



**ASSAf**  
**Presidential Roundtables:**  
**Science, Scholarship and Society**

## **Programme**

### **“Frankensteins or Gods? The Impact of the New Technologies on What It Means To Be Human”**

25 November 2020, 17:00

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**17:00**

#### **Welcome & introductions**

##### **Professor Jonathan Jansen**

ASSAf President, Distinguished Professor in Education, Stellenbosch University

**17:10**

#### **Keynote by Guest Speaker: Prof Margaret Levi**

**17:40**

#### **Statements by Respondents (10 minutes per speaker)**

##### **Prof Tshilidzi Marwala**

Vice-Chancellor, University of Johannesburg

##### **Dr Asheel Singh**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Johannesburg

##### **Dr Mpho Tshivhase**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Pretoria

**18:10**

#### **Discussions and Q&As (no direct questions, participants will be asked to use the Chat box option)**

Prof Jonathan Jansen

#### **Closing**

Prof Jonathan Jansen

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**science & innovation**

Department:  
Science and Innovation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## **BIOGRAPHIES FOR PANELLISTS**

### **PROF MARGARET LEVI**

Prof Margaret Levi is the Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford and Professor of Political Science, Stanford University, and Jere L. Bacharach Professor Emerita of International Studies in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington. She has been a Senior Fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. She held the Chair in Politics, United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, 2009 - 13.

She is noted for her work in comparative political economy, labor politics, and democratic theory, notably on the origins and effects of trustworthy government. Levi's book *Of Rule and Revenue* (1988), a study of the institutions of state revenue production, helped pioneer rational choice approaches in comparative politics. She has since pushed rational choice analysis into new substantive areas, for example, in examining people's acceptance of military conscription in *Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism* (1997). In *The Interest of Others* (2013), co-authored with John Ahlquist, explores how organisations provoke member willingness to act beyond material interest.

Her research continues to focus on how to improve the quality of government. She is also committed to understanding and improving supply chains so that the goods we consume are produced in a manner that sustains both the workers and the environment.

### **PROF TSHILIDZI MARWALA**

Prof Tshilidzi Marwala, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, is an engineer and artificial intelligence professor who has made a distinguished contribution to the development of artificial intelligence and its various applications at the highest academic levels of research and postgraduate supervision. He is an elected Member of the Academy of Science of South Africa, a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences, the African Academy of Science and the South African Institute of Electrical Engineering. Prof Marwala has made significant contributions to the international policy on Open Data in a Big Data World for the International Council of Science (ICSU). In South Africa, Prof Marwala is the Deputy Chair of the Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

### **DR ASHEEL SINGH**

Dr Asheel Singh is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg. He is the author of two journal articles on procreative ethics, and two forthcoming chapters on African bioethics. He is currently engaged with a long-term research project aimed at better understanding our ethical obligations toward future generations, one which brings together theories of meaning in life, dignity, anti-natalism, and transhumanism. This project involves radically revising the contemporary Anglo-American bioethical approach to the ethics of AI and human enhancement by incorporating neglected philosophical theories from the East (primarily Classical Indian philosophy) and Africa (specifically the metaphysics of personhood and the ethic of Ubuntu). His other areas of research include environmental ethics (animal rights, the ethics of eating meat), existentialism, and the prescient philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche.

### **DR MPHOSHIVHASE**

Dr Mpho Tshivhase is a senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria (UP). Her research interests are personhood, personal uniqueness, and themes of love, autonomy, authenticity, death, and African ethics, aspects of race and feminism.

She has worked on different interdisciplinary institutional projects at UP that were hosted by the Centre for Human Rights, the Faculty of Humanities, and the Centre for Advancement of Scholarship. She was a member of the Moralities Research group at the Bayreuth University in Germany where she was invited as a visiting scholar. Amongst other accolades, Dr Tshivhase holds the 2019 Institute of People Management CEO's Excellence Award and she is on the list of the 2019 Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans. She is the current serving President of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa.