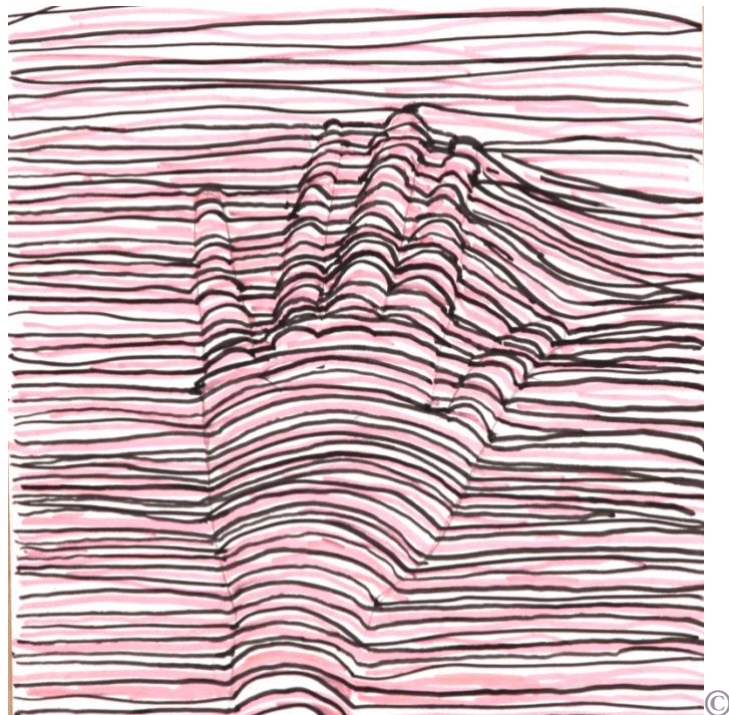


BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Understanding Value IX



Department of Philosophy, The University of Sheffield

December 9-11

2020

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KEYNOTE TITLES AND ABSTRACTS

Kierkegaard on Process and Paradox

Alison Assiter

The University of the West of England

Wednesday 9th of December 2020 - 12:30-13:30 GMT

In Kierkegaard's famous text, *Fear and Trembling*, de Silentio appears to appeal to the authority of God expressed through the requirement on Abraham in particular. What God requires of Abraham is simply, according to de Silentio, paradoxical. The requirement on him is not only incomprehensible to us, in the fashion of, for example, a flying dog or a unicorn, but rather it is literally paradoxical. It involves, as de Silentio puts it over and over again in *Fear and Trembling*, believing 'on the strength of the absurd' or 'believing the contradiction'. (FT, 70) 'What I'm offered (he writes) is a paradox' (FT, 63) The contradiction in question does not appear to be a logical one. So the question is: what kind of paradox is it?

There have been many attempts to try to make sense of what it means and I would like, in what follows, to attempt another explanation. Of course, by its very nature, a paradox cannot be made comprehensible. Indeed, the text is, at least in part about silence and it concerns the impossibility of speaking about certain deeply significant ethical matters.

However, given the significance of the claims in the text and given how seriously the story of Abraham is taken by all the major religions, and indeed, by those who are resolutely secular but who may believe in matters magical or spiritual in some form or another, it behoves us to attempt to make sense of the notion. This is what I will try to do in this paper.

Fanon on Value in Psychiatry

Komarine Romdenh-Romluc

The University of Sheffield

Wednesday 9th of December 2020 - 14:00-15:00 GMT

Frantz Fanon was first and foremost a psychiatrist. He was part of, and helped develop the radical movement in French psychiatry, 'institutional psychotherapy', and continued to work as a psychiatrist until he resigned his hospital position to devote more time to the anti-colonial resistance. This talk is an introduction to some ideas in Fanon's philosophy of psychiatry, which brings out the crucial role played by value in it.

Value-Based Protest Slogans: An Argument for Reorientation

Myisha Cherry

The University of California, Riverside

Thursday 10th of December 2020 - 17:00-18:00 GMT

When bringing philosophical attention to bear on social movement slogans in general, philosophers have often focused on their communicative nature—particularly the hermeneutical failures that arise in discourse. Some of the most popular of these failures are illustrated in ‘all lives matter’ retorts to ‘black lives matter’ pronouncements. Although highlighting and criticizing these failures provide much needed insight into social movement slogans as a communicative practice, I claim that in doing so, philosophers and slogans’ users risk placing too much importance on out-group understandings. Since social movement slogans that express values are first and foremost for users, I argue for a shift in focus in what these slogans (such as the historical ‘black is beautiful’ and the more recent ‘black lives matter’) do for users, as well as what they demand from users and enable them to express. When slogans have done these things, regardless of uptake, we can say they have performed their function.

The Wrong and the Bad

Shaun Nichols
Cornell University

Friday 11th of December 2020 - 18:00-19:00 GMT

Philosophical observation and psychological studies indicate that people draw subtle distinctions in the normative domain, reflected in their non-utilitarian judgments. But it remains unclear exactly what gives rise to such distinctions. On one prominent approach, emotion systems trigger non-utilitarian judgments. Such accounts fail to capture the specificity and regularity of moral judgments. The main rival, inspired by Chomskyan linguistics, suggests that moral distinctions derive from an innate moral grammar. We are developing an alternative account based on rational learning theory. We argue that simple statistical principles can explain how children might use scant and equivocal evidence to acquire rules systems with subtle distinctions and also to acquire a bias for non-utilitarian rules.

GROUP 1: APPLIED PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Wednesday, 9th of December 10:00-11:30 GMT

Ethical Conceptualization of a Sustainable Right to Health(care)

Karla Alex

Heidelberg University Hospital

Despite a vast amount of ethical discussions on sustainability and on the right to health, it has not been precisely determined how both concepts can be connected. As proposed in this paper, a sustainable right to health (encompassing the right to healthcare) comprises an agent-relative right to health(care); an agent-neutral right to health(care); economic aspects; and (only included in the conceptualization of a sustainable right to health, not to healthcare) environmental aspects.

I argue that from the value of health follows a universal right to health and from the universality of the right follows its sustainability. This approach firstly rests on the assumption of normative realism (Nagel, 1986); I presuppose that the instrumental value of health can be deduced from the objective intrinsic value of a human being. Secondly, the ethical conceptualization of a sustainable right to health is based on the traditional concept of sustainability (WCED, 1987; Elkington, 1999), and on the United Nations' definition of the right to health (ICESCR, 1966; CESCR, 2000). Thirdly, the concept rests on agent-relative and agent-neutral values, and it is argued that the sustainable right to health is agent-neutral as well as agent-relative because the value of health is agent-neutral as well as agent-relative. Although, according to Nagel, agent-neutral values can be arrived at from the exact same impersonal standpoint, or "view from nowhere," as agent-relative values, the problem of how to abstract from the agent-relative perspective remains unresolved.

