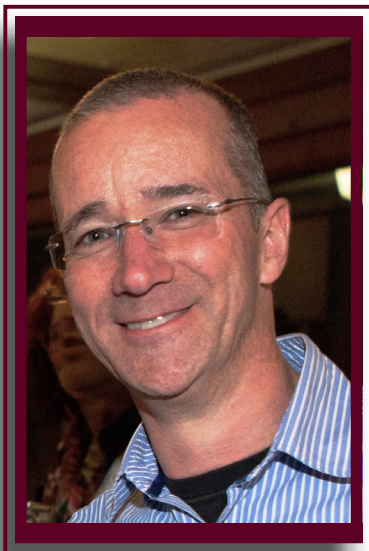


DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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BIOGRAPHY

John Lippitt is Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Hertfordshire, UK and Honorary Professor of Philosophy at Deakin University, Australia. John's philosophical interests include the ethics of forgiveness, virtues and vices, the relationships between philosophy and religion, and the ethics of policing (he serves as an ethics consultant to Hertfordshire Constabulary). He is currently working on a book entitled *Love's Forgiveness*, supported by a Major Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust. Probably best known for his work on Kierkegaard, John's previous publications include *Humour and Irony in Kierkegaard's Thought* (2000), *Kierkegaard and the Problem of Self-Love* (2013) and the Routledge Guidebook to *Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling* (second edition, 2016).

FORGIVENESS, RESENTMENT AND AGAPIC LOVE

ABSTRACT

Forgiveness, it is often claimed, involves giving up, letting go or transcending feelings of resentment. Contemporary discussions of forgiveness sometimes simply assume that resentment is an entirely negative phenomenon, one that we are better off without. But is this really so? Drawing on historical and contemporary work, I question this assumption, aiming to show how resentment need not be construed simply as a reaction to personal injury or insult, and that it can speak for justice. However, if resentment has a positive dimension, and is sometimes warranted, then why would we forgive? I explore an alternative answer to this question, based on the Kierkegaard-inspired idea of forgiveness as a 'work of love'. One objection to such a view has been the charge that such love violates justice. Through a consideration of Nicholas Wolterstorff's distinction between benevolence-agapism and care-agapism, I aim to show that such a worry can be avoided. But the implications of this distinction, I argue, lead us to a different view of forgiveness from Wolterstorff's: one that makes more room for a certain kind of unconditional forgiveness, central to which is the idea of hope, itself conceived of as a work of love.

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