

Preface

The question what, if anything, makes our life meaningful, has in recent years received considerable critical attention from philosophers. Yet meaning in life continues to be a fascinatingly rich topic with plenty of aspects that remain controversial or have not been sufficiently explored yet. For instance, how much difference is there between individuals in terms of what makes life meaningful for us? How much difference is there between cultures? Are non-human animals capable of living meaningful lives? Can inanimate things have a meaningful existence, and if so, is what makes their existence meaningful also what makes human existence meaningful? Is there such a thing as anti-meaning? How do we decide which activities are objectively valuable and which not? Do we have a right to meaning? If so, does it follow that as a society we have an obligation to provide people with what they need to live meaningful lives? Why do we care about meaning in the first place? What exactly would be lost if our life was meaningless? How is meaning in life affected by the changes brought about by the rapid technological advancements we are currently witnessing? Is AI perhaps a greater threat to our ability to live meaningful lives than it is to our survival?

These and other questions were discussed at the *6th International Conference on Meaning in Life*, which took place over three days in June 2024 at the University of Liverpool. The event was organised by me and my postgraduate students Michalina Bevoor, Liam Shore, Neil Williams, and Tom Gardiner, and was attended by more than eighty delegates from twenty different countries. The keynote speakers were Tatjana Schnell, Kieran Setiya, and James Tartaglia.

I am very grateful to this journal's editor, Professor Masahiro Morioka, and the other members of the steering committee, all presenters and participants, and everyone else who helped make this conference the enjoyable and engaging event that it was.

After the conference we invited all presenters to submit their paper to the *Journal of Philosophy of Life* and then, after review, selected four of them for this special issue.

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