



*Aretai – Center on Virtues*  
Second Annual Conference  
**“Exemplars and Exemplarism: theory, sources, and practices”**

Under the auspices of the Northwest Italy Consortium for PhD Program in Philosophy (FINO) and the Italian Society for Moral Philosophy (SIFM)

University of Genoa  
DAFIST, Philosophy Section - *Aretai Center on Virtues*  
Genoa, October 5th-6th 2017

CALL FOR PAPERS

Moral exemplarity, as well as epistemic and aesthetic exemplarity, are cornerstones of philosophical reflection. Admiring and imitating the sage, or the saint, has for long been considered the standard path to wisdom and morality, and – in religious contexts - to salvation. Figures like Socrates and Jesus Christ, among many others, have been taken as sources of inspiration, as well as terms for comparison of one’s own conduct.

After a quite long neglect, the philosophical community has recently seen a resurgence of interest in such topic, highlighting both its theoretical and educational relevance. Such rehabilitation of exemplarity is mainly due to the work of Zagzebski, whose Exemplarist Moral Theory is now a landmark (e.g., Zagzebski, 2010, 2015, forthcoming 2017).

The aim of the conference is to gather scholars working on exemplarity, discussing both the Exemplarist theory and the topic of exemplars broadly conceived, exploring their strengths, but also their weaknesses, as well as addressing potential and actual criticisms (among others, by Susan Wolf in her 1982 essay on *Moral Saints*).

**Invited speakers:**

Elisabetta Cattanei (University of Cagliari)  
Piergiorgio Donatelli (Sapienza University, Rome)  
Ian J. Kidd (University of Nottingham)  
Linda T. Zagzebski (University of Oklahoma)

With the aim of including as many contributions as possible, the conference will be structured around plenary sessions and parallel sessions with the contributed papers selected by double blind review. The contributed papers should last 30 minutes (presentation + discussion). Abstracts of about 500 words (references included), prepared for blind refereeing, should be sent as email attachments to [exemplarsgenoa2017@gmail.com](mailto:exemplarsgenoa2017@gmail.com).

Possible contributions should refer to (at least) one of the three following sections and address one or more of their key questions:



1) Exemplarity: its object and subject

- What is a moral exemplar? How many kinds of moral exemplars are there? Which are the necessary and/or sufficient conditions for being a moral exemplar?
- Can there be forms of non-moral (e.g., epistemic or aesthetic) exemplarity?
- Should we consider moral exemplars only those who are virtuous in all respects? Could someone who displays only one exceptional virtue be a moral exemplar?
- How do we recognize morally exceptional people? Can we rely on the emotion of admiration we feel towards them?
- Is the exemplars' awareness of their exceptionality a necessary requirement for their moral exemplarity? Does the exemplar have some specific kind of moral responsibility toward those who admire her/him?

2) Moral Exemplarism in question

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory? Is its ground on admiration sufficient, or is a metaphysic foundation of exemplarity needed to support it?
- Does Zagzebski's theory of emotions adequately account for the role played by admiration in identifying moral exemplarity?
- Which kinds of exemplars should an Exemplarist moral theory admit (e.g. heroes, saints, sages)?
- What distinguishes Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory from other exemplarist accounts in Western and Eastern traditions? What is their potential contribution to the current debate over moral exemplarism?

3) Exemplars and Education

- Which function do moral exemplars have in education? How do we attract the young's interest toward exemplar characters?
- Can there be vicious, as well as virtuous, moral exemplars, the young might be attracted by? How can we account for such phenomenon, and counter it?
- Which kinds of narrative are better suited to describe an exemplar story?
- Does moral imagination play any relevant role in attracting one to the exemplars?
- What educational role can be played by literature, cinema, and the mass media, in pointing to different kinds of exemplarity?

**Scientific Committee:**

Angelo Campodonico (University of Genoa)

Terence Irwin (University of Oxford)

Michele Mangini (University of Bari)

Letterio Mauro (University of Genoa)

Claudia Navarini (European University, Rome)

Valeria Ottonelli (University of Genoa)

**Organizing Committee:**

Valeria Candio, Damiano Simoncelli, Stefania Zanardi



**Important Dates:**

Deadline for submissions: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Communication of acceptance: May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Accepted abstracts will be available at the conference in booklet form and also available online before the conference.

For further information, please contact: [exemplarsgenoa2017@gmail.com](mailto:exemplarsgenoa2017@gmail.com)

or visit the website at: <http://exemplarsgenoa.weebly.com>

The language of the conference is English.