ABSTRACTS DAY 1

Linda Martin-Alcoff

Decolonializing Philosophy

9.30 Keynote

Abstract to follow.

Jacob Labrizzi

Valuing and Metanormative Neutrality

11.30 Room 1

To say that I value playing music should not require that I accept a particular metanormative worldview. I should not need to believe in irreducible normative facts, or whether desire-like attitudes can be truth-apt. Rather, to value playing music should just be to hold the particular attitude that playing music is worthwhile. But what kind of attitude is valuing?

I claim that valuing is a classificatory attitude. To value something is to classify that something in an action-guiding way. This position I term the *Practical Classification Account* (PCA) of valuing. A virtue of PCA, I argue, is that it runs counter to majority views that understand valuing as a belief- or desire-like attitude (or a combination of the two). For, these views face a dilemma: either they are hostage to particular metanormative commitments (and the challenges those commitments inherit) or these views rely on controversial conceptions of what counts as belief or desire.

The problem is that, traditionally understood, beliefs and desires are not metanormatively neutral. Normative beliefs track irreducible normative facts whereas desire-like attitudes fail to be truth-apt. As such, valuing accounts relying on such attitudes will be hostage to concerns about whether normative facts truly exist or whether what we value can ever be truly worthwhile. We may try to avoid these concerns, but doing so will require more controversial conceptions of belief and desire.

PCA offers a way out of this dilemma. Rejecting belief- and desire-based explanations, we instead understand valuing in terms of practical classification. We practically classify all the time, making declarations such as "lying is wrong" or "playing music is worthwhile." These classifications guide our behaviour insofar as they orient us for and against particular actions and activities. Building from an analysis of evaluative predicates, I show that PCA captures canonical features of valuing. Furthermore, PCA pairs with various metanormative positions depending on what grounds practical classification, showing the view to be metanormatively neutral.

To value playing music should not require that I be a realist, an expressivist, or anything else. To value playing music should just be to hold the particular attitude that playing music is worthwhile. Without metanormative commitment, PCA tells us what kind of attitude valuing is: a *practical classification.*

Sara Gorea

Sideways Music and Sideways Reasons: On the Temporal Dimension of Normativity

Connections between normativity and time have been mapped out in discussions of the relevance of personal identity to ethics or our duties to future generations (see e.g., Parfit, 1971). In this paper, my aim is to explore a neglected area of intersection between these two domains. My argument is that certain moral entities feature an intrinsically temporal element: we can only make sense of a reason as a reason by assuming a direction to time and ontological distinctions between tenses.

In order to show this, I borrow a key insight from Ned Markosian (2020). He argues that aesthetic realism - the view that there are mind-independent aesthetic properties - is incompatible with the Static Theory of time. The latter is a view which holds that time is perfectly metaphysically analogous to the spatial dimensions, lacking features which have been classically attributed to it, such as direction or ontological distinctions between the tenses.

Markosian argues that rotation in a manifold of similar dimensions does not alter an object's intrinsic properties – for instance, turning a painting sideways does not make it any less beautiful. However, rotating an object in a manifold of dissimilar dimensions does alter its intrinsic properties. He discusses the case of sideways music, which is a musical piece that has been rotated in space-time such that its temporal axis and one of its spatial axes have been switched. As an example, some sideways music requires all of its constituting notes to be played at the same time. He argues one cannot turn music sideways without making it lose its beauty. Assuming beauty is mind-independent, this poses a problem for the Static Theory, since it implies that the axis of time is in some ways different from the spatial ones, e.g., possessing a direction. Alternatively, Markosian's argument can be seen as showing there is an irreducibly temporal element to music and some of its aesthetic properties.

I extend this interpretation of Markosian's argument to moral properties. Firstly, I argue there are two ways to interpret Markosian's rotation test. The first is the property change test: an object's rotation in a manifold with one dissimilar dimension changes the properties of the object which depend on the dissimilar dimension. The second is the object destruction test: an object's rotation in a manifold with one dissimilar dimension destroys the object if its essential or definitory properties depend on the dissimilar dimension. While, arguably, sideways music is a case of property change, I argue we can observe object destruction in the case of sideways reasons.

Reasons are normative considerations in favour of a response in certain circumstances for a certain agent (Scanlon, 1998). Sideways reasons are normative reasons that have been rotated in spacetime such that their temporal duration has been swapped with their extension along one spatial axis. For example, a sideways reason may involve a response coinciding with or preceding the circumstances calling for it, such as watering a plant before it needs it. I argue sideways reasons lose their normativity and thus cease to be reasons. The upshot is that we should understand normative reasons as being irreducibly temporal.

