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Philosophy and the Universal:
An Intercultural Issue

How universal is the concept of the "universal"? It is certainly one of the foundational philosophical concepts and, among others, the metaphysical notion that Western philosophy has relied upon to convince itself of its own universality. And yet the concept has been understood differently throughout history and across philosophical disciplines – from metaphysics, logic, ethics, politics, to the philosophies of language, law, and religion. Importantly, the flourishing of intercultural thought has forced philosophy to question the universality of its concepts and of its own practice.

Many traditions have dealt with the claim of universality, and various arguments have been advanced to establish or dismiss the existence and application of universals. This is because the concept of the universal involves issues which are not simply theoretical and speculative, but also geopolitical, interreligious, and social. It is thus inextricably linked to the question, however contemporary, of the presuppositions and consequences of globalisation. As François Jullien notes, in process of globalisation instances of cultural ideas are made into absolutes which can be globally understood, thus separating them – and consequentially our understanding of them – from the cultural contexts and the linguistic constraints in which they originally emerged. For example, if concepts such as "being," "brahman," or "tao," despite their respective meanings, come to perform functions that could be judged analogous or homeomorphic (Raimon Panikkar) from a global or universal perspective, we cannot continue to neglect the irreducible gap (François Jullien) which makes them incommensurable to each other and which would make each of their claims to universality unjustified.

As Jacques Derrida has noted at the end of the 20th century, metaphysics is nothing but a "white mythology" whose fundamental concepts are just a collection of worn-out metaphors. Yet the most urgent task of philosophy is not simply to deconstruct these concepts, but also to fathom the depths of their situated meanings so as to remodel and pluralize them, especially in the case where philosophy is unwilling to let them go as the qualifying traits of human thought in general. Recently, philosophers like Carlo Sini in Italy, François Jullien in France, and Franz Wimmer in the German speaking world have explored the consequences of this intuition, observing that philosophy has been slow to realise that the claims of the universal can no longer be taken for granted. Can the concept of the universal no longer be universal?

The upcoming issue of Tropos will be dedicated to the concept of the universal in relation to the notion of philosophy itself.

The topics include but are not limited to:

- metaphysics, logic, ethics, politics, philosophy of language, philosophy of law, philosophy of religion, intercultural philosophy, interreligious dialogue, and philosophy of translation
- reconstructions of the role played by the concept of the universal within Western traditions
- the peculiar relationship between the concept of the universal and that of philosophy or metaphysics
- new theoretical perspectives on the articulation of the relationship between the universal and the particular, the universal and reality, the universal and philosophy.

Deadlines
Submission deadline: March 31, 2023
Results of blind reviews: May 30, 2023
Publication date: September, 2023

Submission Guidelines
Papers should be submitted to:
- Emma Lavinia Bon: emmalavinia@gmail.com
- Francesca Greco: france_greco@hotmail.it
- Papers should be in English, French, Italian, Spanish, or German
- Papers should be prepared for blind review (double)
- Each submission should consist of two separate documents containing the following:

1) The full paper including:
- Title
- The full paper not exceeding 50,000 characters in total.
- An English abstract of no more than 200 words (also including an English translation of the title)
- 5 keywords
See style sheet below for more detailed information

2) A separate cover letter including the following information:
- The title of the paper
- Your name, affiliation and contact information.
- A biographical presentation of 50–60 words.

General information
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Questions are welcome and should be directed to the editors of the current issue:
- Emma Lavinia Bon: emmalavinia@gmail.com
- Francesca Greco: france_greco@hotmail.it

Style Sheet

For the pre-publication preparation, please read carefully the following instructions.

1) Essays should not exceed **50,000 characters in length** and should include:
- **your name and affiliation;**
- **an abstract of no more than 200 words with an English title;**
- **5 keywords of the essay;**
- **a biographical presentation of 50-60 words.**

2) The number of footnotes should be kept to a minimum and appear at the end of each page. Reference marks come after punctuation.

3) The bibliographical references should directly appear **in the text**. Punctuation comes before quotation marks (" ") and apices (' '). **The reference to a book or an article should appear in brackets:** (Derrida 1967: 103)

4) At the end of the article, **an alphabetically-ordered list of the references should appear**:
- **Reference to a book (and to its translation):**
Derrida, J., 1967, *De la grammatologie*, Paris, Minuit; Italian translation by R. Balzarotti, F. Bonicalzi, G. Contri, G. Dalmasso, A.C. Loaldi, *Della grammatologia*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1998.
- **Reference to a book, including the year of its first edition, if it is the case:**
Heidegger, M., 1971, *Sein und Zeit* [1927], edited by W. von Hermann, Frankfurt a.M., Klostermann.
- **Reference to an edited book:**
Caciagli, M., Spreafico, A. (eds.), 1973, *Un sistema politico alla prova*, Bologna, II Mulino.
- **Reference to an article:**
Kellner, M.M., 1975, *Democracy*, "Journal of Politics," 37, n. 4, pp. 35-64.

4) For further information, please refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (2003).

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Trópos publishes essays that address the most relevant contemporary debates in continental philosophy, in a permanent dialogue with other philosophical traditions. Its main fields of interest include theoretical and practical philosophy, aesthetics, linguistic, and literary subjects.

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