues arising from the ignoring of truth in the modern world, and to warn of their dangers. It will be argued that a practical conception of truth, linked to practical wisdom, that provides a robust means of good decision-making is a good antidote to the misinformation, fake news and lies which appear everywhere. The paper will draw on some of the great philosophical minds of the past, such as Plato and Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas to retrieve a conception of truth that provides an alternative to the impoverished conceptions of truth that have led to its absence in much of modern discourse, and that have resulted in the acceptance of “fake news” and lies as common phenomena in the public space.

Biography: Professor Jānis (John) Tāivaldis Ozoliņš



Jānis (John) Tāivaldis Ozoliņš FHERDSA, FPESA, FACE, Foreign Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, is Professor in the College of Philosophy and Theology, University of Notre Dame Australia, Honorary Fellow and Guest Professor, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, Adjunct Lecturer, Catholic Theological College, University of Divinity, Melbourne and Professor of Philosophy (retired), Australian Catholic University. He was also Inaugural Crawford Miller Visiting Research Fellow at St. Cross College, Oxford. He has been a Visiting Professor at Wuhan University, Wuhan China and University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas. He is Editor of *Analysis and Metaphysics*, former Editor of *Res Disputandae*, formerly *Ethics Education*, and an editorial consultant on a number of international refereed journals. He has interests in the metaphysics of Aquinas, Eastern philosophy, philosophy of education and applied ethics and has numerous publications in these areas. His work has been translated into French, Spanish, Turkish, Polish and Chinese. His most recent publications include *Education and the Pursuit of Wisdom* (Routledge, 2019), *Civil Society, Education and Human Formation* (Routledge, 2017).

Keynote address

Professor Peter Roberts

University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Higher education and the pursuit of truth: Breathing new life into an old ideal

There is a deep historical connection between higher education and the pursuit of truth. This paper considers the fate of this ideal in the so-called 'post-truth' era. Situating developments in higher education in their broader economic, social and political contexts, the paper discusses some of the ways in which truth has been compromised and contested within and beyond the academy. Against the spirit of the times, it makes a case for the ongoing importance, in teaching, research and wider educational life, of the search for truth. It will be argued that truth still matters, and that from an educational perspective, some truths matter more than others.

Biography: Professor Peter Roberts



Peter Roberts is Professor of Education at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. His primary areas of scholarship are philosophy of education and educational policy studies. His most recent books include *Education and the Limits of Reason: Reading Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nabokov* (with Herner Saeverot, 2018), *Happiness, Hope, and Despair: Rethinking the Role of Education* (2016), *Education, Ethics and Existence: Camus and the Human Condition* (with Andrew Gibbons and Richard Heraud, 2015), *Better Worlds: Education, Art, and Utopia* (with John Freeman-Moir, 2013), *The Virtues of Openness: Education, Science, and Scholarship in the Digital Age* (with Michael Peters, 2011), *Paulo Freire in the 21st Century: Education, Dialogue, and Transformation* (2010), and *Neoliberalism, Higher Education and Research* (with Michael Peters, 2008). Professor Roberts is the Director of the Educational Theory, Policy and Practice Research Hub at the University of Canterbury, and is a past President of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia. In 2012 he was a Rutherford Visiting Scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge, and in 2016 he was a Canterbury Fellow at the University of Oxford.

Abstracts

The Struggle for Truth and the Path of Wisdom: Some Reflections on St. Bonaventure's *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*

Moses Aaron T. Angeles
Profesor, San Beda University, Manila, Philippines

The subtle equilibrium between faith and reason, between philosophy and theology that St. Bonaventure argued sustainably can be found in a short work entitled "*De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*", or "The Reduction of the Arts to Theology". The text is a crucial one in understanding St. Bonaventure's stance on the dynamics of faith, reason, and truth. The leading back of the arts and sciences to theology forms the backbone of the text. It is in the study of God's revelation that cognition of God, by which all knowledge leads to, encapsulates the multiform dimension of the same Truth expressed in different ways.

But in a highly secularized society, can this kind of discourse be sustained? St. Bonaventure's notion of wisdom and the struggle for Truth are anchored on what is most basic and most fundamental in the human person – happiness. The sense of urgency and passionate force of his philosophico-theological insights leads us to a foundational unity of knowledge that is at once contemporary and refreshing.