Edward Armitage

Akratic Thinking

12.10 Room 1

Weakness of will, or 'akrasia', standardly describes our acting contrary to our judgement that another course of action would be better – having a cigarette despite judging that we shouldn't, for example. These cases pose interesting philosophical puzzles because they seem to contravene the norms that govern the relationship between our evaluative judgements and our conduct. How we make sense of this conflict is a question that's been long debated.

This philosophical debate focuses on action: not *doing* what we think is best, such as reaching for a cigarette despite trying to quit. I here intend to show that we can also display weakness of will in our *thoughts*. This is something that has hitherto not been considered. For example, you might find yourself worrying about an exam despite being confident in your ability and preparation, or dwelling on a painful memory despite knowing that doing so makes you depressed. I call this 'akratic thinking', to mirror the label 'akratic action' which philosophers give to cases like reaching for a cigarette despite having decided to quit. Where akratic action is where we *act* in a way that we judge we shouldn't, akratic thinking is where we *think* in a way that we judge we shouldn't.

In the same manner that others have argued for the possibility of akratic *emotions* (Mele, 1989) and akratic *beliefs* (Adler, 2002; Owens, 2002), the aim of my talk will simply be to argue for the possibility of akratic thinking, in a way that's supplemented by relevant psychological and neuroscientific work (Freedman, 2017; Haas, 2018). I'll develop this idea by showing how our thought processes can be understood as mental *acts*. That is, if thinking can be understood as a form of *acting*, and weakness of will involves us *acting* contrary to our best judgement, then we have a route to the unexplored idea that weakness of will can manifest within our thinking. This, I'll tentatively argue, is a conclusion that could potentially inform further work into the theory underlying psychotherapeutic practices such as CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy).

Jay Luong

The Artist Speaks: Testimonial Dualism, Generative Testimony, & Artistic Cognitivism

12.10 Room 2 (online)

What is the nature of artistic truth? & by which kind of process do we, as beholders of art, come to apprehend these truths? In this essay, I propose to connect two disparate domains of philosophical inquiry: the question of cognitivism in philosophy of art (whether works of art have epistemic value), and the notion of testimony in epistemology (how knowledge can be shared). Bringing these two areas together, I articulate a notion of artistic testimony: an account of how epistemic goods or states are transmitted through works of art. "is analysis stands to pay dividends for both #elds. Firstly, the notion of artistic testimony clarifies the *epistemic* dimension of artistic cognitivism. Secondly, addressing the arguments against

artistic testimony exposes shortcomings and problematic commitments of a dominant paradigm of epistemology– namely, a dynasty of propositional knowledge. "e emperor, as will be shown, has no clothes: propositional knowledge is an inadequate model for epistemology. Freed from its paralytic grip, we may open ourselves to new vistas on our cognitive practices and achievements.

To begin with, I introduce the basic tenets of artistic cognitivism and testimony. I do not offer a defence of either in this talk; rather, I take these concepts as primitive. Next, I introduce the notion of *artistic* testimony. I develop this notion by anticipating and responding to an objection. In particular, I draw upon Jennifer Lackey's dualist account of testimony, according to which testimony is a process in which both the speaker & the audience must play active roles in ensuring the success of knowledge sharing. In addition, I also connect my account of artistic testimony to generative accounts of testimony, which do not construe testimony as a simple matter of transmission. I conclude by outlining further research directions for artistic testimony.

Ross F. Patrizio

Outsourcing Inquiry

13.50 Room 1

In this article I argue that testimonial norms are not (traditional) epistemic norms—i.e. norms of belief—but rather norms of inquiry. My route to this conclusion goes through a phenomenon I call *perspectival testimony* (PT). PT is testimony in which a speaker does not merely assert a proposition but rather *vouches for a perspective*, in Elisabeth Camp's sense (2017; 2019). Drawing on a series of examples from the recent, burgeoning literature on perspectives (Fraser 2021; Whiteley 2023; Sliwa forthcoming), I argue that while PT makes for a significant chunk of our testimonial practices, traditional theories in normative epistemology of testimony have a hard time accounting for it. In particular, I argue that traditional norms fail to explain situations in which one is epistemically criticisable for adopting a bad perspective, irrespective of whether or not one forms any false beliefs or loses any knowledge. The upshot is that traditional testimonial norms must either be developed or replaced so as to adequately govern the practice they are supposed to govern.

