

## From the Editor

It is difficult to be in Academia today without thinking about the situation for research and researchers developing in the US. On the day of the drafting of this editorial, news broke that a 30-year study of diabetes had been defunded mid-project.<sup>1</sup> This was not a one-off occurrence. The funding for doctoral projects is cancelled at an instant leaving young Ph D students stranded mid-project and worried about their futures.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of Fulbright scholars are left abroad without income.<sup>3</sup> Comprehensive firings at US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may set back scientific work on modelling future climate change.<sup>4</sup> Funding for research, as well as the collection of statistics vital to education studies have more or less come to a complete stop.<sup>5</sup> John Hopkins recently let 2 000 employees go,<sup>6</sup> archeologists are suddenly finding themselves out of work<sup>7</sup> and astronomers are bracing for budgets cuts that some fear could be an “extinction-level event” for the field of planetary science.<sup>8</sup> The history of science is even being re-written; computer science giant Grace Hopper has been scrubbed from Arlington National Cemetery’s website.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, there are lists of forbidden words circulating. The Washington Post reports that the National Science Foundation is now vetting funded projects and

---

<sup>1</sup> Chen, Ellen. March 17, 2025. “NIH cancels funding for landmark diabetes study at a time of focus on chronic disease.” <https://www.statnews.com/2025/03/17/trump-cuts-columbia-university-nih-cancels-diabetes-prevention-program-study/>

<sup>2</sup> Basilio, Humberto. March 14, 2025. “My career is over’: Columbia University scientists hit hard by Trump team’s cuts.” <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-00812-x>

<sup>3</sup> Diaz, Olivia and Heather Hollingsworth. March 10, 2025. “Scholars stranded in America and abroad amid funding freeze of State Department programs.” <https://apnews.com/article/fulbright-scholars-stipends-frozen-indefinitely-9da042b5e0bda70fb1c76105564c71f4>

<sup>4</sup> Lu, Donna. March 17, 2025. “Trump cuts to have ‘chilling effect’ on climate science and ‘degrade’ Australia’s ability to forecast weather.” <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/mar/17/trump-cuts-to-have-chilling-effect-on-climate-science-and-degrade-australias-ability-to-forecast-weather>

<sup>5</sup> Barshay, Jill. February 17, 2025. “DOGE’s death blow to education studies.” <https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-doge-death-blow-education-studies/>

<sup>6</sup> Iyer, Kaanita. March 13, 2025. “Johns Hopkins laying off more than 2,000 workers after dramatic cut in USAID funding.” <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/13/politics/johns-hopkins-layoffs-usaid-funding/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> Call, James. February 20, 2025. “From 17 to 7 left standing: Trump cuts gut Florida archaeologists, Parks Service staff.” <https://eu.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2025/02/20/president-trump-cuts-hit-florida-based-federal-archaeology-team/78984856007/>

<sup>8</sup> Cokinos, Christopher. March 16, 2025. “Space scientists fearful as Trump administration targets science and mulls NASA cuts.” <https://www.astronomy.com/space-exploration/space-scientists-fearful-as-trump-administration-targets-science-and-mulls-nasa-cuts/>

<sup>9</sup> White, Matt. March 13, 2025. “Arlington Cemetery website drops links for Black, Hispanic, and women veterans.” <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/arlington-cemetery-scrubs-website-dei/>

applications so that they do not contain certain words.<sup>10</sup> If researchers do not refrain from working in these areas, their funding can be revoked. Here is a sample of the words on that list:

Antiracist, Barrier, Biases, Cultural relevance, Disability, Diverse backgrounds, Diversity, Diversified, Ethnicity, Excluded, Exclusion, Equity, Female, Gender, Hate speech, Historically, Implicit bias, Inclusion, Inclusive, Inequities, Institutional, Intersectional, Male dominated, Marginalized, Minority, Multicultural, Oppression, Polarization, Racially, Segregation, Socioeconomic, Systemic, Trauma, Underrepresented, Underserved, Victims, Women.<sup>11</sup>

This is not only an attack on those who these terms apply to but also an attack on science. There are many ways to respond to this alarming development, from questioning whether the person in charge of DOGE really should have membership in the Royal Society<sup>12</sup> to taking to the streets to protest.<sup>13</sup> Yet another way is to continue doing research. *De Ethica* will do its modest part by continuing to welcome submissions and to publish articles that cover all the banned words in the list above. In this issue, we cover only “diversity”, “historically”, “disability” and variants like “disabilities” and “victim”, but we will try to do better in this regard going forward.

That being said, we do present a wide variety of concepts and topics in the present issue. In his article “Why Two Recent Attempts to Rescue Constitutive Luck Do Not Work”, Samuel Kahn takes on a debate due to Nicholas Rescher’s conclusion that the notion of constitutive luck is a contradiction in terms. For Rescher, identity precedes luck. Kahn responds to two counterarguments to this view. First, he discusses Robert Hartman’s claims one’s constitution is not chancy, but that this does not distinguish it from moral luck, which is also not chancy nor a species of luck. Here Kahn presents a set of arguments that aim to show that we have reason for thinking that moral luck is, after all, a species of luck. Second, he responds to the claim of Andrew Latus, that both moral luck and constitution are chancy, hence showing that identity does not precede luck. Kahn argues that this line of argument is not successful since it tends to undermine both central tenets of the literature on constitutive luck and the kind of regress argument it is intended to save.

