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Editorial

GEORGE PAVLAKOS

This is the second issue of NILQ in two years with a particular focus on jurisprudence. The centrepiece of the issue is the book symposium on Neil MacCormick's *Rhetoric and the Rule of Law*, the second of four volumes of his "Treatise on law, state and practical reason". The papers derive from a one-day workshop that was organised under the aegis of the Forum of Law and Philosophy on the 28 April 2006 at Queen's University Belfast and was generously funded by the NILQ and QUB School of Law. I am very much indebted to all authors and in addition to Sir Neil who has taken the time to comment on the papers.

This edition is supplemented by six state-of-the-art papers addressing contemporary issues in legal philosophy. In selecting those, I placed the emphasis on demonstrating the continuity between the endeavours of a generation of younger scholars currently working around Europe. Despite thematic differences, I found it striking how much these papers resemble one another in terms of argumentative rigour and an interest in the genuine philosophical questions about the law.

Looking at the contents of the issue one cannot help noticing what have become, over the past few years, the distinct features of jurisprudential thinking at Queen's: first, a shift towards central philosophical questions, such as go beyond the standard debates one encounters in Anglo-American universities and are, perhaps, more reminiscent of the classical debates amongst continental legal philosophers in the first half of the 20th century; then, what may be an indirect consequence of this "philosophical turn", engagement with a much broader community of scholars working outside the Anglo-Saxon world who, however, remain faithful to the high standards of reasoning that are commonly associated with the tradition of analytical philosophy; and finally, a genuine scepticism towards particular labels and categorisations of schools of thought – far from focusing on what is a "legitimate", "mainstream" or "trendy" form of scholarship, the emphasis is placed on the quality and rigour of the arguments put forward. Experience teaches that such an approach fosters imaginative and fresh scholarship. The publication at hand serves as solid proof of this!

Good fortune has it that the editing of this prestigious issue is my farewell act at the School of Law, Queen's University Belfast. The last six years in Belfast, the first in my professional life, have been most rewarding, not only in scholarly but also in broader intellectual terms. A great deal of credit for this is owed to the Forum for Law and Philosophy which sprang from a small reading group back in 2001 and grew to become an

international, albeit informal, forum for debate and scholarly exchange. I am indebted to the entire community of colleagues at Queen's for having made this possible, but would be unfair if I did not make special mention of Jonathan Gorman, Robin Hickey and Tarik Kochi, who have made my experience at Queen's most rewarding.

George Pavlakos, Belfast and Antwerp, Summer 2007