I will briefly discuss this problem by referring to examples of the here proposed concept. For not only is there a conflict between an economic (Porter, 2010) and an ethical (DeCamp, 2019) understanding of value of healthcare that is resolved in my conceptualization by the restriction of economic aspects to those that do not transcend the moral agent-relative

and agent-neutral rights to health, but there is also a conflict between the agent-relative and the agent-neutral right to health that cannot be resolved as easily. This conflict becomes apparent when agent-relative rights to a specific type of healthcare conflict with agent-neutral rights of other members of society (including the entire, global society, as well as future generations), e.g. of those to whom the healthcare is not allocated when there is a shortage of resources, or of those who are negatively affected by, but are no direct recipients of the healthcare in question. Examples include assisted reproductive technologies that respect the agent-relative reproductive rights of potential parents, but result in negative effects on future generations either through embryo selection, or through inheritance of unintended consequences (e.g. in germline genome editing). The SARS-CoV2-2019/COVID-19 pandemic is another example where agent-relative and agent-neutral rights may conflict, as allocation guidelines, immunization policies, and triage value the agent-neutral right to health, but may thereby negatively affect agent-relative rights. These and further examples emphasize the importance of the proposed ethical conceptualization of a sustainable right to health(care) for discussions within medical ethics, as well as for applied ethics in general.

Wisdom and Well-being

Rikke Friis Bentzon
Copenhagen University

In this talk, I aim to explain how wisdom is a necessary component of living a good life with well-being. I understand wisdom as practical wisdom along the lines of Aristotle's phronesis. In this view, being wise does not mean that one has good meta cognition, as Socrates thought, or one is book smart, but rather succeeding in living one's life in a good way (Aristoteles, 2000; Tiberius, 2008). This links wisdom to a process-oriented theory of well-being, as the one presented in *The Reflective Life* (Tiberius, 2008). When well-being is considered as a process rather than a goal, and wisdom is a necessary component of living a life with well-being, then the notion of wisdom is best explained as a practical knowledge.

Practical knowledge is usually considered in either intellectual or anti-intellectual notions, meaning it is viewed either as a relation between a subject and a propositional content, or as abilities or dispositions to act in a certain way. An intellectualist about practical knowledge will explain my ability to do horseback riding successfully in terms of my familiarity with certain explicit propositions about how one does horseback riding. An anti-intellectualist would say that I have certain abilities or dispositions to act in a certain way when going horseback riding.

I will show how Tiberius bases her notion of wisdom on intellectualistic terms, while explaining her process-oriented theory of well-being. Afterwards, I will argue that wisdom would be better explained in anti-intellectualist notions.

Exploitation and Servile Relations in Clinical Research

Victor Chidi Wolemonwu

University of Sheffield

Discussions about the notion of exploitation in clinical research often centre on three key elements, namely, lack of consent, excessive risks and unfair distribution of benefits. Many bioethicists, clinical researchers and policy-makers seem to agree that these elements are essential to provide an adequate explanation of what may be morally wrong about the involvement of human subjects in clinical research (Hans Jonas 1969; WHO-GCP 2002; Howard Brody 2012; CIOMS 2016). The Pfizer, Tuskegee syphilis and Synflorix clinical trials, vividly exemplify morally questionable and exploitative clinical research. In each of these cases, voluntary consent was absent; the studies were excessively risky, and the risks of the research outweighed the benefits offered to the participants, which were mainly food, shelter and transportation. Alan Wertheimer's account of exploitation seems to show that exploitation may still occur in a consensual interaction. According to Wertheimer, the fundamental element of exploitation is 'unfair advantage.' In other words, exploitation occurs if an agent takes unfair advantage of another in order to benefit from the transaction. There are two ways in which an agent can take unfair advantage of another: if an agent benefits from the transaction by harming the other transacting party, or if the agent's benefit is excessive relative to the benefit of the other transacting party.

Wertheimer's account is inadequate to account for the moral wrongness in exploitative clinical research cases like the Lily, AstraZeneca and Tenofovir clinical trials for two reasons: First, exploitation may occur even if the exploiter did not receive any benefit. For instance, in the Tenofovir clinical trial, the clinical trial was aborted because some activists claimed that the researchers recruited the research subjects (who were prostitutes) without providing a remedy just in case there were complications. So, the researchers did not achieve the goal of the research, yet, there was something morally wrong about the study. Secondly, it is difficult to determine what counts as excessive benefits in clinical

research. The reason is that research subjects consent to trials for different reasons. In non-therapeutic clinical research like the Lily and AstraZeneca experiments, the research subjects agreed to the clinical trials because they needed some money, food and accommodation. There is no gainsaying that addressing these needs by involving in clinical research is the most reasonable thing to do.

However, it is difficult to determine what might be morally wrong in these cases if we rely on the size of benefits received, mainly if the benefits received is based on contractual terms. To explain what is morally wrong in the Lily, Tenofovir and AstraZeneca experiments, therefore, we need to invoke the idea exploitation based on the concept of servility. I argue that the Lily, Tenofovir and AstraZeneca experiments are exploitative because the researchers put the research subjects into a position in which they voluntarily enter into servile relations with them. I will attempt a defence of this account against some possible criticisms.

GROUP 2: ETHICS, META-ETHICS AND MORAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Wednesday, 9th of December 10:00-11:30 GMT

The Long-Term Sensitivity Problem for Expected Value Consequentialism

Dylan Balfour

University of Edinburgh

By many plausible estimates, humanity could survive for millions, perhaps even billions, of years into the future. This paper will explore the problem this causes for the most popular form of consequentialism, which posits that what agents ought to do depends on the expected value of their available actions, where expected value is a function of the values and probabilities of their possible consequences. The problem arises when we consider what several recent authors have noted: that even a tiny probability that an action will have a beneficial impact on the long-term future of humanity will confer that action enormous expected value. This is an example of a “Pascal’s mugging”, to borrow Nick Bostrom’s terminology. Pascal’s muggings obtain when infinite—or extremely large—values are at stake. Actions which have a chance of bringing such value to fruition are almost always dominant in expected value terms, no matter how small the probability. This phenomenon has been leveraged by a recently established movement of so-called longtermists, who argue that we ought to prioritise actions and interventions with long-term prospects, even if these interventions have a tiny chance at succeeding.

However, the longtermist literature neglects discussion of what these huge expected values might entail more generally. This paper will show that Pascals’s muggings are a ubiquitous feature of almost all actions, not just the large-scale interventions highlighted by longtermists, and it will argue that this poses a significant problem for expected value consequentialism. The problem is this: pretty much any evidence in favour of a proposition ought to give us an above-zero credence in that proposition, even when the evidence is incredibly specious or unreliable. Thus, any evidence that an action could produce some systematic long-term effects should give us non-zero credence in that action having such effects. This is sufficient to generate a Pascal’s mugging for that action’s expected value. Because of this, if expected value consequentialism is

true, when what we ought to do will often depend on scraps of evidence or far-flung causal projections of our actions' possible long-term ramifications. Even more problematically, it entails that many patently wrong actions might be obligatory, provided some piece of evidence or dubious line of reasoning supports the possibility that they could have a positive effect on the far-future. I call this the long-term sensitivity problem for expected value consequentialism, and believe it constitutes a significant, novel reason to reject the theory.

