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## John Skorupski

### VALUES AND FEELINGS: ADAM SMITH'S THEORY

#### 9.30 Keynote

Adam Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, gives a completely general, naturalistic, epistemology of our judgements about the 'propriety' of sentiments – of when a sentiment, or affective response, is or is not 'proper' or reasonable. By virtue of the link that Smith takes for granted between the propriety of sentiments and the propriety of actions, this becomes a 'sentimentalist' epistemology of practical reasons.

I argue that Smith's theory is a cogent contribution to the metatheory of reasons, that it stands apart from any Humean theory, and I discuss what its limits as a metatheory of reasons are.

## Georgie Malone

### INTERPRETIVE JUSTICE AND COMMUNICATIVE LABOUR

#### 11.30 Room 1

In his 2018 article, Tom Robins defends a taxonomy of aesthetic virtues as belonging to either character traits or functions. Running parallel to discussions of reliabilism and responsibilism in virtue epistemology, his taxonomy is meant to provide a satisfactory definition of art and give further explanation of why we appreciate it. While his account succeeds in providing a parallel taxonomy, several issues arise in bringing reliabilism into virtue theories of aesthetics. In this paper, I draw attention to the shortfalls of a reliabilist account by examining cases of forgery and AI art. These examples are intended to highlight that the value of art cannot be reduced to a result of aesthetic faculty virtues and that it is not theoretically useful to think of aesthetic faculties as virtues proper. Motivated by these cases and building on Christine Swanton's discussion of moral virtues in particular roles in her 2021 book, I will defend an account of aesthetic role virtues that can overcome the shortcomings of a reliabilist account while maintaining Robins' intuitions about artistic value and the theoretical need for aesthetic faculties and offering a more holistic account that includes partial virtues and virtues in development.

## Marri von Stokkum

### PASSIVE EXPERIENCE OF VALUE: HUSSERL, LIPPS

#### 11.30 Room 2 (online)

The early Husserl proposed that values are the objects of an experience referred to as *Wertnehmung* (parallel to the German word for "perception," *Wahrnehmung*). Moreover, he argued that acts of valuation are founded on doxic acts: for instance, in order to experience a

car as “beautiful,” I must have a perception of the car itself as it is parked in the dealership. Both perception and valuation are presupposed, in turn, in the decision to act (e.g., now I want to buy this car).

To sum up, then, volition is founded on valuation and valuation is founded on perception. These founding relations, in which the doxic element holds a primary position, still reflect the influence of Brentano, for whom feelings of love and hate must always refer to an object already perceived. While this scheme was never discarded, it became embedded in a more encompassing architectonic as Husserl made the transition from *static* to *genetic* phenomenology.

Genetic phenomenology discloses a “passive” dimension of experience. Taking a leaf from the insightful exposition by Roberto Walton (2017), I will defend the reading that on the passive level of experience, *feeling* has priority over perception and comportment. My primary way of orienting myself in the world is a matter of desire (*Streben*), in which the objects of perception are never “neutral” givens, but rather defined by relevance or irrelevance. It is only on the active (versus the passive) level of experience that I can isolate a doxic act (S is p) on which valuation and volition are to be founded in turn.

Little attention has been paid to the correspondences between Husserl’s genetic outlook and Lipps’ mature philosophy of *Feeling, Willing and Thinking* (1902). “Feeling,” for Lipps, is never a hedonic quality accompanying perceptual experience, but rather a primary way of accessing reality in terms of its “subjective possibilities” (*subjektive Möglichkeit*). Within this mode, the world I engage with cannot be abstracted from my own being and sense of orientation, as would be required in a pure doxic act.

Genetically speaking, therefore, one may conclude that “value” is precisely foundational for any intentional act, whether it be doxic, evaluative or related to a course of action. But we must be careful to specify the meaning of “value” on the level of passive experience. The proto-intentional “value” disclosed on the level is not to be confused with value-predicates that mimic factual properties (e.g., the car is “new” as well as “beautiful”). On the passive level, value is absolute precisely in the sense that I do not have to pose the question whether it belongs to the object itself or emerges from my relation to the object.

## George A. Surtees

### WHY INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY IS STILL A VIRTUE FOR THE OPPRESSED

#### 12.10 Room 1

On one prominent account, intellectual humility requires owning your intellectual limitations. However, some have argued that, while this may be a virtue for members of privileged groups, it is doubtful that this conception of intellectual humility remains a virtue for those from more marginalised groups. In my talk, I defend the limitations-owning account of intellectual humility against this objection. I engage with one prominent version of this objection, as offered by Laura Callahan. I suggest that this objection falls into a dilemma, either horn of which is not a problem for the limitations-owning account, but is a problem for Callahan’s objection. I end with what I take to be the underlying problem that limitations-owning might pose for the marginalised. I contend that this is a practical problem regarding

how we should apply the virtue, not a theoretical problem regarding how we should conceptualise it.