Biography: Moses Aaron T. Angeles, Ph.D. is currently Full Professor of Philosophy of the Department of Social Sciences and the Humanities and Vice Dean for the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Cluster of the College of Arts and Sciences, San Beda University, Manila, The Philippines. His research interests include Medieval Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Modern Political Philosophy, and Continental Philosophy.

The Inescapable Desire for Truth

Jamin Asay
Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Hong Kong

In the past few years, the proliferation of fake news and discourse surrounding it has brought the concept of ‘post-truth’ to the public’s attention. Oxford Dictionaries declared ‘post-truth’ their word of the year in 2016, defining it as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”. Sometimes the concept is deployed in service of the idea that growing numbers of people are indifferent regarding whether or not their beliefs are true. In fact, writer Steve Tesich—in the essay in which he coins ‘post-truth’—asserts that “we have acquired a spiritual mechanism that can denude truth of any significance”. The idea is that one indication that we have moved into a post-truth political era is that we increasingly care less and less about our beliefs being true.

My contention is that, in whatever ways contemporary political discourse has moved in a post-truth direction, it cannot be the case that one aspect of that shift involves indifference regarding whether or not our beliefs are true. My argument looks to the nature of and interconnections between truth, belief, and desire, and defends the idea that it’s incoherent not to care about whether or not one’s beliefs are true. Insofar as we have beliefs about the world, we *ipso facto* have a concern for truth. Hence, we need to offer a competing analysis of the various phenomena that are leading commentators to see in contemporary political discourse an apparent lack of concern for the truth. There are all sorts of salient barriers at the moment to discovering the truth, but it would be a mistake to interpret them as revealing a growing indifference toward truth as such. The desire for truth is inescapable, even in epistemically troubling times.

Biography: Jamin Asay is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hong Kong. Previously he taught at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, and at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, from which he received his Ph.D. His main research areas are in metaphysics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science. He is the author of *The Primitivist Theory of Truth* and a forthcoming monograph on truthmaker theory, both with Cambridge University Press.

An Integral Understanding of Truth as the Event of Adequation: A Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas

Bai Ziqiang. University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

Human being, says John Paul II, may be defined as “the one who seeks the truth.” (*Fides et Ratio*, n. 28) Yet, it is not simply partial or provisional truths that humans seek. Because, the partial or provisional truths can be easily misleading or even manipulated to the effect that partial truths become complete lies. The truth that is really sought after by human beings must have a certain integrity, such that it can stand as the “foundation of human, personal and social existence.” (*Fides et Ratio*, n. 5)

In fact, St. Thomas’s understanding of truth encompasses such integrity and goes beyond it. Because, though St. Thomas holds the relation of adequation between intellect and reality as constitutive to the essence of truth, he understands adequation not as a shallow relation between a thing and its image in the mirror, but, in the words of Catherine Pickstock, as “an event which realises or fulfils the being of things known just as much as it fulfils truth in the knower’s mind.” (*New Blackfriars*, 81, 2000, 312) In this paper, I will discuss St. Thomas’s analogical understanding of truth as the event of adequation. Specifically speaking, I will discuss St. Thomas’s understanding of truth as the events of epistemological adequation, metaphysical adequation and moral adequation.

Epistemologically, truth entails twofold assimilation that is adequate, i.e., the assimilation of the mind to reality and reality to the mind. Metaphysically, since truth is “the ultimate end of the entire universe,” (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 1, n. 1) epistemological truth also opens itself and participates into the metaphysical event of the entire universe’s adequation to the divine intellect, i.e., “the first author and mover of the universe.” (*Ibid.*) Morally, since truth is not an indifferent adequation but a good of the mind, (*Ibid.*) it is destined to be adequately shared for the building up of the human community. By building up the human community which is a special part of the universe, truth as a moral adequation would also come out as metaphysically tinged.

Bai Ziqiang is a holder of Doctorate of Sacred Theology from the University of Santo Tomas (UST), Manila, Philippines. Born in China on March 15, 1982, I finished all my primary and secondary studies in China from 1992 to 2004. After a special training in English for more than a year, I enrolled myself in UST for all my tertiary studies from 2006 to 2017 (interrupted by three years of pastoral work as an assistant parish priest in China from 2013-2016), i.e., Bachelor in Philosophy, Bachelor in Theology, Licentiate in Theology and Doctorate in Theology.