The paper will proceed in three sections. The first will outline exactly what a Pascal's mugging is and expost the longtermists' thesis that the long-term future of humanity dominates expected value decision-making. In the second section, I will develop the case for the long-term sensitivity problem for expected value consequentialism, arguing that it leads to a host of deeply unintuitive results for the theory. Finally, I will briefly address two possible attempts to salvage expected value consequentialism. The first is to "discount" the value of future generations, erasing the moral valence of people in the far future. The second is to appeal to the "Principle of Indifference". I find both of these attempts ineffective.

Naturalized Social Moral Epistemology: A Cornell Realist Account

Sushruth Ravish
IIT Bombay (Mumbai)

A prominent meta-ethical position that has emerged since the last decades of the twentieth century is often referred to as Cornell realism (CR). Prominently championed by Richard Boyd, Nicholas Sturgeon and David Brink, CR argues for a post-positivist, non-reductionist naturalistic account of moral properties and facts. Most evaluations of CR revolve around the parity thesis — the claim that methods of moral enquiry are analogous to scientific enquiry. Criticisms of the parity thesis are then taken to amount to a refutation of CR's epistemology. We argue that critics of CR have so far interpreted the parity thesis narrowly, conceiving it almost as a transposition of the scientific method into the moral domain. Such an interpretation fails to account for the CR's quest for a unified methodology that accommodates objectivity as well as the social nature of both moral and scientific inquiries. While the parity thesis is an underlying methodological principle, it alone does not explicate CR's epistemology. Therefore the criticisms of the parity thesis even if well-founded fail to target CR's epistemology.

This paper attempts to show that CR's epistemology for arriving at justified moral beliefs is a variant of reflective equilibrium (RE). We identify two essential structural elements of RE, namely considered moral judgements and the coherence seeking process and show how CR offers a reinterpretation of both these elements of RE to achieve the twin goals of achieving 'objectivity' and incorporation of the 'social' within moral inquiries. In both these aspects, traditional understanding of RE seems to differ — with Rawls refusing to comment on the metaethical implications and conceiving of the method as a largely, individual introspective affair. CR's objective reinterpretation can successfully respond to traditional objections like the isolation and input objections. More importantly, the social turn that CR gives to RE, we argue, makes it robust enough to ward off more recent criticisms pertaining to the fallibility of reason emerging

from experimental work in moral psychology and cognitive science. While traditional interpretations of RE rely exclusively on the rationality of the individual, CR's reinterpretation sees morality as a community-wide enterprise that can facilitate moral knowledge even in the face of biases that affect individual cognition. Moral progress (as in the case of abolition of slavery) too occurs by the social task of asking for and producing reasons and arguments for moral judgments. It is the strength of these judgments that often persuade others of the merit of the judgment. Thus, apart from amounting to a feasible epistemology for CR, the reinterpretation of RE provides a viable alternative for the advocates of RE committed to metaethical realism. Hence any account claiming to encompass moral progress must incorporate the sociality of moral inquiry. CR's reinterpretation of RE brought forth here creates a much needed dialogue between metaethics and topics in social epistemology.

On Feeling that the Rain Should Stop: Virtues, Values, and Norms in Scheler

Matt Rosen

University of Oxford

Max Scheler, born in Munich in 1874, made significant contributions across the philosophical landscape, including to phenomenology, the theory of value, and the philosophy of religion. For all that, interest in his work declined after his death in 1928. This was partly because the dissemination of his works was severely restricted under the Nazi regime, and partly because of the success of Husserl's phenomenology in its transformation in the phenomenology of Heidegger. The past few decades, however, have seen a revival of interest in Scheler's writings and in the subjects with which they are concerned. The focus of this attention has largely been on Scheler's analysis of sympathy, and on his cognitive account of the emotions. One aspect of his work that has so far gone relatively unconsidered, despite considerable interest in the topic, is his account of the virtuous life.

In this paper, in order to begin remedying this, I endeavor to draw out from Scheler's writings a sketch of an account of virtue. I pay particular attention to an essay written by Scheler in 1913, entitled "On the Rehabilitation of Virtue". This essay sets out a view about what virtues are and how a concern for their centrality in human life might be rehabilitated. I first discuss the nature of virtue as Scheler sees it, and I make a few remarks about its relation to the notions of character, personhood, and value.

I then discuss an objection to Scheler's view according to which it isn't sufficient for grounding a deontological conception of morality. I argue that this objection is wrongheaded, since it neglects how virtues and values give rise to deontic norms. On Scheler's view, virtues and their attendant emotions disclose values in the world, and these disclosed values can be transformed into norms. I am honest. My friend lies to me. I feel betrayed. This reveals to me that lying is disvaluable. I have the sense

that my friend should not lie to me. I have the sense that one should not lie. Or it is raining, which makes me uncomfortable. This reveals to me that it ought to stop raining, or that I should have brought an umbrella. I think that I ought to pack an umbrella when I go out. I think one ought to travel with an umbrella. When we lose sight of this movement from virtues, values, and emotions to norms, we lose sight, as Scheler sees it, of what it means to live well.

I conclude by commenting on some objections that further developments of Scheler's picture will need to answer, especially the worry that particularism cannot be reconciled with a theory of the virtues. In this way, I try to get clear about what Scheler's picture can offer present-day projects in virtue ethics; in turn, this will help us to get a handle on Scheler's work in a more comprehensive way.

GROUP 3: POLITICS OF LANGUAGE USE AND SOCIAL METAPHYSICS

Wednesday 9th of December 2020 15:30-17:00 GMT

'It's just a meme!' Toxic Speech, Online Environments, and Plausible Deniability

Nikki Ernst

University of Pittsburgh

In this paper, I consider a case of linguistic appropriation – namely: a recent campaign initiated by anonymous users of extremist online forum 4chan to promote the innocuous ‘OK’ hand gesture as a symbol of white supremacy. This example, I argue, presents a challenge for philosophy of language to understand the characteristic mechanisms through which pieces of digital media continuously customized and recontextualized by online communities – that is: internet memes – might be abused to harm members of marginalized groups. To flesh out this point, I approach such harmful linguistic practices through Lynne Tirrell’s framework of ‘toxic speech’, thereby highlighting the ways in which speech acts may license discriminatory inferences with respect to targets of white supremacist ideology. Building on this analysis, I construe internet memes as linguistic tools especially well-suited for ‘insinuation’, meaning a practice of performing certain speech acts covertly, or off the record. This practice affords speakers a form of ‘plausible deniability’ about having intended specific acts of toxic speech, which in turn serves to block attempts to hold toxic speakers accountable for their speech acts. Underlying these dynamics, I will argue, is a dominant conception of internet memes as a discourse that is not to be taken seriously, i.e. not to be taken as an indication of speakers’ sincere beliefs. Hence, building on recent work by Regina Rini, I maintain that the instability of conversational norms on social media discourages internet users from conceiving online speech acts, like the sharing of memes, as genuine sources of testimony.

