



## Editorial

In December 2025, *Tattva Journal of Philosophy*, in conjunction with the Department of English and Cultural Studies of CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, and the Department of Philosophy of St. Anthony's College, Shillong, organised their third international conference. The overarching theme of the conference was "Living Ethically in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The present issue of *Tattva* comprises the papers presented at the aforementioned conference, in addition to articles devoted to questions in other philosophical disciplines, such as philosophy of language, theory of knowledge, and philosophy of science.

The first paper, by Abhinav Tyagi, entitled "Living ethically through our concepts: on the need for conceptual enhancement," posits the argument that our moral actions are contingent on moral concepts. However, these concepts have not always been a part of our conceptual repertoire, thus giving rise to the following questions: how can we lead an ethical life in the face of the historical contingency of our moral concepts, and how can we enhance our moral vocabulary? In order to address these questions, the author employs the methodology of conceptual engineering, with a particular focus on its functional approach. Conceptual engineering is a metaphilosophical concept that posits the notion that the question of what concepts are should be complemented by the question of what our concepts should be. The functionalist approach is predicated on the efficiency with which a concept performs its intended function. The in-depth analysis of the functionality of moral concepts demonstrates that they guide our moral and ethical life. This provides a compelling rationale for the assertion that we should adopt a positive stance in our engagement with these concepts.

In her paper "Between Practice and Principle: Understanding Ka Jingsneng Jingkraw as the Ethical Foundation of Khasi Moral Life" Wandashisha Mary Nongbri examines the relationship between moral teachings and the ethical life of the Khasi. These teachings should not be perceived as rigid rules but rather as dynamic examples of moral practice, shaping the behaviour of individuals and communities. This practice is founded on three tenets: to know man, to know God; to earn one's righteousness; to know one's maternal and paternal clans. Ka Jingsneng Jingkraw is an oral tradition that has been passed down through generations of the Khasi people, moulding their daily lives. It guides a person to live in harmony with others and to promote the well-being and dignity of the other. The author argues that Ka Jingsneng Jingkraw constitutes a distinctive philosophical system, one that is firmly embedded in teaching and indigenous wisdom. This system, the

author contends, is inextricably linked to the promotion of proper conduct, while also finding resonance with universal ethical concerns. It is evident that this tradition provides a comprehensive framework for understanding moral life as both a lived experience and a reflective practice.

The third article of this issue, by Anushka Malik and Bidyut Bhusan Jena, is entitled “The Grey Ethics of Fantasy Wars and Trauma: Portrayal of Select 21<sup>st</sup> Century Modern Fantasy Fiction.” The authors conducted a study of the portrayal of war in four fantasy fiction works, published between 2022 and 2024, in order to assess fresh developments in the ethics of war. They use Ray Dalio’s framework of the five major types of wars, Jeff McMahan’s theory of war ethics, and Judith Lewis Herman’s three-stage recovery model, which assesses the psychological impact of war on soldiers and civilians. The central thesis of this paper is as follows: Modern fantasy fiction works portray war as a morally ambiguous space influenced by political and economic systems, trauma, and psychological fragmentation. This thesis challenges the conventional frameworks of war ethics. In fact, modern fantasy fiction has replaced the age-old moral dichotomies of good and evil, embracing a “grey ethics.” Moreover, it maintains a degree of flexibility to adapt to the evolving landscape of war. Consequently, modern fantasy fiction provides a different and more nuanced depiction of conflict and war in comparison to traditional works and, as such, it should not be ignored.

In his article entitled “Wisdom and Knowledge,” Oushinar Nath defines wisdom as a virtue that is intimately connected with living well. This suggests the existence of a close connection between (practical) wisdom and living ethically. In this article, the author defends the weak reductionist thesis that propositional knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient for wisdom. In addition to possessing a general knowledge of living well, a wise person must also possess a particular knowledge of various facts relevant to specific situations. This suggests a critique of strong reductionism, i.e., the idea that general knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for wisdom, and non-reductionism, according to which wisdom is neither necessary nor sufficient for wisdom.

In his article, “Aristotle’s Concept of Metaphor,” Shibin Joseph puts forward the argument that scepticism concerning the cognitive significance of metaphors is rooted in a misinterpretation of Aristotle’s theory of the metaphor. Rather than an examination of contemporary responses to various aspects of the metaphor in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, the author instead focuses on the place and role of metaphors in the philosophical works of Aristotle. The author acknowledges Aristotle’s pioneering role in asserting that the metaphor is a rhetorical phenomenon and seems to lack any philosophical significance. However, he criticises the one-sidedness of this viewpoint by exploring whether a philosophical argument can be based on

metaphor. The conclusion drawn is that metaphors have a place in Aristotle's philosophy, especially when one discusses the ultimate universals, which lie at the limits of conceptualisation.