Lying as unnatural vice

Jeremy Bell

Lecturer, Philosophy, History and Theology, Campion College, Sydney

A lie, meaning a falsehood intended to deceive, is always at least venially sinful. This was the view of both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, and it is also the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§2485). Yet most of us, Catholic or otherwise, find it difficult to accept that lies are never permissible. Lying out of politeness or to spare an invalid distress are not obviously wrong. No one doubts that concealing the truth (e.g. by equivocating) is sometimes permissible; why, then, should outright lying always be impermissible? The textbook case of lying to Gestapo agents about the Jews hidden under one's floorboards suggests that it may occasionally be wrong *not* to lie.

Contemporary moral philosophers such as Sissela Bok and Bernard Williams hold that lying is (normally) wrong because it is in some way antisocial. Even when it goes undetected and does no particular harm, it is manipulative. This approach, however, tends to undermine the rigorist thesis that lying is *never* permissible. Misleading by equivocating seems no less manipulative than outright lying, but it is sometimes permissible. It is unsurprising that few, if any, contemporary secular philosophers agree with Kant and the Augustinian Catholic tradition that lying is wrong under any circumstances.

The subject of this paper is Aquinas' quite different approach to the problem of lying. According to Aquinas, lying is wrong, not primarily because it is antisocial, but because it is an abuse of the faculty of speech. It is "unnatural" to speak *contra mentem*, because "words are naturally signs of intellectual acts". Just as bestiality is an abuse of the generative power and thus "against nature", so too is lying against nature. This is why it is *never* permissible. Aquinas' argument seemingly fails to do justice to our intuitions regarding the essentially social significance of lying. Like other "traditional" natural-law arguments, it also seems open to Humean or Moorean strictures on deriving moral "oughts" from natural facts. I seek to show that, despite these and other difficulties, it merits our serious attention.

Biography: **Jeremy Bell** is a lecturer in philosophy, history and theology, at Campion College, Sydney. Jeremy studied philosophy and Jewish history at the University of Sydney. In 2006 he was awarded a General Sir John Monash Award to support him in his doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of Chicago. While in Chicago, he converted to Catholicism. His doctoral dissertation was on Elizabeth Anscombe's philosophy of mind. Since returning to Sydney, he has worked at Notre Dame, Broadway and Campion College, teaching both history and philosophy.

Accuracy and Precision Messaging: A Preliminary Assessment

Alfred-Charles Co
Tsinghua University, Beijing China

The mass media have always played a central role in political communication. The last decade had seen the rise of Social Media and its widespread adoption across demographics, and this has subsequently led to their near instant adoption as instrument of mass communication in various domains of human social, political and recently even religious movements to help persuade and campaign for public support. Social media has thus become the main focus of a lot a recent studies and those works are mostly quantitative in character and little effort is done to give space for more qualitative assessment or comparisons regarding the use of Social Media between different political systems. There is need for a qualitative description and theorizing of the role that the Social Media plays in these various domains of social, political and even religious life.

This paper attempts for a more holistic, albeit, less quantitative assessment with the intention of having a better understanding of the role played by the new media.

Preliminary assessment can be directed to the understanding of it as an organizational tool, a fundraising tool, an advocacy tool and as a public relations tool.

At present, traditional concepts and theories of communication derived from studies of traditional forms of media are still the most widely used lenses from which people are made to understand information in social media phenomena.

My discussion will touch on the role of predictive analytics in the new media and the paper will wind up with a discussion of the theory that social media serves as a guide, in various ways and to varying degrees of accuracy and precision, as a tool that aids social institutions in targeting their messages to help increase the probability of successful persuasion and generating support will from here be referred to as *Accuracy and Precision Messaging Theory* (APMT). This study ends with the suggestion that *Accuracy and Precision Messaging Theory* be quantitatively verified, and qualitatively compared between different social/political systems.

Biography: Alfred Charles Co is a PhD candidate at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. He is a Chinese Filipino, living in Manila.

TheHappyManifesto – Three Rules For Happier Students

Phillip D. Cortez, MCM
Author and Speaker

Something is missing in classrooms across America, Western Europe and across the globe. While students, young and old, focus on core learnings designed to advance careers and livelihoods, such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, we have seemed to have created a void in this hyper-competitive atmosphere.