Essentially, I argue that practices organized around purportedly humorous internet memes like the OK sign create expressively constrained environments. In these environments, the possibility of ‘hate speech’ occurring is up for debate. That is, counter-speakers’ attempts to call out internet trolls as dogwhistlers committing acts of ‘hate speech’ will be inhibited by the common ground of online interaction. According

to the conversational norms of such expressively constrained online environments, inferences from someone sharing 'offensive' internet memes to them being either a 'hate speaker' or a serious speaker at all are neither salient nor socially licensed.

Hence, this paper does not approach harmful linguistic practices within the narrow legalistic framing of 'hate speech'. Rather, I engage harmful speech as a variety of social practices embedded in diverse environments, practiced by diverse discursive communities, and powered by diverse technologies. In the spirit of a 'non-ideal philosophy of language', I argue that modeling accounts of conversational norms on offline environments means idealizing speech in a significant way. That is, insofar as philosophers of language approach conversational settings within the prevalent Gricean framework of cooperative conversational maxims, non-anonymous speakers and non-ambiguous speech, they will be unable to conceptualize linguistic practices on social media. However, since online environments enable characteristic forms of toxic speech, namely ambiguous acts like 'sharing' or 'reposting' that may abuse a veneer of plausible deniability, I urge non-ideal theorists to engage critically with unstable conversational norms of online environments.

Not-So-Neutral Counterparts

Gillian Gray

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

As Luvell Anderson and Ernie Lepore note in their 2013 paper “Slurring Words,” it is a common assumption that slurs correspond to neutral counterparts which share their extensions. While a slur may pick out the same group of people as its neutral counterpart, it seems to do something additional and distinct. Neutral counterparts (henceforth ‘NCs’) are often meant to be the baseline from which slurs deviate; often, when philosophers think about slurs and what defines them, they are thinking about the additional unique characteristics slurs have which distinguish them from their NCs. But it may be that slurs’ so-called “neutral” counterparts are less neutral than we think. Considering how often NCs are referred to in the literature on slurs (especially pragmatic accounts of slurs), it is surprising how little has been said about them. It is far from clear in what sense and to what extent they are neutral. I argue in this paper that when we consider common views in the metaphysics of race, gender, and other social kinds, we can see that “neutral” counterparts of slurs fail to be neutral in three important ways. First, these NCs do not have meanings or extensions which are obvious, agreed-upon, or uncontroversial; second, they do not pick out morally, socially, or politically neutral facts about the world; third, they are not morally, politically, or socially neutral in function when used.

A more robust understanding of how NCs fail to be fully neutral can help guide further discussion of how slurs function. There is a growing body of literature which attempts to explain just what the difference is between use of a slur and use of its neutral counterpart. Slurs are said to express contempt; to interpellate, derogate, and subordinate their targets; to reflect the speaker’s perspective; to reveal the speaker’s endorsement of a given ideology; and so on. It is true that slurs have a particularly offensive effect. We see this in the strong reactions they garner and the pain they cause their targets. I argue that if we do not fully understand the characteristics of NCs, we will likely also not fully

understand slurs and the source of many of their harmful effects. It may be (and, I think, is) that we can learn a significant amount about how and why slurs work the way they do by examining the not-so-neutral features of their NCs. In addition to serving as a starting point for further examination of the relationship between NCs and slurs, my account has several explanatory upshots, including explanations of how slurs differ in force from insults; why some slurs cause significantly more offense than others; and why seemingly neutral terms often develop into slurs over time.

Valuing Disability in Itself: A Constitutive Account

Khang Tôn

University of California, Davis

In *The Minority Body*, Elizabeth Barnes appeals to disability-positive testimonies in support of the thesis that one can value disability in itself, or for its own sake (Barnes 2016: 122). The appeal to these disability-positive testimonies raises two distinct but related questions: (a) Can one really value being disabled in itself? And (b) is being disabled something valuable? Proponents of the welfarist account of disability favor a negative answer to (b), and take this to be a good reason for giving a negative answer to (a). In particular, welfarists maintain that disability is something sub-optimal, intrinsically bad, harmful to one's well-being, or makes one worse off; and *prima facie* one cannot value something that makes one worse off. Against the welfarist, I will give a positive answer to question (a). In what follows, I argue that one can value disability, or being disabled, in itself. I begin by discussing a number of considerations that motivate this project before moving on to show why Sam Scheffler's account of valuing is a useful working model for us to better understand how one can value disability (section I). After that, I will show why, even though Scheffler's account captures many important facets of what it means to value disability, it is still not sufficiently robust to support the stronger claim that one can value disability in itself, or for its own sake. In attempting to argue for this stronger claim, I will articulate my own account, one that I call 'Constitutive Valuing' (section II).

Roughly, the guiding idea is that, for some people, being disabled is constitutive of their social and practical identity; and that it makes perfect sense for one to value that in and of itself. Once the notion of constitutive valuing is clarified, this can help illuminate our understanding of how disabled people can and do value disability in itself. Finally, I will explain what I take to be the main strengths and weaknesses of my proposal. First, my account respects and takes seriously the first-personal epistemic authority of people who give disability-positive testimonies. Second, my account is able to offer a plausible interpretation of what a person means

when they claim to value being disabled in itself, which is that they value their practical identity insofar as being disabled is what they take to be constitutive of that identity. Third, my account aims to contribute to the current ameliorative project of combating systemic ableism and challenging the kinds of pre-existing prejudices that unjustly devalue disability. I conclude that my account offers a useful model to help us better understand what - or an important part of what - it means to value disability in itself. Next, I will also consider and respond to two criticisms of my account of constitutive valuing (section III). My final conclusion is that, even if my particular proposal ultimately fails, we can nonetheless be optimistic about the prospects of a successful and theoretically illuminating account of what it means to value disability in itself.

GROUP 4: MATHEMATICS, NUMBERS AND VALUE

Wednesday 9th of December 2020 15:30-17:00 GMT

Incomparability in Comparison and in Choice

Adrian Liu

Stanford University

We regularly face choices wherein our options resist comparison. In November, I will have to vote for a cash-bail or an algorithm-bail system in California, where neither choice is clearly better, but neither do they seem equally choice worthy. Rather, they resist comparison. Nonetheless, faced with the question what to do, I must choose some course of action. If we must compare options to determine how to proceed, then rational choice is threatened if options cannot be compared. But the literature on such incomparability has largely assumed that the possibility or impossibility of comparing certain items is unrelated to whether or not the comparison occurs in the context of some practical choice.

I think this assumption is mistaken. My paper motivates the significance, for studying incomparability, of a distinction between choice situations, wherein there is a set of options for choice and I am to choose one of the options, and comparison situations, wherein there is a set of items (not necessarily choices) and I am to compare them with respect to some value (but not necessarily to choose one). To explain the putative incomparability of options for choice, I argue, we must pay closer attention to the differences between choice situations and comparison situations.