It's often argued that members of privileged groups could benefit from owning their limitations. Think of the man who 'mansplains' to his female colleague, despite her clearly knowing more about the topic than him. Regarding the man, this might be correct - but what about the woman he's patronising? We might worry that being attentive to and owning her limitations would, for her, just reinforce undue self-doubt about her epistemic abilities, of the sort all too common to members of marginalised groups (Whitcomb et al., 2021). These concerns motivate the idea that limitations-owning, while a virtue for the privileged, may not be so for the oppressed. As Callahn argues, these problems are sufficient to reject this account of intellectual humility and opt for a new one (Callahan, 2024).

However, I argue that this view falls into a dilemma. Either, accurately owning your limitations should cause you to doubt your beliefs about your epistemic abilities; or, it shouldn't. If it should, then this suggests that your initial beliefs were unjustified. If it shouldn't, then this doesn't look like limitations-owning has the negative outcomes for marginalised people that it's purported to. Either of these options, I argue, is fine for the limitations-owning account, but raises doubts about the objection itself.

With this in mind, I end with what I take to be the real problem. Namely, being a member of an oppressed group can condition one to be unjustly doubtful of one's epistemic abilities, resulting in vices like intellectual servility (Tanesini, 2018). In this context, it is likely that such a person would, if they attempted to cultivate limitations-owning, go too far, over-estimating their limitations and reinforcing tendencies towards servility. This is a bad thing to be sure - but it is a practical problem regarding implementing the virtue, rather than a theoretical problem regarding how we conceptualise it. Thus, my argument can retain what is intuitively plausible about the objection, avoid the dilemma, and preserve the limitations-owning account. It also helps us think about what practical interventions for cultivating intellectual humility could be of most value for marginalised groups.

## Chanasorn Pothikruprasert

### M O R A L   T E S T I M O N Y   &   M O R A L   D I S A G R E E M E N T

#### *12.10 Room 2*

One attempt to explain why there is something wrong with moral testimony is that moral testimony cannot make moral knowledge available to the audiences because of the existence of disagreement. Let us call this DISAGREEMENT. To some people, the fact that we disagree with epistemic peers on a certain thing could result in suspension of our beliefs or reducing our confidence with respect to that matter. DISAGREEMENT is denied by Robert Hopkins who argues that disagreement is not always guaranteed in all communities. In addition, Hopkins proposes that we should believe that the problem of moral testimony is that even if moral testimony can make moral knowledge available to the audiences, the audiences cannot use it because there might be moral norms preventing us from using it. In other words, the problem of moral testimony is moral, not epistemological.

In this essay, I will focus on DISAGREEMENT. My aim is to explore whether moral disagreement makes moral knowledge unavailable. In the first section, I will present DISAGREEMENT as a starting point of the discussion. In section 3, I will consider Sarah

McGrath's and Hopkins' arguments as to why moral disagreement cannot make moral knowledge unavailable because we are not in the position to know moral knowledge. Finally, I will conclude that the effect of disagreement is more serious than it seems. Therefore, we cannot be optimists and pessimists moving on to discuss the moral aspect of moral testimony might be a bit too hasty.

## Michael L. J. Greer

### SHAME ABOUT WHITE SHAME: PERSONAL AFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATION AS A TOOL FOR RESISTING OPPRESSION

#### 13.50 Room 1

The recent boom in public discourse around anti-racist activism and white allyship has seen critiques of white shame and guilt as “useless” emotions. Accordingly, empirical research confirms that white allies are now shameful of their bad, useless emotions (like shame). What should we make of white allies shaming themselves about their emotions? What should we make of the role of emotion in social justice solidarity practices?

To answer this question I develop the concept of *personal affective transformation*. I take an affect to be a feeling, emotion, or mood. I argue that *personal affective transformation* is an important method of resisting oppression, especially for those who are out-group members to a struggle. This describes the process of a social justice advocate distancing themselves from undesirable affects and attempting to cultivate desirable affects that allow them to continue to participate in anti-racist, politically progressive social movement building. I show that this is a tool of resistance wherein people attempt to manipulate their own affective responses so as to be better aligned with their rationally-held principles and values.