We're living with a *happiness* void.

Lost in this hyper-competitive, dog-eat-dog atmosphere are the concepts of empathy and character, both of which are critical ingredients to being happier individuals. It's an atmosphere that goes beyond classrooms and into newsrooms, where the concept of being #1 is a ripe for opportunities to present fake news, allowing readers and viewers to shape shift headlines to meet their own beliefs and values.

The purpose of the presentation is to go back to basics, bring empathy and understanding back to the forefront, and follow three simple, yet effective rules that students and professionals of all ages can apply in their every day environments so that they can live happier, more fulfilling lives.

Biography: Phillip D. Cortez is an independent author and speaker

The Catholic Martyr and Foucault's *Parrhesia*

Paul Dungca, SDB
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

In an age where conservation of youth and worldly life is glorified, martyrdom is an alien concept. The *Catechism of the Catholic Faith* conceives of martyrdom as the “supreme witness given to the truth of faith: it means bearing witness even unto death (no. 2473).” Contemporary thinkers have been looking for an exemplar of a genuine truth-teller and a Christian martyr is rarely considered.

In his work *Fearless Speech*, Foucault contemplates of the notion of *parrhesia*, the act of telling the truth. He commences and clinches his work by claiming that he is not after the act of truth-telling but is rather considering in depth the qualifications of a truth-teller. In the process of problematizing the *parrhesia*, he has profiled who a genuine truth-teller is.

In this paper, I shall argue, that a Christian martyr is not just faith-defender but more so a practitioner of political *parrhesia* of Foucault. I shall contest that a martyr has a critical and pedagogical role to play that can transform the citizens so that they will serve the best interests of the Church and the state.

The paper opens with the reading and reviewing of the *Fearless Speech*. From which, the *parrhesiastic* character and attitude of a truth-teller are abstracted. These shall be critiqued side-by-side with the lives of three martyrs who have proven that faith and politics can never be dichotomized in defending the Truth.

This work aims at presenting the martyrs philosophically and politically as pedagogical models in morally educating the young people and journalists to love and search for the truth.

Biography: Paul Aldrin P. Dungca, SDB is a Salesian seminarian who takes his master's degree in the University of Santo Tomas (UST), Manila. Currently, he is writing his thesis entitled: “Searle's Notion of Man in A.I. Predictive Policing as a Challenge to Aquinas' Anthropology” under the supervision of the Professor Emeritus Alfredo Co of UST.

A Camusian Perspective On Journalism And How Fake Can A News Be

Carl Jayson Hernandez
Lecturer, Mary the Queen School of Malolos, Philippines

Albert Camus, by his life and his works, exemplify what it is to be a journalist. Being for a time in the said line of work, he used it to profess the truth before, during, and even after the war. Some of the important moments are his exposition on the Kabylia region of Algeria, his participation in the underground newspaper (Combat), and his condemnation of the Hiroshima Bombing. Even when his view was unpopular to the trend, he still voiced out the moral side of news writing. However, he himself was a victim of fake news and was often misquoted.

Hence, the paper will be divided into two main parts: the first part deals with an exposition on how Camus' life exemplify what journalism should be. Second, the issue of fake news will be discussed. Given the level of objectivity regarding news writing, the question of the reliability on how true can a news be will be the focus of the discourse. Here, his works will be referred to, especially a reinterpretation of Camus' *The Fall*, shedding further light to *unreliability*.

Biography: Carl Jayson Hernandez is a lecturer at the Mary the Queen School of Malolos. He studied at the Immaculate Conception Major Seminary at Guiguinto, Bulacan (Philippines), where he earned his A.B. Philosophy. He is currently studying M.A. in Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas.

Authority And Education In The Time Of Fake News

Levine Andrew Lao
Lecturer, Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy
University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines.

In 1940, Jacques Maritain, a neo-Thomist, gave a commentary on the Aquinas Lecture of Yves Simon, which was about the notion of authority. In these discussions, several propositions may prove important in understanding the key concepts in the theme conference theme “Truth, Lies, Fake News and Moral Education.” These same propositions, I intend to use in my claim that there is still a certain kind of authority that can and should thrive in this era of, arguably, radical tolerance of just about anything.