Having laid out the problem, I begin to sketch a solution. The solution I propose puts to use an idea growing in prominence in contemporary epistemology: that epistemology is the theory of inquiry (Hookway 2006; Friedman 2020, forthcoming; Kelp 2018; 2020). To motivate my proposal, I draw out some important similarities between: (i) the particular problem PT poses for traditional norms on testimony; and (ii) the considerations taken to motivate an inquiry-based approach to normative epistemology more broadly. Finally, I sketch what inquiry-based testimonial norms might look like, and argue that the resulting picture is an attractive one. The normativity of testimonial uptake, on this picture, has less to do with the rationality of *testimonial belief* and more to do with the rationality of *outsourcing inquiry*—of incorporating the perspective of another epistemic agent in pursuit of one's question.

Marina Moreno

The (Im)possibility of Prudential Value

13.50 Room 2

Prudence is generally understood to be concerned with the balancing of well-being over time. For instance, we deem it prudent to undergo a painful dental treatment if it helps us avoid greater pain in the future. Even though we thus sacrifice some well-being at the time of the treatment, the future avoidance of greater pain makes it a prudentially valuable endeavour. How, precisely, well-being ought to be balanced over time, however, is a fervently debated question. While Sidgewick (1901) endorsed a maximisation principle over lifetime well-being, other authors have suggested averaging principles (cf. Bricker 1980, Pettigrew 2019) and maximin principles (cf. Bruckner 2003). This controversy has led some authors (e.g. Huckfeldt 2011) to suggest that there is no universal standard at all and prudence is ultimately merely a matter of contingent personal commitments.

I aim to show that, in some sense, matters are even worse. On the one hand, I argue contra Huckfeldt that the existence of a universal standard of prudence is both very desirable and plausible. On the other hand, however, I argue that developing such a standard is exceedingly challenging. This is due to an often overlooked structural fact about prudence, namely that it shares a structural similarity with population ethics: In both contexts, we assess the comparative value of populations of selves/people, which may vary in number and level of well-being. Based on this analogy, I introduce various axiomatic constraints on a theory of prudence, and argue that they are universal and independent of personal preference. I show that most proposed theories of prudence run into very similar counterexamples as their counterparts in population ethics and generalise this challenge by applying Arrhenius' fifth impossibility theorem of population ethics (2011) to prudence.

I then go on to develop and compare four possible answers to this challenge. First, I discuss the possibility of accepting the very repugnant conclusion intrapersonally. Second, I present and further develop Donald Bruckner's Minimax Regret approach (2003), which gives up Transitivity. Third, I apply Jacob Nebel's Lexical Threshold View to prudence and critically evaluate it. Lastly, I introduce what I call the Negative Lexicality View, which is based on Lexical Threshold View but overcomes some of its problems. I conclude by comparing the various options and argue that the Negative Lexicality View, which posits a principled difference between the worst forms of suffering and all other forms of well-being, is most promising.

Bosco Lebrun

Debates are Harmful: We Need a Conversation for More Fruitful Political Normativity

14.30 Room 1

Debates permeate our societal and political fabric, serving as a fundamental mechanism for deliberation and decision-making. From presidential campaigns to classroom exercises, the

practice of debating is ingrained in our collective consciousness. Initially lauded for its perceived ability to uncover truths, forge consensus, and assert power, debates often fall short of their intended objectives. Instead, they marginalize certain voices within society, tend to exacerbate existing divisions, and fuel confirmation bias (Nickerson 1998; Dutilh Novaes 2020). This is particularly the case with regards to political matters (Taber and Lodge 2006; Kahan 2017) as core beliefs and group belonging are at stake. As a result, engaging normativity in ethics and politics is challenging due to the prevalence of extreme positions and a lack of receptiveness towards the arguments of others. So are debates actually desirable? More generally, how should we proceed in the face of disagreement and conflict over political issues? The paper explores the value of different methods of political normativity and challenges traditional views because of their contradicting results: what is the point of being right if it leads others to believe and do the opposite of what is right? In contrast with authors who defend the necessity and desirability of adversarial argumentations (Govier 1999; Aikin 2011; Casey 2020), critiques point out the excessive use of forcefulness, the exclusion of certain individuals or groups with the risk of marginalizing their perspectives, and epistemic problems (Gilbert 1994; Kidd 2020; Bailin and Battersby 2016). Although endorsing the latter views, I show that the mainly feminist charge against pro-adversarial argumentation is problematic for a number of reasons which overall impede the cooperation that they support. I argue that what generally keeps the argumentation adversarial stems from its truth orientation and the prevalent aspiration for impartiality. A more fruitful political normativity requires to mobilize another kind of intelligence, emotional, in order to identify the more significant underlying needs, interests and values of the interlocutors with whom we engage. Contrary to the most common practice, understanding-oriented argumentations, which I label "conversations", imply abandoning the striving for impartiality, and conceiving of political normativity as nothing more than the recognition of win-win solutions. The paper concludes by answering objections defending traditional political normativity, including its supposed value for pedagogical and transparency purposes, but also the objection that the project of finding win-win solutions is actually a deceptive agenda (Mouffe 2000, 121–22). I defend the idea that win-win solutions are desirable and feasible avenues and therefore that a more fruitful political normativity is indeed possible.

