



Transcendentals in the Twenty-First Century

Conference and Workshop 29.08.2019 – 03.09.2019

Recent years have seen increased interest in the Scholastic tradition, not only from a historical point of view, but as a source of inspiration for original philosophical work. One example of this is the rich and difficult idea of 'transcendentals', understood as the fundamental or 'most common' properties of being. Traditional examples include unity, goodness, and truth, and, more controversially, beauty. This idea has precursors in Plato, Aristotle, Dionysius, Augustine, Boethius, and Avicenna, and it plays an important role in the great scholastic thinkers including Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. While its modern legacy is harder to trace, the idea of the transcendentals is closely related to the commonly cited triad of the truth, the good, and the beautiful, which appears in the medieval *Summa Halensis* and again in the nineteenth-century work of Victor Cousin.

The 2019 conference and workshop asks what role the transcendentals have to play in twenty-first century thought. Special attention will be given to two traditional transcendentals in particular, truth and beauty, whose relationship has been a topic of especial interest in recent philosophy. This ranges from Theodor Adorno's anxiety about the deceptive possibilities of beauty in the twentieth century to the cognitivist and expressivist theories of art defended by analytical philosophers like Nelson Goodman and Roger Scruton. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on historical precursors to the doctrine of the transcendentals, the medieval doctrine itself, as well as work in other traditions that sees an important relationship between unity, goodness, truth, and/or beauty.

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