

## Editorial

After serving for twelve years—first as Co-Managing-Editor and then as Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Reason Papers*—Carrie-Ann Biondi will step down from her Co-Editor-in-Chief position. Demoting herself to Book Review Editor will allow her time to turn to other projects calling from the wings. Beginning with issue 40.2, Shawn Klein will serve as the Editor-in-Chief of *Reason Papers*.<sup>1</sup>

The topics of the two symposia in this issue of *Reason Papers* may seem unrelated—a reconsideration of Stoicism and an attempt to integrate free markets with Existentialism—but they share an interesting sub-theme: wariness of consumerism. What ties them together is a concern for responsibly exercising one’s freedom in ways that enhance each individual’s autonomy.

In her introduction to the Stoicism Reconsidered symposium, Jennifer Baker sets the stage for Massimo Pigliucci’s and Brian Johnson’s exchange by identifying a number of benefits that the resurgence of Stoicism can provide in a world full of distractions and challenges. Pigliucci welcomes modern Stoicism as the most attractive variant of virtue ethics on the moral philosophy scene. He also develops and updates this ancient theory for practical use in the twenty-first century by taking into account insights from cognitive-behavioral therapy and explaining how key Stoic tenets are compatible with both religious and non-religious belief systems. It’s an important opportunity, he argues, for professional philosophers to reach and help millions of people. Johnson, however, is dubious that even an updated Stoicism can be sold to modern audiences. His main worry concerns Stoicism’s view about how we ought not be emotionally attached to “externals” or “indifferents” in our quest for tranquility of mind. Most troubling, he argues, is that Stoicism seems to imply that it is irrational to grieve the loss of loved ones, which he regards as “ethical sociopathy.” Pigliucci seeks in his rejoinder to clarify the nature of Stoic indifferents so as to defuse Johnson’s charge and establish an emotionally healthy form of Stoicism.

The second symposium focuses on William Irwin’s book *The Free Market Existentialist: Capitalism without Consumerism*. This

---

<sup>1</sup> Note from Carrie-Ann Biondi: I am delighted to be able to hand editorship of *Reason Papers* to someone as conscientious and excellent at editing as Shawn Klein is. Editing a journal takes a tremendous amount of skill, judgment, and dedication—all of which Shawn possesses in abundance. I look forward to seeing to what new heights he takes *Reason Papers*.

thought-provoking work integrates insights about individualism, authenticity, and responsibility that can be gleaned from libertarian political philosophy and Existentialism. Both strands of thought emphasize that individuals need freedom. Rather than seeing these views—as many have—as antagonistic to one another, Irwin argues that Existentialism can be “the perfect accompaniment to capitalism, allowing us to reap the benefits of a free market while encouraging us to resist crass consumerism.”<sup>2</sup> While broadly sympathetic with Irwin’s project of reconciling political liberty and free markets with Existentialism, Jason Walker argues that Irwin’s moral anti-realism leaves a libertarian political and legal system vulnerable to the whimsy of its citizens. Without normative grounds, why would people obey the law or respect the rights of fellow citizens? Like Walker, Mark White lauds Irwin’s attempt to reconcile two seemingly conflicting views in a nuanced way and worries that moral anti-realism is not up to the task Irwin sets for it. White, though, has an additional critique: he is dubious that many readers who are not already supporters of free markets would be persuaded of the soundness of Existentialist-inspired arguments for libertarian political philosophy. White thinks that Irwin’s book would have been strengthened by focusing primarily on how Existentialist insights could bolster our ability to live authentically in a world full of market pressures to do otherwise. While grateful that Walker and White appreciate his main project, Irwin is confident that his account of prudence is sufficient for guiding action in a free market system and protecting the individual liberty they all value.

In a previous issue of *Reason Papers*, Gary James Jason analyzed four early Holocaust documentaries with the aim of understanding what makes them effective (or not) as examples of their genre.<sup>3</sup> Here, he resumes that project by describing and analyzing several later Holocaust documentaries. In both parts of this extended study, Jason finds that such documentaries—when they incorporate actual footage and steer clear of assigning “collective guilt”—avoid being classified as propaganda and succeed in being powerful tools to educate posterity.

Three book reviews round out this issue. Raymond Raad offers a mixed verdict on Harry Binswanger’s *How We Know: Epistemology*

---

<sup>2</sup> William Irwin, *The Free Market Existentialist: Capitalism without Consumerism* (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Gary James Jason, “Memorializing Genocide I: Earlier Holocaust Documentaries,” *Reason Papers* 38, no. 2 (Winter 2016), pp. 64-88.

*on an Objectivist Foundation*. Raad argues that the strongest chapters are those that explain and unpack Ayn Rand’s distinctive epistemology. Others are weaker, though, in their attempt to venture into new terrain (e.g., propositions) and in missed opportunities to engage with recent scholarship. Thornton Lockwood tackles Shawn Klein’s edited collection *Defining Sport*. Although he finds that the first half of the volume—focused on the necessary and sufficient conditions of sport—does not really break new ground, Lockwood thinks that the second half offers a rich examination of “borderline” cases about what might count (or not) as a sport. Finally, Alex Abbandonato reviews the most recent edition of *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, which remains a popular classic in the field of peace and conflict studies. He finds this fourth edition—with its emphasis on “bottom-up” peacebuilding, transnational cooperation, and mediation—to be an improvement over previous editions. In a world as marked as it has ever been with geopolitical strife, fresh approaches to conflict resolution are always welcome.

Thank you for reading *Reason Papers*. The editorial leadership may be changing, but we will still aim to publish the highest quality normative inquiries and debates.<sup>4</sup>

Carrie-Ann Biondi  
Marymount Manhattan College, New York, NY

Shawn E. Klein  
Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

[www.reasonpapers.com](http://www.reasonpapers.com)

---

<sup>4</sup> Note from Shawn Klein: The masthead may say Co-Editors-in-Chief, but Carrie-Ann did the lion’s share of the work and deserves the lion’s share of the praise. *Reason Papers* is what it is today because of her efforts and dedication. She has been, and I know will continue to be, a great mentor, colleague, and friend. I only hope that I will be able to match her legacy of excellence at *Reason Papers*.

