It is our pleasure to welcome you to the fourth volume of *Perspectives: International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy*. This journal is an annual, peer reviewed, postgraduate publication that features articles and book reviews from the analytic and continental traditions in philosophy. It is our goal to offer a platform for all students of philosophy who are in the early stages of their career, be they master’s students, doctoral students or recent graduates, to publish their work, and gain experience with the peer-reviewing and editing process that is part of publishing in a serious academic journal.

Academic publishing can be a long, frustrating process; one that aspiring philosophers may feel is imposed on them for reasons alien to philosophical interest. Yet publication is essential to surviving and thriving in academic philosophy. Through being open to submissions from all areas of philosophy, and especially seeking out themes that are of interest to both continental and analytic styles, we hope to open up a space where discussions across boundaries can take place. At the same time, by holding submissions to the highest academic standards, the editors hope to promote careful thought, engaging writing, and ongoing philosophical dialogue.

Due to the financial crisis, local recession, and resulting budget cuts in education, last year’s issue of *Perspectives* was not available in a printed version, published only online. This year, thanks to a new collaboration with the UCD Philosophy Society, we have been able to return to providing both an online and a printed version.

The theme of this year’s journal is philosophy and nature. ‘Nature’ has been prominent in the news of late. In the last five years alone wildfires have destroyed millions of acres of forest in the western United States alone. In 2004 and again in 2011, tsunamis wreaked havoc in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In 2010, Pakistan was deluged by monsoons and nearly one fifth of its land mass was flooded. In 2011, Australia was hit by a series of floods, and at one point, three quarters of the state of Queensland was under water. A scientific consensus has emerged that climate change is a reality; the climate is getting warmer and human actions are at least to some extent responsible for this. The tsunami in Japan and the resulting nuclear disaster in Fukushima is a powerful example of the occasionally disastrous interaction between nature and technology. Governments have tried to respond to these challenges, and some unprecedented and sometimes controversial measures have been taken, such as carbon emission trading, government targets for reducing emissions, and the drive for renewable energy sources. However, on the whole the political response to global
warming seems dominated by misinformation, scandals, squabbling, economic fear and disagreements about the distribution of responsibility and financial burdens. The challenges involved in furnishing an appropriate response are directly connected to the ways in which climate change (and environmental concerns more broadly), pose enormous questions for our relation to technology, knowledge, social justice, and political institutions. The editors of Perspectives can think of no better time to devote an issue to the problems engaging humanity in its relationship to nature.

When issuing the call for papers, we did not want to single out any particular area of this relationship. The philosophical examination of humanity’s relationship with nature asks numerous questions beyond the scope of our culpability for extreme weather and global climate shifts. We invited articles addressing any number of issues in this relationship. We invited those who submitted papers to address issues like: What is nature? How do we know nature? What is the relationship between humanity and nature? Have science and the enlightenment gone too far in their disenchantment of nature? We also invited submissions from the fields of Deep Ecology, Environmental Ethics, Feminism and the Environment, Social Ecology, and Wilderness Research. We could not have been more pleased with the response we received.

In this volume Richmond Eustis takes up the implications of guided trips into the wilderness in his article “Buying the Wilderness Experience: the Commodification of the Sublime.” He inquires whether or not it is possible for the consumer, on a purchased wilderness holiday, to have a genuine experience of the Kantian sublime. His analysis reveals the precarious role of the guide as one whose job it is to walk the fine line between providing a disingenuous, engineered experience and one that plays too closely with the very real dangers of the wilderness. In her article “Whether Earthquakes are Lovable: Knowing Nature in the Wake of Disaster”, Molly Sturdevant challenges an overly optimistic reading of Spinoza in environmental philosophy. This view uses Spinoza’s ethics to give a holistic account of our place in nature, but leaves out the implications of Spinoza’s determinism, according to which nature is wholly indifferent to human values and suffering. She goes on to indicate the possibility of a Spinozistic environmental ethics which does justice to the relation between humans and nature which is both one of dependency and of mutual violence. In ‘Climate Change and the Ethics of Individual Emissions: A Response to Sinnott-Armstrong’ Ben Almassi seeks to counter Sinnott-Armstrong’s claim individuals are not responsible for the emissions they produce. On Almassi’s account Sinnott-Armstrong rejects the assignment of moral
responsibility to individuals on the basis that no defensible moral principle is available to ground this assignment. Almassi develops an account of the ‘threshold-contribution principle’ which he argues can both withstand Sinnott-Armstrong’s objections and demonstrate how emissions are the individuals moral responsibility.

Finally, Perspectives is a work of collaboration between postgraduate editors, authors, and those who have been kind enough to anonymously peer review our articles. This is a voluntary gift and a labor of love. We would like to thank our contributors, our reviewers, and our publisher. We would also like to thank the UCD Philosophy Society and the UCD School of Philosophy for their support. We are proud to present to you the fourth edition of Perspectives.

The Editors,
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