During the 19th century, it became evident that the rise of social liberties meant the decline of authority. Both Maritain and Simon lamented this “disgraceful” turn, agreeing that, in this situation, highlighted was the incongruence between the actual political life of individuals in a society and how they thought about their political life. We are reminded here of our time, where social media trolls, commandeered by the purveyors of fake news, distort even their very own perception of reality from how it truly is. For our contemporary philosophers, in these instances, the society needs to strengthen a certain kind of authority, one that is not in the form of dominion of servitude, rather, that which empowers human persons to reasonably act as one towards a common good.

To further understand the latter, ample discussion on prudential judgment is needed. The truth of a person’s prudence depends on his particular kind of appetite, which he develops over years of experience and moral education. It cannot be calculated as we do in the hard sciences. However, despite the natural diversity of prudential judgments, the society can aid in developing in persons the moral appetite that is not limited to a singular person, instead, one that accords with others’ desire to pursue the common welfare of the members of a society.

Recovering Truth: Countering the Downward Transcendence of Integral Reality

Helenka Pasztetnik

Associate Lecturer of Theology, The University of Notre Dame Australia.

Jean Baudrillard has argued that objective reality has been replaced by integral reality in our hyperreal world. This presentation will analyse Baudrillard's main claim regarding integral reality and apply it to the epistemological question of knowing truth, and the moral question of desiring to know truth. The central concern of the paper will revolve around the question whether it is still possible to know and live according to truth in a world of virtual reality where it has become impossible to distinguish between representation and illusion. This paper will conclude with the claim that the only way to counter the downward transcendence of integral reality is through intellectual and moral asceticism and purification, in order to regain sensitivity to the transcendentals of beauty, goodness and truth. This will be presented as the most pressing task of a Christian education today.

Biography: Helenka Pasztetnik is an Associate Lecturer of Theology at the University of Notre Dame Australia. She is currently completing her doctorate in moral theology, particularly focusing on the effects of digitally mediated images on our desire for union with God. Helenka holds a Master of Sacred Theology from the John Paul II Institute and a Bachelor of Arts from ACU.

Li, Yi, And Duty: The Categorical Imperative And *Tien Xia Da Tong*

Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland
University of Santo Tomas Manila, Philippines

I present a creative dialogue between Kant's Categorical Imperative and *Tien Xia Da Tong* as a play between action (*li*), proclivity (*yi*), and education-imperative (duty): the 'moral law within' is an internal disposition to an external reality as *all in harmony under*, the 'starry heavens above.'

For Kant, there is only one good will and it becomes the duty of each to align one's will to that. The ideogram of *yi* suggests a point of convergence—a 'duty imposed upon me.' The duty to act accordingly is a result of moral education: right conduct (*li*) is the expression of this moral consciousness (*yi*). Actions are understood through *Wu Lun* yet go further: The externality of goodness is rooted not merely in the relation itself (i.e. the person at the receiving end) but in an internal alignment to the good will, which begets *Tien Xia Da Tong*, in harmony to their moral-imperative espoused by their *Ming*. Hence, moral education is as a rectification of names (*Zheng Ming*), which justly is the activity of practical reason. Repeating an action (*li*) effects an exterior cultivation and a sense of harmony in relations, yet above all it is an internal acquiescence to the good will—a disposition to goodness, to humanity, to truth. *All in harmony under heaven* is when all act independent of external expectation (*li*), internalizing the action to a moral cultivation (*yi*), a duty of alignment to the good will.

Biography: Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, and is currently undertaking his master's studies. His essay "5 Assumptions on the Illusion 'Filipino Philosophy' (A Prelude to Cultural Critique)" won top prize at the *Don Isabelo de los Reyes Philosophical Essay Writing Contest*, sponsored by the Philosophical Association of the Philippines, on new themes for Filipino Philosophy. His research interests include Aesthetics, Social and Political Philosophy, Critical Theory, Nietzsche, Kant.

The Attitude of Opposition as a Service to The Truth in Karol Wojtyla's Philosophy of Community

Blaise D. Ringor
University of Santo Tomas

The world today is marked by the profound revolution that it had discovered: the social media. This platform is considered as one of the most helpful tools in communication from one person to another or even to a larger scale of group. Nevertheless, with all the greatness and opportunities that it offers, it cannot still be denied that it renders forms of abuses such as, to name a few, cyberbullying that humiliates others, cybersex that uses the sexuality of a person as a means towards an unending pleasure of many, and e-money scamming as a form of technologically-enhanced stealing.

