

## **Editors' Preface**

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Welcome to the first open issue of *Expositions*. As will be our practice every fall, we are here publishing essays grounded in various disciplines, written on a variety of topics, and submitted independently of one another. An open issue is thus a microcosm of the university: scholars study what they want to study, but their work forms a kind of interdisciplinary whole.

### **The virtue of openness**

If the whole is to be a genuine one, however, rather than a jumble of disconnected thoughts, it must have something essential in common. “Openness” does not mean merely the license to study whatever one wishes; it demands more of our scholarship, not less. Truly interdisciplinary studies are “open” in the sense of inviting the serious and thoughtful reader to be curious about them all. When evaluating submissions for an open issue, therefore, we do not only ask whether they somehow combine the topics or methods of multiple disciplines. We are more interested in whether they speak to the living concerns of a wider audience of teachers and scholars. Articles that meet this standard give us good reason to be interested in disciplines other than our own. They also become all the more fruitful when read in one another’s company.

### **The current issue**

In the first of our articles, Kathleen Roberts Skerrett offers a Christian account of responsibility for others. Responding to the political theorist William Connolly, who accuses Augustine of spreading a politically manipulative moralism, Skerrett finds in Augustine an ethic rooted in generous love. Our second author, Roslyn Weiss, also investigates service to others, but her focus is on philosophers rather than saints. Socrates and Maimonides both educated other people at considerable cost to themselves, and, according to Weiss, this activity should be

understood as a real, if unorthodox, form of piety. Our third article, by James H. Johnson, is set on the operatic stage and devoted to vice rather than virtue. For Johnson, Mozart and da Ponte's *Don Giovanni* exemplifies a love that is neither generous nor responsible (to say nothing of philosophic), but which disarms critics and victims alike with its sincerity.

Finally, Dennis M. Weiss revisits the theme of our Spring 2007 issue by considering a matter of great controversy today. Whatever the humanities may reveal about human nature to this point, could that very nature be eradicated by the abuse of modern technology? Weiss argues that the best way to reach a balanced view of this debate is to keep it situated within the tradition of philosophical anthropology.

### **Upcoming themed issues**

Our articles in spring 2008 will be devoted to "Socratic Questions." Much is said in praise of Socratic method as an approach to teaching the humanities. Less is said, however, about how the specific questions that Socrates asked can help our study of texts other than Platonic dialogues. In our next issue, we will discover what happens when Socrates' questions are taken up by the likes of Augustine, Virginia Woolf, W.E.B. DuBois, and Walter Pater.

We are now accepting submissions for the Spring 2009 issue, for which our theme will be "Enchantment." What is the power of poetry in the soul? How should we understand such genres as magical realism or medieval romance? What is the place of enchantment in the modern world? How should we discuss the history of magic, alchemy, or astrology? We welcome submissions from scholars in literature, history, philosophy, theology, art, and all other humanities disciplines that can shed light on enchantment in its many senses.