I begin by presenting the hegemonic view in Western political philosophy that prioritizes (1) reason over affect, and (2) the public realm of politics over the private realm of experience. The trend of denigrating personal experience and emotion pervades even the most progressive spaces, (e.g., Marxist spaces, where individual emotions are seen as unimportant to class struggle). Section 1 thus sketches a view I argue against: that individual, private experience and affect are unimportant for political struggle, and subsequently that we should devote our political energies solely towards the public, rational space of reasons. When this view plagues progressive contexts it is especially detrimental since people in these contexts take themselves to be doing liberatory work. On my view, it is a serious problem if we don't acknowledge the impact of individual affect in political spaces, since individual affect and resulting affective dynamics can inadvertently *reify* oppressive perspectives and dynamics. I outline longstanding feminist conversations around the “politics of personal transformation,” where feminists have focused on changing themselves in response to their complicity in the oppression of other women (e.g., rooting out internalized patriarchal beliefs through consciousness-raising). I show that this conversation traditionally has prioritized *epistemic* phenomena over *affect*—it has prioritized feminists changing their belief sets rather than their emotions.

Section 2 sketches arguments in favor of a politics that takes affect seriously, drawing on Martha Nussbaum's *Political Emotions* and Sandra Bartky's *Sympathy and Solidarity*. In Section

3 I return to the case of white allies feeling shame about their shame. I argue that what is happening here is a moment of *personal affective transformation*. In this case, this is a method of becoming better at being a white person engaged in anti-racist politics. I end by suggesting this may best be read as what Lisa Tessman describes as a “burdened virtue”.

## Dmitry Ananiev

### O B L I G A T O R Y   E N D S :   T O W A R D S   R E C O N C I L I N G T H E   P E R S O N A L   A N D   T H E   I M P A R T I A L P E R S P E C T I V E S

#### *13.50 Room 2*

It is common among Kantians to appeal to obligatory ends to provide an account of our duty of beneficence (Herman 2007, Hill 2002, Sticker 2023). They claim that we are required to adopt others’ happiness or well-being as an end and adopting it as an end entails using at least some opportunities to promote it. Non-Kantians also recognise the attractiveness of including obligatory ends in our moral theorising (Noggle 2009, Portmore 2023). For instance, appealing to obligatory ends help explain the limits on the requirement of beneficence. One is not required to maximise others’ happiness, but rather promote it to the extent necessary for adopting the relevant end. However, an account of obligatory ends that is not fully committed to Kant’s ethics has not yet been offered. The aim of this paper is to develop such an account by addressing several foundational questions.

First, it is unclear why there are moral requirements regarding ends at all. I argue that apart from actions, morality also regulates attitudes that we are required to form. And having certain attitudes (e.g., certain intentions) is just what it is to have an end. Forming some such attitudes is morally obligatory.

Second, there is no clear account of what makes specific ends obligatory. Why is it, for instance, that we have reasons to take others’ well-being as an end rather than reasons simply to help others? In the case of others’ happiness, I argue that adopting it as an end enables us to recognise its importance, which is not recognised otherwise. More generally, we can identify obligatory ends by looking for strong moral reasons to form the attitudes constitutive of such ends.

Third, how do obligatory ends weigh up against our personal optional ends? I argue that we are not permitted to adopt personal ends that would entail a failure to adopt any obligatory ends. However, obligatory ends do not preclude us from pursuing personal ends that are crucial for keeping our life worth living, that is, maintaining the level of our well-being above a certain threshold.

This way, introducing obligatory ends in our moral theorising also offers a way of reconciling the personal and the impartial evaluative perspectives. It is plausible that one’s personal perspective is at least in part shaped by one’s non-obligatory ends and projects. The view on morality that recognises obligatory ends that can be balanced against one’s personal ends recognises the importance of the personal perspective. At the same time, it requires everyone to adopt certain obligatory ends, thus securing the importance of the impartial perspective as well. The emerging picture has clear theoretical attractiveness, as introducing

the obligatory ends avoids the problems of consequentialist theories that attach no intrinsic importance to one's personal ends. It

also avoids the problems of other attempts to reconcile the two perspectives, such as Scheffler's agent-centred prerogative, which risks making the normative force of the impartial perspective either too lenient or too imposing.