The root of these abuses can be traced in *relativism* (*Fides et Ratio*, n.5) which splinters the truth by promoting that there is no universal ground of truth that one can discover and *nihilism* (*Ibid.* n.90) which fosters the thinking that everything has no meaning, and if there is truth one can never discover it anyway. Hence, the social media platform, instead of being a vessel of truth, becomes the apparatus of smokescreen to hide the reality.

Opposition, despite its vital importance, is one of the most discarded campaign ideas against the disrupt of truth. This is because many people choose to side with those who are in power. Karol Wojtyla's philosophy of the community teaches the importance of the *attitude of opposition* in the community for it promotes participation to the common good which is the central sphere of the community.

This attitude, of course, must not be self-serving but truth-serving. Hence, this teaching of Wojtyla is an important voice to hear in this age that is shaped by social media for it removes the splinter in the eyes of the many caused by lies. With this in mind, this paper attempts to answer the question: how can the *attitude of opposition* serves the truth?

Biography: **Blaise D. Ringor** earned his Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from *Immaculate Conception Major Seminary*, Tabe, Guiguinto Bulacan, Philippines. He wrote his thesis on Karol Wojtyla which was awarded as one of the best theses. He also published two articles in the same institution on the thoughts of Karol Wojtyla. At present, he studies M.A. Philosophy at the Pontifical and Royal Catholic University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila.

Truth's Tensions

Penny Rush

Lecturer, School of Philosophy and Theology, The University of Notre Dame Australia

The twin tensions inherent in the concept of the transcendence of truth, on the one hand, and of truth's accessibility on the other, are nothing new to western philosophy. Western, analytic philosophy, whatever else it does, returns again and again to the apparent incompatibility of these two concepts. Indeed it could be argued that this compulsive interest is at the heart of the story of philosophy itself.

Our core intuitions about truth center on it seeming to hold outside, or independent of, human activity and existence; and it being (minimally, possibly) accessible. The puzzle lies in the notion that what we can access can't also transcend our own capacities. This paper, while resisting going over well-trod ground, turns again to these tensions, aiming to appreciate them both in a new way.

In the first instance, it argues that there are indeed two tensions at play, and that these tensions are indeed twin, insofar as each inhere in the concept of truth itself. It then considers frameworks with potential to accommodate both without sacrificing the intuitive appeal of either. This consideration draws from a variety of ideas, including elements of Murdoch's attention epistemology, Holland's notion of humility, McDowell's notion of 'friction', and Barad's agential realism. Two key values arise: that of humility and of optimism, both of which share an important relationship with truth's twin tensions.

The concluding section of the paper contends that neither tension should be neglected in any analysis of truth, nor can either be resolved. From there, it offers a brief exploration of what this then means for our human endeavor, in particular our concepts of knowledge, understanding and reality.

Biography: Penelope Rush, PhD is a lecturer in the School of Philosophy and Theology, Notre Dame, Sydney. Although Penny's primary focus since graduating has been on the philosophy of mathematics, she has taught and researched philosophy across almost every area (from Gender studies to Continental philosophy to pure logic) for over 15 years. In recent years she has been the invited guest speaker for the Annual Berkeley Lecture, Maynooth University, National University of Ireland, a guest Lecturer for the Royal Institute of Philosophy's Annual Lecture series: Metaphysics; and a Visiting Fellow to the project 'Foundations of Logical Consequence', Arché Centre, St Andrews University, Scotland.

An Aristotelian-Thomistic Critique of the Umberto Eco's Concept of the Power of Falsity

Rudolf Steven N. Seño, OP
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In the first chapter of his book *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, Umberto Eco explores the possibility of the “force of falsity” (title of the chapter, 1-2). False information, when presumed to be true, could have positive consequences. The truth is discovered in a serendipitous, lunatic, or accidental way.

The accidental discovery of America is an example. It was discovered by means of a mistake of Columbus. Thinking that the earth was smaller than it actually was, he bravely sailed the vast Pacific Ocean hoping to reach Asia. The sages of Salamanca, getting their calculations right, was aware of the actual size of the earth. They discouraged him from sailing because of the long travel it will take. Thanks to the mistake of Columbus and not heeding the suggestion of the Salamanca advisors (even though they were correct in their calculations), America was discovered. A new truth (existence of a continent) was revealed.