Tom S. Swaine-Jameson

The Euthyphronic Argument

14.30 Room 2

I argue for robust metanormative realism (RMR), the view that there are objective normative facts that are objective and irreducible to natural facts. I draw principally from David Enoch's (2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2021) arguments, and argue that the best understanding of Enoch's case for RMR comprises a *factual stage* argument for the existence of normative facts, followed by a distinct *robust stage* argument for a conception of those facts as grounded in neither subjectivity or nature. Enoch's factual stage *argument from deliberative indispensability* is most defensible when presented as an argument for the existence of normative facts, where the conception of facts, and the corresponding conception of truth, is minimal (along broadly Wrightian (1992) lines)—not yet challenging subjectivist or naturalist views—and where the conception of normativity is one of authoritative (as opposed

to merely formal) normativity. On this interpretation, the distinct robust stage is required to establish the robust status of normative facts.

In this paper, I present the robust stage of the case, taking us from metanormative factualism to RMR. In Enoch's robust stage, he proceeds piecemeal, finding metanormatively factualist alternatives to RMR weak on a variety of grounds. In contrast, I draw a thread common to Enoch's arguments and relate it to Plato's *Euthyphro*. I argue that this Euthyphronic argument can be generalised against all non-robust factualisms, despite its being typically deployed against constructivism and reductive naturalism.

Granting the coextensiveness of normativity and nature, the Euthyphronic argument asks whether the normative or *prima facie* non-normative side grounds this relation. No answer, I argue, is sustainable for non-robust metanormative factualism: normative answers to Euthyphronic questions collapse into robust realism: naturalistic answers change the objects of the relevant factualisms from authoritative to formal normativity; quietist refusals to provide answers make problematic explanations of normativity's supervenience on nature.

I discuss the relation between the Euthyphronic argument and some other arguments for RMR. (i) While Moorean-style open question arguments attack both conceptual claims of equivalence between normative and natural concepts alongside substantive claims of coextensiveness, the Euthyphronic argument can accommodate both conceptual equivalence and substantive coextensiveness, targeting instead claims of the *identity* of normative and natural properties; accordingly, it avoids problems surrounding Moore's conceptual claims and is not hostage to the fortunes of projects seeking to establish necessary and sufficient natural conditions for normative facts. (ii) The Euthyphronic question, as I phrase it, is neutral as to whether agents *care* about answers to it: any connection between normative truth and agential motivation is, strictly speaking, dispensable to RMR, on my view. (iii) In contrast to the closely related 'normativity objection' to normative reduction discussed by Patrick Fleming (2015)—that reduction of normativity to nature involves metanormative eliminativism in reducing normativity to arbitrariness—the Euthyphronic argument attacks both reductivist and non-reductivist naturalisms, and both Humean synthetic reductivisms and analytic reductive projects alike, countering Fleming's response to the normativity objection.

Christopher Woodard

J U S T I C E   F O R   U T I L I T A R I A N S

15.30 Keynote

Utilitarianism is often thought either to have no theory of justice, or to have a very implausible theory of it. These critics have a point: if the best utilitarian theory of justice is that a set of institutions is just if and only if it maximises utility, it is hard to see what is added by calling these institutions 'just' as well as 'optimal'. This paper seeks to undermine this criticism by presenting a richer utilitarian account of justice, as respect for moral rights. This way of thinking of justice is strikingly historical in character, in sharp contrast to the way that, it is often thought, utilitarians must think of justice. In contrast to egalitarian theories of justice, this utilitarian theory of justice suggests that egalitarian ideals may be best understood as aims of good policy, the pursuit of which may come into conflict with the demands of justice.