The paper is in two parts. In the first part, I argue that choice situations and comparison situations are structurally different in terms of what sort of moves are rationally justified within each situation. In non-choice comparison situations, we have agency over the parameters: the items to be compared, the values by which we compare them, and the sort of conclusion we must reach. But in practical choice situations we have no such agency. The necessity of choice places rational limitations on how we can narrow the scope of our options and the values we use to compare them. And the ultimate conclusion we must reach is always the same: we must make a choice.

These are significant structural differences between choice situations and comparison situations, and in the second part I explain why the differences are relevant for theories of incomparability. First, I argue that the distinction creates new explanatory burdens for both of the main types of theories of incomparability: hard-failure theories and vague-failure theories. Hard-failure theories posit a determinate failure of standard comparative relations. But their plausibility depends chiefly on thought experiments of comparison situations, and the theory is less appealing when we move to choice situations. Vague-failure theories claim that when items are incomparable it is simply vague whether each of the standard comparative relations applies. But certain features of comparison situations make vague-failure less compelling, meaning that the vague failure theorist must explain why features of choice in particular can preserve vague-failure for choice situations.

Second, I suggest that my distinction can deflate a tension between two basic intuitions about comparison in choice situations: first, that choices must always be made on the grounds of comparisons, and second, that comparisons of values and bearers of values is often inappropriate or distasteful.

Value by the Numbers: Quantificational Discrimination and the School Mark

Noëlle Rohde

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One of the key forms in which value is fixed and communicated is the number. From university rankings to salaries, from 10-point attractiveness scales to the Chinese Social Credit score - numbers seem to offer a clear, simple and transculturally understandable means of expressing value.

However, one of the crucial drawbacks of quantifying (human) value has to date hardly been discussed: discrimination. Scholarship on discrimination has been traditionally skewed in two respects. Firstly, philosophers have focused on what I call “classical discrimination,” that is unjust, disadvantageous treatment based on non-quantified features such as gender or ethnicity. Secondly, discrimination has always been described as an act which requires at least two individuals - the “discriminator” and the “discriminee,” if you will. In this paper, I aim to broaden the scope of the debate by redressing these two shortcomings. Firstly, I introduce what I call “quantificational discrimination”. I define the phenomenon as any act, practice or policy that imposes a relative disadvantage on persons based on their membership in a numerically defined group. I show that quantificational discrimination is harder to detect and harder to call out as wrong than its classical counterpart. What is more, it is often mistaken for legitimate selection and it affects not only marginalised groups but has a much broader social impact. Secondly, I advance the argument that it is possible to discriminate against oneself, that is to engage in what I call reflexive discrimination. The liaison of both insights yields the concept of reflexive quantificational discrimination. Prompted by the (implicit or explicit) value judgements encapsulated in numbers, individuals treat themselves unjustly. In particular, they unduly withhold internal goods such as self-trust, self-esteem or credit from themselves.

In order to illustrate the social significance of reflexive quantificational discrimination, I draw on empirical examples from my philosophical-anthropological doctoral research. During a year of ethnographic fieldwork in Germany, I am investigating a site in which numbers and value are inextricably intertwined: the school. Using students' lived experiences with being graded as a window onto social quantification at large, I offer insights into how reflexive quantificational discrimination plays out in practice and I argue for its theoretical recognition.

How Mathematization Might Render Narratives of Mathematics Better (And Why This Matters!)

Deniz Sarikaya

University of Hamburg

There are different narratives on mathematics as part of our world, some of which are more appropriate than others. Such narratives might be of the form ‘Mathematics is useful’, ‘Mathematics is beautiful’, or ‘Mathematicians aim at theorem-credit’. These narratives play a crucial role in mathematics education and in society as they are influencing people's willingness to engage with the subject or the way they interpret mathematical results in relation to real-world questions; the latter yielding important normative considerations.

In this talk, we want to analyze different narratives of mathematics and suggest that mathematizing as a virtuous practice in its own right is a better narrative of mathematics than, for example, extrinsic narratives which focus on the results of mathematical activity and the application of mathematics in non-mathematical contexts. By ‘better’ we mean that the mathematizing-narrative describes mathematical practice more adequately and that it allows for a shift in mathematics education that yields beneficial outcomes for our society. We argue that the fundamental activity of doing mathematics, or, more precisely, of introducing, using, varying, applying ... mathematical symbolism is a virtuous practice — what we call mathematizing, drawing on Freudenthal’s research in mathematics education.

includes individual choices on the component factors of the model. We argue that mathematizing, parallel to virtues such as art appreciation or art production, is beneficial for personal flourishing as it opens up a new aspect of reality — or at least a new perspective on it — that is not available without mathematizing. This virtue narrative focusing on mathematizing is better than other competing narratives that are currently more present in society. The latter often hide the arbitrary component factors of mathematical models which depart from the real-

world context for reasons of reducing complexity or favoring simplicity of the mathematical tools for example. A mathematical model is often perceived as an objective and true representation of a societal context. If it, however, becomes clear that any normative conclusion, which is (partly) grounded in such a model, is directly connected to the choices made by building the model, then we can reduce the risk associated with the authority of formal tools in public debates. Mathematizing means modelling a context in mathematical terms, which We start with a short exposition of Freudenthal, analyse the ethical consequences as to be found in Ernest's Philosophy of Mathematics Education, we then look at four narratives in particular, which we might title by the simplified slogans:

1. Mathematics is useful
2. Mathematics is beautiful
3. Mathematicians aim at deep understanding
4. Mathematicians aim at theorem-credit

GROUP 5: POLITICS OF LANGUAGE USE, SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Thursday 10th of December 2020 15:00-16:30 GMT

Hermeneutical Impasses and Heterogeneity in Marginalized Groups

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Advocates of the movement World Hijab Day (WHD) emphasize the hijab's ability to function as something political, feminist or empowering. However, proponents of the opposing movement, No Hijab Day (NHD), emphasize the exact opposite; they emphasize the hijab's ability to function as something disempowering and anti-feminist. In looking at debates between the two movements, or indeed, most debates on the hijab that feature something along the lines of these two opposing perspectives, one quickly realizes how differing the preferences and values presented by either side actually are. Importantly, and despite the disagreement, both groups are interested in protecting the rights of girls/women in the global Islamic community. Hence, the lack of understanding between them, and consequently, the lack of meaningful solidarity, creates an obstacle for both parties.

This discussion provides an analysis of the hermeneutical impasse that occurs between WHD and NHD advocates. I argue that a new type of hermeneutical impasse, the 3rd party impasse, is required to capture the case of WHD-NHD. I begin with a description of Luvell Anderson's 4 types of hermeneutical impasses, highlighting the three main features that characterize a type 4 hermeneutical impasse. These three features are unilateral prejudice, unilateral wilful/unwilful hermeneutical ignorance, and unilateral truth-tracking. In section two, I introduce both movements, WHD and NHD. In section three, I demonstrate that WHD-NHD differs from type 4 on account of its bilateral, as opposed to unilateral, features. In section 4, I introduce a fifth hermeneutical impasse, the 3rd party impasse, which captures the bilateral features of WHD-NHD, along with an additional feature, the bilateral potential for contributory injustice. Lastly, in section 5, I examine statements from both movements for potential contributory injustice to further show that the 3rd party impasse captures the case of WHD-NHD.