Another one would be the alleged Donation of Constantine transferring the power of the emperor to the pope. This document has proven to be inauthentic.

[Y]et, without that document, without a profound belief in its authenticity, European history would have followed a different course: no conflict over investitures, no mortal struggle for the Holy Roman Empire, no temporal power of the popes, no slap at Agnani, but also no Sistine Chapel (Eco, 1998, 7)

The legend of Prester John goes along the same line. It is about the existence of a Christian priest in the east (beyond the Islamic land), being validated by a letter. This was also proven to be a hoax. But it was fortuitous in encouraging the expansion of the missions.

Many of these theories have been expounded in Eco's novel *Baudolino*, New York: Harcourt Inc., 2000. Such theory of serendipities is not only interesting but also entertaining. But it has some flaws. It seems to assert that truth is just relative. What may be true today, may be false tomorrow. It could also show that truth is just a matter of politics. The powerful determine the truth. Unfortunately it does not see the big picture. Just like his character Baudolino, Eco “confused what [he] saw with what [he] wanted to see.” (2000, 30)

This paper proposes an alternative perspective on how to view the serendipities without having recourse to falsity. Using Thomas Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, I hope to make sense of small truths including that of superstitions and explain why they appear to be in the guise of falsity.

Biography: **Fr. Rudolf Steven N. Seño, OP, PhL** is a Filipino Dominican priest. He teaches Philosophy in the Ecclesiastical Faculty of Philosophy in the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines. He is the treasurer of the Institute of Preaching, Assistant Parish Priest of the Santo Domingo Parish, and the Prefect of Studies of the Dominican Student Brothers in Santo Domingo, Quezon City.

Aquinas's *Distinguo* as means towards the Truth: A Thomistic Synthesis of Creation and Evolution

Reuel Rito N. Seño

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The word “creation” is derived from the Latin word *creatio* (noun *creatio, creationis*), which can mean “begetting children; creating or producing”; or commonly characterized as “to make something out of nothing” – *creatio ex nihilo* that is why it is an act but proper to God alone.

On the other hand, the term “evolution” is defined as the “change of organic species over time”. The nearest Latin word maybe *evolvo* (verb, which means “to roll out, unroll). But there is also the Latin noun *mutatio* were we derive the English word “mutation” which means “change or alteration”.

There is an old Latin adage which says, “*Concede parum, nega frequentuer, distingue semper*”, which is roughly translated as “concede little, frequently negate, always distinguish”. It proposes that we should always try to discern the truth which may lie hidden in whatever idea or human experience we may encounter, casting a thoughtful gaze upon the world and marvels which it contains so as to find the ray of truth that may enlighten a particular concept. During Medieval history it is a warning against the dangers of over-generalization. In the same vein, there is this interesting book entitled “On Freeing Myself from a Full Nelson Hold and other sonnets” by Paul Bussan, which contains a sonnet entitled “Thomistic Advice” whose first line says: “Seldom affirm, never deny, always distinguish”. This process or concept of *distiguo* or “I distinguish” puts forward the unique and brilliant style of searching for the truth.

There would seem to be some sort of irreconcilable differences or even conflict between the concepts of “creation” and “evolution” yet we still continue to aver that there is good evidence for evolution and creation and that the former is not against the former much less the Doctrine of Creation, that states that “God gives being to everything that is and He (God) sustains everything that there is”.

Biography: Reuel Rito N. Seño is an Assistant Professorial Lecturer in De La Salle University, De La Salle-College of St. Benilde and Miriam College teaching Theology, Religious Education and Philosophy subjects. He has been in the academe for more than a decade. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the Philippine Dominican Center of Institutional Studies (PDCIS), Bachelors in Sacred Theology (Ecclesiastical Degree) from the Ecclesiastical Faculty of Theology, University of Santo Tomas; a Master of Arts Degree in

Theology (Equivalency) granted by the Commission on Higher Education. He is taking his Doctorate degree in Philosophy at the University of the Philippines, Diliman and is writing a Dissertation Proposal on Thomas Aquinas. He has presented several research papers locally and abroad of which some have been published. He is also a recollection and retreat facilitator for more than a decade now. His research interests are in the areas of Theology, Religious Education and Philosophy.

