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Printed in the United States of America

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A P O R I A

A STUDENT JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

volume 30 number 1 • spring 2020

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah

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Aporia is published twice each year by the Department of Philosophy at Brigham Young University and is dedicated to recognizing exemplary philosophical work at the undergraduate level. The spring issue each year includes the winning essays of the annual David H. Yarn Philosophical Essay Competition, which is open to BYU undergraduates only, along with other outstanding philosophical essays submitted by undergraduate philosophy students from around the world. The winners of the Yarn Competition are selected by a faculty committee independent of the student editors and staff, who make all other publishing decisions. The fall issue is published online and consists of papers selected by the editorial staff. Submissions are welcome from all undergraduate students, both at BYU and elsewhere.

The *Aporia* staff is especially grateful to those whose support makes this journal possible. Special thanks go to Professor David Laraway, chair of the Department of Philosophy, and Professor Michael Hansen, our faculty advisor. *Aporia* is funded by a generous contribution from the David H. Yarn Endowment. Those wishing to contribute to this fund may do so by contacting the BYU Department of Philosophy.

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COMMEMORATION OF PREVIOUS EDITORS

Since its inception in 1991, the *Aporia* has been published under the direction of numerous editors who have grown the journal from its roots as a repository for David H. Yarn Contest submissions to an undergraduate journal of international renown. In this 30th anniversary edition, we would like to commemorate those editors who have contributed to the legacy and mission of the *Aporia*. The name of each of the *Aporia*'s previous editors, accompanied by the year in which they first became editor of the journal, is listed below.

Mark Ballif (1991)

Mark Hanning (1991)

David Laraway (1991)

Karl Shurts (1991)

Wayne Le Cheminant (1993)

Angela D. Wentz (1994)

Mark Olsen (1995)

David A. Jensen (1996)

Michael Durham (1997)

David Barber (1998)

Jeron D. Paul (1999)

Kimberly A. Patterson (2000)

Jason Bylund (2001)

Ryan G. Christensen (2002)

J. A. West (2003)

Julie Lund Hughs (2004)

Carl J. Cranney (2005)

Jeff Johnson (2006)

Russell Farr (2007)

Jandon Mitchell (2007)

Jason A. Hills (2008)

Michael J. Hansen (2009)

Steve Tensmeyer (2010)

David Crapo (2011)

Parker Brown (2012)

H. Brendon Fraga (2013)

W. Ashley McMurray (2014)

Taylor-Grey Miller (2015)

Elias Pratt (2016)

Ariana Fuller (2017)

Prescott Jackson (2018)

Logan Packer (2019)

“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.”
-Isaac Newton (1675)

Foreward

DR. DAVID LARAWAY

It is a pleasure for me as the chair of the Department of Philosophy at Brigham Young University to offer a few words in recognition of *Aporia*'s thirtieth anniversary. It just so happens that as a young and enthusiastic philosophy major in the early 1990s, I was one of the four founding editors of the journal and I have a vivid recollection of the circumstances that attended its inauguration. A few of us undergraduate students had come to see the benefits of sharing our written work with each other and we realized that BYU's College of Humanities had an abundance of resources to help facilitate the publication of student work. When we nervously floated the idea to James Faulconer, then chair of the department, of producing a journal of philosophy, he did not hesitate to offer us all the financial and moral support we needed. Dan Graham, the department's specialist in ancient philosophy, suggested the name *Aporia* to us: the term somehow managed to capture some of the gravitas we earnestly sought while winkingly acknowledging the limitations of any contributions we, as ambitious undergraduates, might have hoped to make to the discipline. By the end of winter semester of 1991, the first edition had rolled off the press and the four of us had spent countless hours becoming more familiar than we could ever have anticipated with not only the primitive word processing and publication design software of the day but, more importantly, the need of subjecting our work and the work of our peers to the most demanding standards possible. We handed out copies of that first edition of the journal with the pride of new parents and the zealotry of new converts to a cause greater than ourselves. I do not recall that we had any long-term plans for the journal: we hoped simply that that initial edition would be sufficiently successful that we might persuade the department to provide us with funding once again for another edition the following year. And so they did. A tradition was born.

Since that first edition of *Aporia*, the names of more than thirty students have graced the masthead as editors of the journal. An additional

one hundred and twenty five undergraduates have served as editorial board members and referees. They have overseen the publication of more than two hundred and fifty articles, just about half of them written by BYU philosophy students and the rest by undergraduate students affiliated with nearly ninety other universities, including a dozen from schools located outside the United States. Most of the names of the editors, editorial board members, and authors over those thirty years are of course unfamiliar to me, but of those with whom I am acquainted, a fair number of them are now professors of philosophy in their own right, while others have gone on to distinguished careers in law, government service, the private sector, and other fields in academia. What they all share, regardless of the career paths they have followed, is the experience of having subjected their own work to the highest critical standards. It is one thing for a student to put together a reasonably strong term paper: it is something else altogether to subject one's work to the higher levels of scrutiny and refinement required by the editing and publication process, in the knowledge that one's work will reach a much wider audience than a professor and perhaps a classmate or two. Regardless of the career paths our student authors and editors have finally chosen, I have no doubt that the skills they have honed by working with *Aporia* has markedly enhanced what are sometimes called the "transferable skills" that the discipline of philosophy demands: close reading, concise exposition, rigorous argumentation, a creative approach to often well-worn problems, and meticulous revision and editing. I am quite confident that it has not been an idle exercise for any of the journal's authors or editors over these last decades.

To all the past the editors of *Aporia* I offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for their labors. I express gratitude in particular to Logan Packer, this year's editor, for his invitation for me to compose these lines. And I would dare to hope that one of them might be in a position to draft a note similar to this one thirty years hence.

David Laraway

Professor of Hispanic Literatures and Cultures
Visiting Chair, Department of Philosophy