On the Non-existence of Private and Third-person Blame

Shervin Mirzaei Ghazi

University of Manchester

In recent years a strand of accounts of blame have been developed that can be called conversational/communicative (McKenna (2012), Fricker (2016)). These theories focus on the expressive (or conversational) function that blame must play. Although second-person expression plays a central role in conversational theories, however, they tend to preserve the possibility of other kinds of blame—unexpressed and third-person—that do not involve it. For example, Miranda Fricker (2016) introduces a paradigm case for blame—‘Communicative Blame’—and make sense of other cases as derivative. McKenna (2012) also claims “it's overt blame that is more fundamental, not private blame” (175) and private blame has to be explained with reference to overt blame.

One reason for following this approach is maybe due to widespread belief that what we call third-person and unexpressed blame are, in fact, instances of blame, and an adequate theory of blame has to include them also. After all, it would seem easy to think about occasions when two people blame an absent wrongdoer (third-person blame) or when we blame someone in our heart and do not express it to her (unexpressed blame). Here, Fricker and McKenna follow the lead of some emotional or conative accounts, according to which, expression is not even necessary for blaming others, and being subject to reactive attitudes is enough (Sher (2006), Wallace (1994), Watson (1996)). I will argue, however, that conversational accounts should abandon the assumption that there are such things as ‘private and third blame’. Firstly, these cases do not fit easily in a conversational account, and insistence on preserving them undermines the conversational function of blame. Secondly, in this way, these accounts conflate blame with other practices— such as condemnation—and also cannot differentiate between blame and judgment of blameworthiness.

After showing this, I will consider two interrelated practices, namely punishment (Duff 2001) and forgiveness (Corlett 2013). Duff's and Corlett's accounts fit nicely with conversational accounts of blame, and I sketch how blame, punishment and forgiveness might fit together into a unified account of what I shall call 'sanctioning behaviour'. This provides an additional reason to deny the existence of private and third-person blame, since the other forms of sanctioning behaviour – punishment and forgiveness – clearly cannot be private: nobody can be punished or (on Corlett's account) forgiven privately.

When is Reappropriation Appropriate? ‘Gossip’ as a Case Study

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It has been recently suggested that gossip is more than just idle talk (Rysman 1977; Horodowich 2005; Alfano and Robinson 2017; Adkins 2017). In particular, authors working within feminist epistemology have argued that is a relatively safe way for members of marginalized groups to resist the norms and values of their oppressors, as well as circulate potentially protective information (“PPI”). In this paper we oppose the idea of calling such subversive exchanges “gossip.” Our case consists of a descriptive claim and a normative claim.

The descriptive claim is that the folk are not inclined to classify an utterance about an absentee as gossip when it conveys PPI. We substantiate this claim by presenting results of an experiment devised specifically to test it. We presented each of the participants with one of the four vignettes in which two feminine presenting characters talk about an absent masculine presenting colleague. In three of them the utterance conveys PPI (“I heard that Ron has a history of inappropriately touching his female colleagues”), whereas the fourth one is more naturally construed as an instance of idle talk (“I heard that Ron is dating a supermodel”). Our participants were significantly more inclined to describe the latter vignette as an instance of gossip.

The normative claim, in turn, is that utterances conveying PPI should not be labeled as “gossip”. First, given our experimental findings, we point at the practical difficulties of securing the uptake of the revised concept of gossip put forward by such authors as Adkins (2017) and Alfano and Robinson (2017). Second, and more importantly, we argue that even if these difficulties could be bypassed, the successful reclamation would lead to a normative distortion, which – in the long run – would do a disservice to the marginalized groups that are supposed to benefit from the proposed reappropriation attempt (cf. Maitra 2018).

We use our argument for the normative claim to mount a more general account of when it is and is not appropriate to re-appropriate stigmatizing terms. It is argued that an adequate theory of reappropriation has to (i) explain why slurs are most apt for reappropriation, while (ii) leaving the conceptual space for reappropriation of other kinds of terms. We submit that the following criterion does just the job:

World of our dreams criterion [WODC]. A stigmatizing term T is apt for reappropriation if there is no use for the pejorative use of T in the world envisaged by the group targeted by T. According to WODC, reappropriability is sensitive to the particular vision of the world one endorses. It follows that if X and Y are both stigmatized by a term T, T may be re-appropriable for X but not re-appropriable for Y, and the other way around. One practical consequence is that if X and Y want to join forces against a common oppressor, it may oftentimes be prudent for them to choose a tactic different than reclamation.

GROUP 6: MORAL PSYCHOLOGY, EMOTIONS AND PERCEPTION

Thursday 10th of December 2020 15:00-16:30 GMT

Anxiety, Value, and Relational Agency

Dong An

Texas A&M University

Anxiety as an emotion has uncertainty as its intentional object. It functions to signal the uncertainty and motivate people to seek relevant information. Thus, it can have epistemic value (Nagel, 2010; Vazard, 2019). Moral anxiety is the kind that specifically addresses moral uncertainty. It is the emotion we feel when we face moral dilemmas, such as whether I should break my promise to send my mother to the nursing home which is better for her health. It is argued that moral anxiety is valuable because it can contribute to moral decision making (Kurth, 2015). I argue that these two types of value of anxiety are premature. Furthermore, I propose that anxiety can be valuable in the sense of manifesting our sensitivity to uncertainty and thus revealing our limitation as human beings.

It is psychologically well established that anxiety can motivate people to seek further information. However, there are two points to note. First, it is important to distinguish two kinds of information anxiety motivates us to seek. One is the factual information related to problem solving. The other is the information related to anxiety coping. Anxiety can be epistemically valuable just in the first case.

Second, empirical research has shown that even though it is true that anxiety motivates information seeking, anxious people do poorly in information retention, for example, in memorizing the material (Terry & Burns, 2001; Turner et al, 2006). This shows that even if the information seeking behavior is present, it may be ineffective.

Even if we grant that anxiety can sometimes function to promote the epistemic end, its value in moral decision making is less obvious. As noted, moral anxiety is elicited when we face moral dilemmas. Moral dilemmas are by nature difficult situations that lack a correct answer. Should I send my mother to the nursing home, which is better for her health but breaks my promise and is against her will, or should I keep my promise and

choose what is not optimal for her? It is hard to say which decision is correct. Thus, even if anxiety pushed us to deliberate, because the seeking is doomed to fail, the deliberation is fruitless in terms of decision making.