C.S. Lewis and Patrick Deenan on Aquinas's *acedia* and *curiositas*

Christian Stephens

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In an article entitled, 'How a Generation Lots Its Common Culture,' Professor Patrick Deenan of Notre Dame (USA) warns us that, 'We have fallen into... thinking that our educational system is broken, but it is working on all cylinders. What our educational system aims to produce is cultural amnesia, a wholesale lack of curiosity, history-less free agents, and educational goals composed of content-free processes and unexamined buzz-words like "critical thinking," "diversity," "ways of knowing," "social justice," and "cultural competence."' "

Deenan's insights may well be the fulfilment of a danger foreseen nearly 80 years ago by C.S. Lewis. His fictional demon Screwtape, insists on getting humans to think not in terms of true or false, but whether something is 'academic', 'practical', 'contemporary', 'conventional', etc. One must not allow human reason to awaken (even to argue *against* Christian claims), and the most effective tool to prevent such is to have them only attend to 'the stream of immediate sense experiences.' The capacity for this relentless 'streaming' has increased exponentially with the arrival of the internet, smart phone and social media.

I will then suggest that the habits of thinking which Deenan and Lewis diagnose are in fact an uncanny combination of two vices identified by St Thomas Aquinas, nearly 800 years ago, as *acedia* and *curiositas*. Finally, that the cure and anecdote for these will be the re-discovery of two classical principles: firstly, that the truth is essential for human flourishing. Secondly, that since there is a hierarchy of truths; not all that *can* be known is worth knowing. One must form the habits by which one removes oneself from the endless 'stream' of superficial news and information which dulls, bores and saddens, in order to attain the eternal and inseparable goals of a true moral education: knowledge and love of God, my neighbour and myself.

Biography: **Christian Stephens** is a lecturer in the School of Philosophy and Theology, University of Notre Dame, Sydney. He has Masters degrees in philosophy and theology, and is currently undertaking doctoral research on the nature of idolatry in the thought of Aquinas, and it's contemporary applications.

Nietzsche: truth, perspectivism, and his concern with *Bildung*

Steven A. Stolz

Senior Lecturer, School of Education, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

Often Nietzsche is wrongfully associated with the rejection, or denial of truth; however, at no point does he suggest that notions of “truth”, “truths”, and “truthfulness” should be abandoned altogether as an epistemic ideal. Unfortunately, one reading concerning Nietzsche’s perspectivism has become *de rigueur* in the secondary literature and more pronounced outside the community of Nietzsche scholars. As such, the aim of my presentation will be two-fold: (1) for the sake of conceptual clarity, I will discuss Nietzsche’s position on truth and his use of interpretation as a means of distinguishing knowledge from “perspectives” and “affective interpretations” employed in the *search* for truth in most human contexts; and, (2) I will argue that Nietzsche’s concern with *Bildung* to a large degree brings together the central tenets of his thinking to emphasise an ethics of character that is meant to serve as an alternative approach to cultivating character or the self in such a way that it reveals “what one is” now (*being*), and who they could become (*becoming*).

Biography: Steven A. Stolz, PhD is a Senior Lecturer at La Trobe University, Australia. Before he became an academic, he taught for 10 years as a secondary school teacher in the following curriculum areas: mathematics, science, religious education, health and physical education. He also has a background in analytical and continental traditions of philosophy which has led to a diverse array of research interests that range from: philosophy of action, ethics/moral philosophy, aesthetics, epistemology, and phenomenology. At the moment, his primary area of scholarship is concerned with educational philosophy and theory, but he also has a particular interest in the areas of embodied cognition, narrative enquiry, and learning theories in psychology. His scholarship is best described as being located at the intersection between education and philosophy, particularly how theory informs practice, and/or how practice informs theory.



Media and Morality

The digital age and the rise of social media have brought about a proliferation of news and information along with a diverse range of views and opinion. Some say new forms of media enhance democratic and civic participation, while others worry about 'echo chambers' and increasing political polarisation.

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Date: 30 May 2019

Time: Refreshments from 6pm, Panel begins 6:30pm

Location: [St Benedict's Hall,](#)

[The University of Notre Dame Australia, 104 Broadway \(corner Abercrombie St\)](#)

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