## Eleanor Jerome

### WHOSE DUTIES TO RESIST?

#### 14.30 Room 1

Oppression harms the oppressed, and there is an urgent need to end—or at least mitigate—these harms. A burgeoning literature in contemporary political and social philosophy asks whether victims of oppression themselves have obligations to contribute to this goal in the form of duties to resist their own oppression. In this paper, I argue that the existing literature on victims' duties to resist problematically overlooks the heterogeneity of victims. Failing to properly unpack the differences between victims of oppression results in an unhelpfully coarse-grained dichotomy between victim and non-victim that neglects to recognise the ways in which many victims are in fact *privileged* in many respects. Such simple definitions of victimhood allow relatively privileged victims to rhetorically place themselves in the same category as the most marginalised, disguising their relative privilege by focusing exclusively on the ways in which they are oppressed. Failing to appreciate and attend to the heterogeneity of victims and the morally relevant differences between differently situated victims of oppression therefore results, I argue, in an overcautiousness when assigning duties of resistance. This overcautiousness often functions to excuse victims who ought not to be excused, perpetuating their relative privilege and ultimately adding to the burdens of the most marginalised.

The paper proceeds as follows. I begin, in §1, by outlining the current state of the debate, focusing particularly on arguments against duties to resist. Such arguments, I suggest, tend to take the form of emphasising the burdens that such duties place on victims, and expressing scepticism about the extent to which duties to resist can end or mitigate oppressive harms in the first place. In §2, I pull from existing philosophical work on privilege (Bailey 1998) and intersectionality (Nash 2008, Garry 2011) in order to analyse the ways in which privilege cuts across the victim class. In §3, I reconsider arguments against duties to resist in light of this analysis, arguing that recognition of this heterogeneity unveils the ways in which differently situated victims will be differently able to bear the burdens of resistance, and differently able to mitigate or end oppressive harms through their acts of resistance. I consider the former in terms of Uma Narayan's notion of the 'patriarchal bargain' (2002), using the game theoretical notion of disagreement points to demonstrate how privilege improves victims' bargaining powers in choice

situations that are deformed by oppression. On the benefits side, I argue that a clear-eyed consideration of privilege is vital for understanding not only the causal levers of resistance available to victims, but also for examining precisely who the benefits of resistance accrue to. A blanket reluctance to assign duties to resist, I argue, is of most detriment to the most marginalised among the victim class.

I conclude that the debate around victims' duties to resist works on the wrong level of generality, and ought to pay closer attention to the morally and politically relevant differences *between* victims of oppression.

## Declan O'Gara

### A DEFENCE OF THE ERROR THEORY AGAINST MOOREAN ARGUMENTS

#### 14.30 Room 2

According to the moral error theory, all first-order moral judgments are false.<sup>1</sup> Whilst some reject the view because they take issue with the arguments used to support it, many take the apparent absurdity of its conclusion to be enough to dismiss it. This *Moorean* response to the error theory can be presented as follows:

- (1) If the error theory is true, then 'it is wrong to torture innocents for fun' is false.
- (2) 'It is wrong to torture innocents for fun' is true!
- (3) So, the error theory is false.

I take Moorean reasoning to play a big role in the relative unpopularity of the error theory. In this paper I look to unpick exactly how these arguments are supposed to work, before explaining why it is that they fail.

I argue that the best interpretation of these arguments is what I label the *objection from incredulity*. According to this argument, our high-credence moral beliefs warrant strong epistemic weighting, and therefore justify the rejection of the error theory.<sup>2</sup> In response, I argue that there are plausible debunking explanations for these beliefs, and that this undermines the objection from incredulity.<sup>3</sup> So long as these explanations are in fact plausible, the Moorean can no longer claim that our high-credence moral beliefs *on their own* are enough to undermine the error theory, given that error theorists can explain why we might have these beliefs. Moreover, even if the Moorean can show these debunking explanations to be implausible, I argue that this would render the Moorean argument dialectically redundant. If there is no plausible debunking explanation for our moral beliefs, then the error theory is completely hopeless regardless.

I then turn to a recent paper from Eric Sampson (2023), who contends that Moorean arguments do not rely on our high-credence beliefs, but merely invite a *plausibility comparison* between the error theory and some highly plausible moral judgment. Given that certain moral judgments seem highly plausible, and each of the error theorists arguments (including debunking) are highly controversial, he argues that this is a comparison that the error theory will lose. In response, I first argue that debunking explanations are not controversial in the way that Sampson maintains once we have a proper understanding of how they function within this debate. Secondly, I will argue that the comparison we are being asked to make is unfair to the error theory because it fails to account for the metaethical commitments necessary to underpin the Moorean worldview. Mooreans owe us an explanation for how these moral judgments are true, and it is these explanations that error theorists take issue with. Any real comparison between the views would therefore have to weigh these arguments against each other. I argue, however, that this kind of comparison is unlikely to be settled on Moorean grounds.



Dorothea Debus & Louise Richardson

ON THE VALUE OF THE PERCEPTUAL  
EXPERIENCE OF BREATHING

*15.30 Keynote*