Still, anxiety can be valuable if we shift our attention from problem solving to sensitivity and awareness revealing. Sensitivity and awareness are valuable not just because they are the first step to solve the problem – to solely focus on that is to aim at eliminating uncertainty in human life, which is arguably both impossible and undesirable – but also because it reveals one important aspect of human life, i.e., we are sometimes incapable and vulnerable. This opens up a new way to understand human agency, which is what feminist theorists call relational agency (Christman, 2004; Mackenzie, 2008). By realizing our limitation, we have a better understanding of ourselves and see the potential of acting in an interconnected way. This argument complements the point that moral anxiety is constitutive of virtuous agency, which models on the individualist, atomistic notion of agency (Kurth, 2018).

Moral Judgment and Decision-Making in the Predictive Brain: Implications of Predictive Processing for the Rationalism and Social Intuitionism Debate in Moral Psychology

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University of Arizona

The fields of moral psychology and philosophy struggle to provide a satisfactory account of moral judgment and decision-making that reconciles the role of reason, relevant background knowledge, emotion, and social expectations in the formation of moral judgments while maintaining consistency with modern cognitive and neuroscientific research. This failure is a consequence of confining explanations to the historically influential, though outdated, dichotomy between Rationalism and Social Intuitionism. In this article, I provide an alternative account that situates moral judgment and decision-making within the promising cognitive and computational neuroscientific paradigm of Predictive Processing. This account, that I call a Predictive Processing Model of Moral Judgment Formation (PPMJ), suggests that moral judgment formation results from a dynamic inferential process, integrating background knowledge acquired through past experience as well as multimodal sensory information to guide our actions, reduce uncertainty in our social environment, and drive learning through the minimization of prediction error flow during social and moral experience. PPMJ represents a superior alternative by explaining the following three challenges that allude the traditional dichotomy: (1) it can account for the phenomenological diversity of our everyday moral experience, (2) it is compatible with a satisfactory moral epistemology, and (3) it can account for both conscious and nonconscious reasoned moral judgments.

The Aretaic Value of Irrational, Useless Doubts

Lilith Newton

University of Edinburgh

In this paper, I defend a conception of doubts as epistemic anxieties, and discuss three ways of evaluating doubts, so conceived. Anxiety is standardly understood in psychology and the philosophy of emotions as an emotional response to risk. Epistemic anxiety, then, can be thought of as an emotional response to epistemic risk: to the risk of forming false beliefs (Pritchard 2015, 2016).

There is precedent for thinking of doubt as, or alongside, epistemic anxiety. Charles Sanders Peirce wrote that '[d]oubt is an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and enter into the state of belief' (1986: 38). The unpleasant affective aspect of doubt and its motivational power to induce epistemic risk-minimisation behaviours, such as information-gathering and careful deliberation, on Peirce's view, make it functionally similar to more familiar anxieties. More recently, Jennifer Nagel has developed an account of epistemic anxiety as a 'force' that 'determines how much evidence we are inclined to collect and how thoroughly we will weight it' (2010: 408); and Juliette Vazard (2018) has posited a causal relationship between the emotion of epistemic anxiety and the propositional attitude of doubt.

I argue that following Peirce in identifying doubt with epistemic anxiety has advantages over views on which the two are related, but unidentical. First, this identity claim makes sense from the perspective of epistemologies on which knowledge is incompatible with close possibilities of error, which are widely endorsed amongst contemporary epistemologists (e.g. Lewis 1996; Anderson 2014; Pritchard 2015, 2016; Dutant 2016). Second, this allows us to evaluate doubts in the same ways that we evaluate more familiar anxieties, which, in turn, can shed light on epistemological debates on the (dis)value of sceptical doubts. Drawing from work in psychology and the philosophy of emotions, I argue that anxieties are evaluable in terms of rationality and usefulness.

Anxiety is rational insofar as it is proportionate to risk; thus I will outline some prominent accounts of risk, including epistemic risk, to explicate the rationality of anxiety. Anxiety is useful insofar as it alerts one to a risk one can take steps to minimise, or motivates one to take these steps.

Sceptical doubts do badly on both counts. My doubting that I have hands because I might be deceived by a demon is disproportionate to the risk of this obtaining, at least given the most influential account of risk within contemporary epistemology: Duncan Pritchard's modal account (2015). This doubt is also useless: there is nothing I can do to minimise the risk of being so deceived. However I argue that sceptical doubts may nevertheless have aretaic value: they may reflect well on the intellectual character of the sceptic. To this end, I consider Charlie Kurth's (2018) argument that moral anxiety, even when irrational and useless, is valuable insofar as it is the emotional manifestation of the virtue of moral concern. I argue similarly that sceptical doubts may be the emotional manifestations of such intellectual virtues as thoroughness or cautiousness (Zagzebski 1996), and as such are still worthwhile doubts to have, even if irrational and useless.

GROUP 7: AESTHETICS, POLITICAL THEORY AND ETHICS

Friday 11th of December 2020 10:00-11:30 GMT

Framing the Perceptual Theory of Sentimentalism as a Discourse Ethic

Elliott Hartman

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In this paper I propose to frame Tappolet's perceptual theory of sentimentalism as a discourse ethics by incorporating Habermas' theory of communicative action as a process of moral discourse. The basic premise of sentimentalism is that moral judgements are made on the basis of the emotions that accompany these judgements. Additionally, the type of emotion that is felt corresponds with the type of judgement being made with negative emotions indicating immorality and vice versa. This premise has since been expanded by the perceptual theory which has drawn a parallel between these emotions and perception. In this model when a person witnesses moral events in the world, they experience emotions that are directed toward that object and these emotions correspond with the moral character of that object. The perceptual theory argues these emotions are attuned to moral properties thus revealing them to the observer. This theory raises several interesting questions. To what extent is emotion perceptual? And in what capacity do moral properties exist? Rather than examine these metaphysical questions, this paper will develop this theory by broadening its scope to include the social and cultural aspects of morality which constitute a significant aspect of moral experience. One proponent of the perceptual theory has identified how a process of moral discourse may contribute to the accuracy of moral perception. By providing access to the perceptions and perspectives of others a discourse process would allow individuals to identify sources of bias and erroneous stimuli that may interfere with moral perception (Tappolet, 2016, p. 172). Tappolet has not specified what form this process would take nor how this social process may interact with moral perception, but she has indicated that identifying these sources of interference is a collaborative process (p. 195). In this paper I look to Habermas' theory of communicative action to fulfil this role. Communicative action is a process of collective rationality whereby

members of a community participate in discourse that is oriented toward reaching an understanding about the world. According to Habermas it is also the process that allows individuals to contribute to the formation of cultural norms and values (Habermas, 1984). In this paper I will outline how Tappolet's perceptual theory may incorporate communicative action to form a holistic theory that places this perceptual process in a cultural context. I argue that by utilizing communicative action the perceptual theory opens the door to new moral processes that may strengthen the theory's underlying claims. Additionally, by mapping out how the perceptual theory interacts with the formation of cultural moral norms may allow for an epistemic link to be drawn connecting moral properties with cultural values.

