



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
الجامعة العبرية في القدس  
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES  
PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

*The Departmental Colloquium*

**Martin Pickavé**

University of Toronto

## **Peter Strawson and Peter John Olivi on Emotions, Reactive Attitudes, and Determinism**



In his landmark paper “Freedom and Resentment,” Peter Strawson argued that whether or not determinism is true is ultimately not relevant to our common social practices and to the issue of moral responsibility. For holding someone responsible is grounded in human reactive attitudes, which are intimately connected with our human nature; they are simply not the sort of things that could be dislodged permanently by any theoretical conviction regarding the truth of determinism. At least at the time Strawson’s paper was first published it stood out for turning the debate over free will and moral responsibility away from metaphysical questions regarding causation and

agency towards the actual moral psychology of human beings. Strawson was, however, not the first to discuss the question of free will through the lens of reactive attitudes. As historians of philosophy have recently noticed, almost seven hundred years earlier Peter John Olivi (1248-1298) alluded to reactive attitudes in his discussion of human free choice (*liberum arbitrium*). Interestingly, in analyzing reactive attitudes Olivi reaches conclusions that are completely opposite to Strawson’s. For Olivi, our reactive attitudes in fact indicate that determinism must be wrong.

The goal of this paper is to analyze the differences in how Strawson and Olivi conceive of reactive attitudes, which are for the most part emotions or emotionlike phenomena. In particular, I shall focus on the arguments by which Olivi intends to show that reactive attitudes indicate that both those who experience them and the persons at whom they are directed possess a type of free will incompatible with determinism. This will lead me to explore two questions: In what sense does Olivi’s free will defense differ from that of his contemporaries? And what would or could Olivi respond to Strawson’s argument? The responses to these two questions will hopefully make clear that the issue at stake is whether there is a special set of emotions proper to rational human agents.

**Tuesday, 30 April 2019 | 12:30-14:00**  
**Room 2001, Rabin Building**