The sixth article, by Mudasir Tantray and Tariq Rafeeq Khan, engages with the question of the "Translation of Philosophy Texts into Kashmiri Language: Role and Current Challenges." Following a detailed description of the evolution of the Kashmiri language through different periods and an analysis of the influences it underwent in the course of history, the authors emphasise the importance of translating philosophical works into Kashmiri to enhance its richness, the dissemination of complex philosophical ideas among native speakers, and to preserve the Kashmiri language by introducing new terminology and concepts, thus keeping the language dynamic. The article demonstrates that the translation of philosophical ideas has had a profound influence on the development of scientific methodologies, ethical considerations, and technological advancements. Philosophical translation faces a series of specific challenges, stemming from the precise and abstract nature of philosophical terminology, which lacks equivalents in other languages. Translation also necessitates the capture of nuanced meanings, different interpretative possibilities, and context-specific applications. A particular challenge in translating into the Kashmiri language is that it has been influenced by Persian and Sanskrit, thus introducing a complex interplay of linguistic layers. The authors conclude that overcoming these challenges through the production of accurate translations will engender a more holistic understanding of the world, promote ethical innovation, and foster cross-cultural dialogue.

In his paper on "Enactive Perception vs Zen Perception: a thought experiment using Muller-Lyer Illusion," Navneet Chopra discusses two different conceptions of perception. Enactive perception is defined as the process through which perception emerges from the coupling between sensory and motor experiences. It is also characterised as a pragmatic need to act in the world under the (action) affordances offered by the environment to the organism. This finding suggests that objective perception is not possible. Zen perception, on the other hand, advocates the relinquishment of the quotidian constraints that encumber the perception of reality as it objectively is. This results in the conviction that true, objective perception is indeed possible. The author concludes that Zen practitioners cultivate a state of awareness that emphasises non-attachment and direct experience; yet they remain enactive beings who interpret the world based on lived experiences and contextual information. In other words, even a Zen master perceives the world through a lens shaped by prior experiences, cultural understanding, and situational context.

The subsequent article, authored by Himansu Sekhar Samal and entitled "Beyond Positivism: Habermas' Critical Engagement with Scientific Rationality," constitutes a critical discussion, from a Habermasian perspective, of the positivist or scientific assumption that social sciences should adopt the methods of natural science in order to provide real knowledge. Habermas contests this supposition, contending that it disregards the manner in which humans actually think and interact. Instead, he asserts that our personal and social goals exert a profound influence on our knowledge of the world. Furthermore, the positivist approach is inadequate in addressing questions concerning values and norms, as well as in assessing social change, etc. The author concludes from this discussion that sociology can improve if it continues to engage in a critical dialogue with Habermas' theory about a number of fundamental disputes, such as between constructivists and positivists, methodological individualism and collectivism, and rationalists and empiricists.

Sreejith K.K.'s paper, entitled "Virtue Epistemology, Causal Connection, and Gettier Cases: In Defence of Sosa," discusses Ernest Sosa's assumption of the symmetry between action and belief, and its critique by Christian Piller. The author contests the validity of Piller's criticisms, asserting that the examples employed by the latter are not structurally analogous to those presented by Sosa. Furthermore, he elucidates several salient notions in Piller's argument, including the severing or loosening of the causal connection between basic action and the ultimate outcome in the Gettier cases, and the diminished credit of the agent in the Gettier case, which creates a divide between the basic action and the result. In order to defend Sosa against these criticisms, the author introduces the causal theory of Wesley C. Salmon and highlights some conceptual ambiguities in Piller's argument.

The concluding paper of this issue is authored by Peter Jonkers. It is a commentary on the overarching theme of the 2025 conference and focuses on "The Interdependence between Ethical Knowledge and Living Ethically." The author posits that, within the context of Western philosophy, ethics constitutes a theoretical reflection on the good life for all people. Consequently, it exerts only a limited influence on the practice of *living* ethically. In the context of this observation, the article introduces the concept of practical wisdom as a way to conceptualise the interdependence between these two dimensions of ethics. Practical wisdom can be defined as a knowledge that provides a reasoned orientation in people's existential search for the good life. Furthermore, the possession of wisdom is not merely an intellectual accomplishment; it is a quality that is embodied and enacted in the actions and life of a wise person. Finally, practical wisdom is not the preserve of wise individuals, but is embedded in a community, closely connected to various spiritual and secular traditions worldwide. These can be defined as schools of wisdom.

The Editorial Board hereby wishes you much intellectual pleasure in reading the articles in this issue. We sincerely hope that the philosophical quality and relevance of these papers will stimulate your own thoughts on the issues explored.

**Peter Jonkers**  
**Editor-in-chief**