David C. Vogt’s article starts off from the intuition that to have moral standing to blame is to have a right to blame. In “The moral function of standing to blame”, he analyzes this notion with the help of Hohfeld’s classic classification of rights. Standing to blame, on this view, concerns the power to hold another person to account and to demand that this person responds appropriately to the wrongdoing in question. Vogt defends this view from the argument that standing to blame cannot be such a power because all normative work can be done by the concept of blameworthiness, by showing how blame gives rise to additional obligations beyond those brought about by blameworthiness. He shows that

---

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, Carolyn Y., Scott Dance and Joel Achenbach. February 4, 2025. “Here are the words putting science in the crosshairs of Trump’s orders.” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2025/02/04/national-science-foundation-trump-executive-orders-words/>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Yates, Kit. March 4, 2025. “Elon Musk is a proven danger to good science, but the Royal Society won’t say it. That’s why I resigned.” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/mar/04/elon-musk-science-royal-society-scientific-integrity>

<sup>13</sup> Ledford, Heidi and Alexandra Witze. March 3, 2025. “US science is under threat — now scientists are fighting back.” <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-00661-8>

that standing is sufficient for creating a pro tanto obligation, not that it is also necessary, thereby deflecting the argument that there can be standingless blame and, moreover, he specifies the proper scope of this concept of standing to handle other important counterarguments from the literature. Finally, Vogt ends the article by showing that, *pace* Kyle Fritz and Daniel Miller, there is not a conceptual asymmetry between standing to blame and standing to forgive.

In “Towards Artificial Wildlife: Speciesism and Intelligent Machines”, Spyridon Stelios and Georgios Sakellariou investigate a possible similarity between fears expressed concerning a future where super-intelligent AI takes over the world to the detriment of human beings, and some patterns of thought expressed in speciesism with regards to other natural species. They suggest an approach to understanding fears about AI development in the terms of an intelligence-based speciesism. This position suggests that humans’ fears of rapid AI development is structurally similar to the worries that domesticated animals would have of humans. This approach suggests that environmental ethics could provide valuable resources for analyzing technological development.

Troy Bierma also writes about the relationship between human beings and nature. In his article “Permaculture: Guiding a Prefigurative Practice for Richard Bauckham’s Ecotheology”, he looks to develop an alternative to the stewardship model of this relationship with the aid of Bauckham’s holistic approach. Bauckman’s ecotheology is interpreted as having three pillars: human beings should see themselves as part of nature, value diversity and exercise caring dominion. This approach is then brought into discussion with David Holmgren’s theory of permaculture, which provides an ethical framework to complement Bauckman’s ecotheology. Bierma shows how Holmgren’s theory complements that of Bauckman. In particular, it provides ethical principles to guide choice-making. These principles concern care for earth, care for people and the ideal of fair shares. With this analysis in hand, Bierma can conclude that the approach of permaculture provides tool to practicing dominion as caring responsibility.

Lars Lindblom, *Executive Editor*

## References

- Barshay, Jill. February 17, 2025. “DOGE’s death blow to education studies.” <https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-doge-death-blow-education-studies/>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Basilio, Humberto. March 14, 2025. “My career is over’: Columbia University scientists hit hard by Trump team’s cuts.” <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-00812-x>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Call, James. February 20, 2025. “From 17 to 7 left standing: Trump cuts gut Florida archaeologists, Parks Service staff.” <https://eu.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2025/02/20/president-trump-cuts-hit-florida-based-federal-archaeology-team/78984856007/>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Chen, Ellen. March 17, 2025. “NIH cancels funding for landmark diabetes study at a time of focus on chronic disease.” <https://www.statnews.com/2025/03/17/trump-cuts-columbia-university-nih-cancels-diabetes-prevention-program-study/>, accessed 26 March, 2025.

- Cokinos, Christopher. March 16, 2025. "Space scientists fearful as Trump administration targets science and mulls NASA cuts." <https://www.astronomy.com/space-exploration/space-scientists-fearful-as-trump-administration-targets-science-and-mulls-nasa-cuts/>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Diaz, Olivia and Heather Hollingsworth. March 10, 2025. "Scholars stranded in America and abroad amid funding freeze of State Department programs." <https://apnews.com/article/fulbright-scholars-stipends-frozen-indefinitely-9da042b5e0bda70fb1c76105564c71f4>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Iyer, Kaanita. March 13, 2025. "Johns Hopkins laying off more than 2,000 workers after dramatic cut in USAID funding." <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/13/politics/johns-hopkins-layoffs-usaid-funding/index.html>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Johnson, Carolyn Y., Scott Dance and Joel Achenbach. February 4, 2025. "Here are the words putting science in the crosshairs of Trump's orders." <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2025/02/04/national-science-foundation-trump-executive-orders-words/>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Ledford, Heidi and Alexandra Witze. March 3, 2025. "US science is under threat — now scientists are fighting back." <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-00661-8>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Lu, Donna. March 17, 2025. "Trump cuts to have 'chilling effect' on climate science and 'degrade' Australia's ability to forecast weather." <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/mar/17/trump-cuts-to-have-chilling-effect-on-climate-science-and-degrade-australias-ability-to-forecast-weather>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- Yates, Kit. March 4, 2025. "Elon Musk is a proven danger to good science, but the Royal Society won't say it. That's why I resigned." <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/mar/04/elon-musk-science-royal-society-scientific-integrity>, accessed 26 March, 2025.
- White, Matt. March 13, 2025. "Arlington Cemetery website drops links for Black, Hispanic, and women veterans." <https://taskandpurpose.com/news/arlington-cemetery-scrubs-website-dei/>, accessed 26 March, 2025.