

2025 Annual ACPA National Meeting
Call for Papers

“Esse, Vivere, Intelligere: A Triad at the Heart of the Philosophical Tradition”

Conference Location: University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN

Conference Date: 30th October-2nd November 2025.

Deadline for Submission: 30 April 2025.

Send all submissions to: acpa@acpaweb.org

1) ACPA President D.C. Schindler’s description of the theme and call for papers:

What it means to know and what it means to be are arguably two of the most fundamental questions in the history of philosophy. As Aristotle put it (and Heidegger reminded us), “the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt” is the question “what is being?” (*Meta.*, VII.1.1028b3-4). The question concerning the nature and the possibility of knowledge, which we perhaps associate more directly with the modern and postmodern periods, is in truth just as ancient as the question of being. But the question concerning life has had less direct attention: What does it mean to live? There is a difference between explaining the nature of life in itself, and simply expounding the activities that characterize life. According to Aquinas, “living is not an accidental but an essential predicate” (*ST* 1.18.2). There is no doubt something mysterious about the act of living, and it would seem a worthy endeavor for the members of the ACPA to explore this mystery and how it bears on other concerns central to the philosophical tradition.

A host of questions springs up from the articulation of the series, *esse, vivere, intelligere*, any one of which would warrant sustained philosophical reflection: Does this indicate a hierarchy of being? Is each a kind of intensification of the one before, and if so, in what sense? Does living illuminate the meaning of being, as the famous phrase of Aquinas (quoting Aristotle) suggests: “*vivere viventibus est esse*”? Does knowing, by analogy, illuminate the nature of living? Is knowing an intensification of life, as again Aristotle suggests (“The actuality of thought is life,” *Meta.*, XII.7.1072b26)? Clearly, being is a necessary condition for living and knowing. Can we also say that living is a necessary condition for knowing? In other words, is there such a thing as “artificial intelligence”? What about “artificial life”? If there is a connection between living and knowing, what does this reveal about the nature of knowing? What does it mean to say that, in God, these three are identical? Does this divine identity bear on the meaning of each, and in what

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way? One of the central assumptions of the classical philosophical tradition is the “sameness,” the ultimate unity, of being and knowing. What exactly does this mean, and does living have anything to do with this connection? Do moral acts regarding life and death—for example, cloning on the one hand or assisted suicide on the other—bear on the philosophical life (as Plato’s *Phaedo* suggests)? In short, what does it mean to live, and what insights might an exploration of this question open up in relation to the more familiar questions regarding being and knowing?

In addition to these mostly metaphysical inquiries, there are also important historical questions related to this theme: In what sense does this series of notions, which came to be called the “noetic triad,” derive from Plato, or even earlier thinkers? Does the triad undergo an evolution of meaning in the passage from Middle Platonism, to Neo Platonism, and then to the Christian tradition? More specifically, what presence does this theme have in Aquinas’s appropriation of Neoplatonic thought, witnessed above all in his commentaries on the *Divine Names* and on the *Book of Causes*? What role does the triad play in the development of Trinitarian doctrine? What place does the triad have in the interpretation of man as “microcosmos” and as “*imago dei*”? What is the relation between the “noetic triad” tradition and the scholastic treatises on the divine names, the essential attributes of God, and the “pure perfections”?

- 2) Papers must be received no later than 30 April 2025. The authors of the papers must be members of ACPA at the time of submission.
- 3) Submissions must be received through email. Please save your paper in Microsoft Word (.docx preferred) or PDF. (Other formats are not acceptable.) The text of your paper should not exceed 15 typed, double-spaced pages, 12 point (30 minutes reading time). The paper must begin with a short abstract (150 words), suitable for inclusion in the conference program. (The abstract will not be counted against the overall length of your paper.)
- 4) The format of the paper should be appropriate for blind reviewing; that is, nothing in the paper itself should reveal the author’s identity. (We will take care that your paper is not identifiable in the way it is saved by us, as blind review is one of the strengths of our conference papers and our proceedings.)
- 5) In the body of your email, please include: Author’s name, University affiliation, Postal address, Phone number, E-mail address (correct from 30 April 2025 through 1 December 2025).

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- 6) It is understood that, by submitting material for possible presentation at the 2025 Annual Meeting, authors agree that, should the paper be accepted for presentation at the Annual Meeting and publication in the annual *Proceedings*, they will deliver the paper in person at the 2025 ACPA Conference, and they agree to allow the ACPA to hold the copyright to their paper published in the *Proceedings*. If the paper is accepted, you will be asked to sign a publication agreement with us.
- 7) Those authors who wish to have their papers considered for the ACPA Karen Chan Young Scholar's Award (scholars 35 years of age or younger, regardless of academic position, are eligible) should indicate as much in the body of their email.
- 8) We will acknowledge receipt of your paper by email, shortly after it is submitted. If you do not hear from us within one week of submitting your paper, please contact us by email. Then by 31 July 2025, we will inform you if your paper has been accepted for the conference and publication in the ACPA *Proceedings*. [Each paper submitted undergoes double-blind review by two of the 6-8 members of the conference's program committee. The program committee members rank the papers, and the ACPA President and Secretary select the highest ranked papers for inclusion in the conference and for publication in the *Proceedings*. The names of the program committee members are published in the conference schedule.]
- 9) If you would like to comment on a paper or to chair a session, please let the ACPA Secretary know by sending a separate e-mail. Be sure to provide your e-mail address, as well as your telephone numbers, and your area of philosophical expertise.