From Enemies to Adversaries - Mouffe, Wittgenstein and Political Disagreement

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Can we understand someone with a different political ideology? Can someone's values become intelligible to us even if they are very different from our own? In the age of populism and "identity politics" is there any way for non-antagonistic politics? In this paper I defend such a possibility, building on the works of Chantal Mouffe and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

First, I will present Mouffe's theory of 'agonistic pluralism', which builds on thoughts of the later Wittgenstein (section 2). In several works (2000; 2005) Mouffe presents two arguments against rationalistic approaches to political theory (e.g. Habermas 1984, Rawls 1971): First, she claims that such accounts rest on a narrowly uniform idea of rationality as they make "differences irrelevant" (Mouffe 2000: 19), which renders them "unable to adequately grasp the pluralistic nature of the social world" (Mouffe 2005: 10). Second, Mouffe criticizes the idea that such procedural theories only rely on formal requirements without making substantial ethical commitments. For both her arguments she cites Wittgenstein as an important source. I will carve out the assumptions upon which Mouffe's reading rests (sections 3 and 4). The next section (5) dwells again on the philosophy of Wittgenstein and responds to a common criticism of agonistic pluralism, namely that Mouffe is unable to explain how political opponents can be seen as legitimate adversaries instead of enemies which should be destroyed. In Mouffe's words: "The crucial point here is to show how antagonism can be transformed so as to make available a form of we/they opposition compatible with pluralist democracy" (2005: 19). If we see political disagreement as a clash of forms of life, then Wittgenstein's remarks on the possibility of understanding different forms of life become relevant (Z § 390; PPF § 327). Wittgenstein stresses repeatedly how the practice of imagining a different language (PI § 19), different training (Z § 387) and different social facts can make other forms of life intelligible (PPF § 366;

cf. Baker / Hacker 1985: 240 ff., esp. 242). Lastly (section 6), I examine which practical consequences follow from such an understanding of political disagreement. In particular, I argue that through narration and the study of history we can foster our ability to imagine different forms of life. Accordingly, literature and testimony become politically relevant as through them we can understand opposing values. This contributes to a civic practice which acknowledges radical plurality in society and yet does not conceive of political opponents as hostile enemies.

In doing this, it is neither my aim to scrutinize the interpretative consistency of Mouffe's work, nor to defend agonistic pluralism against other theories of the political. Rather, I strive to connect Wittgenstein's philosophical work with relevant and recent developments in political philosophy (cf. Crary / de Lara, forthcoming) and contribute to the general endeavour of making political theory apt for its application.

Exploring the Relationship Between the Aesthetic and Moral Value of Food

Nicholas Reimann

University of Leeds

The debate about the relationship between aesthetic and moral value has brought forth a variety of accounts of what aesthetic-ethical value interaction might consist in. Autonomists deny any such interaction; they maintain that a moral defect in a work of art never makes for an aesthetic defect, and likewise, that a moral virtue never contributes to a work's aesthetic value. Moderate moralists hold that a moral virtue/defect sometimes makes for an aesthetic virtue/defect, whereas (radical) moralists claim that a moral virtue/defect always makes for an aesthetic virtue/defect. Contextualists argue that the valence of the interaction can sometimes be inverted, that is, sometimes a moral defect can make for an aesthetic virtue, and vice versa.

So far, there have been only a few attempts to apply the value interaction debate to the case of food. One concern with such a project might be that the experience of food is not typically considered to be an aesthetic experience. I reject this view, arguing instead that the savouring of experiences that are derived from the senses of taste, smell and touch — traditionally taken to be the 'lower' senses — can and should be considered genuine aesthetic experiences.

Having thus established the aesthetic quality of the experience of savouring food, I turn to some conceptual difficulties in applying the ethical-aesthetic value interaction debate to the case of food. One obvious disanalogy between (representational) art and food is that food rarely advances a moral perspective. The moral quality of a work's perspective, however, is what most contributors to the value interaction debate have focused on. Korsmeyer (2012) suggests that we should consider the moral quality of food in terms of the moral status of its means of production instead. Specifically, she maintains that a food's moral quality is aesthetically relevant if the means of production leave a

discernible 'trace' in the final product. The position she then goes on to argue for is analogous to moderate moralism. Liao and Meskin (2018) pick up Korsmeyer's discussion of trace, but they draw a different conclusion, viz. food contextualism.

In reviewing these two accounts, I will interrogate the notion of 'trace' in particular, arguing that its scope is too narrow to do the work that Korsmeyer seems to want it to do. I will then turn to Gaut's merited response argument for moralism and Carroll's uptake argument for moderate moralism in order to explore whether they might be extended so as to provide a more promising strategy for applying the value interaction debate to the case of food.

GROUP 8: FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY AND PERSPECTIVES FROM SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Friday 11th of December 2020 10:00-11:30 GMT

The Biased Mind, Cognitivism, and Liberal Feminism: Tracing the Problems with Implicit Bias Theorising

Naomi Beecroft

University of Wollongong

Theorising around implicit bias – the notion that people can think and act in oppressive ways without conscious awareness of doing so – is dominated by what Ayala (2016) calls The Biased Mind approach. Implicit biases, the biased mind account goes, are patterns of injustice situated within individual minds, with the tacit assumption that it is the moral responsibility of these individual minds to solve (Ayala 2016). This paper traces the dominance of The Biased Mind to problematic, individualistic frameworks in a) philosophy of mind and cognition, and b) feminist philosophy.

First, I argue that implicit bias theorising's problematic foundations in philosophy of mind and cognition are due to the dominance of cognitivism as a framework for understanding mindedness. The cognitivist account states cognition is a brain-bound process of transforming sensory data into contentful representations, which are manipulated and then acted upon. This is what Hurley (1998) calls The Sandwich Model; cognition is the filling, sandwiched between perception and action. The central tenets of the cognitivist account are a) internalism (the belief that minds are skin and/or skull bound, Clark and Chalmers 1998) and b) representationalism (the belief that cognition is the manipulation of contentful symbols, Fodor 1975).

Second, I show that The Biased Mind account of bias naturally falls out of liberal feminism's core demand for women's freedom of choice. This demand for choice, though seemingly agreeable, has met staunch criticism from feminists across the political spectrum, most notably from the Marxist feminist tradition. The objection states that liberal feminism, with its emphasis on choice, neglects a robust analysis of power relations, and as such reifies the autonomy and choices of some women at the

expense of others more marginalised in complex systems of domination and subordination (e.g. Young 2006). This failure to properly understand and account for these complex power relations has created a watered-down concept of implicit bias, creating a million-dollar bias mitigation industry aimed at the betterment of white, western, professional women.

Having demonstrated the shaky ground implicit bias theorising is built upon, I provide the beginnings of an anti-cognitivist account of implicit bias, backed by materialist feminist methods and aims. The field of E-cognition (embodied, extended, enactive, embedded and ecological cognition) offers alternatives to the individualistic conception of cognition. For the E-cognition theorist, cognition is a diachronic, interactive, socially embedded process that involves no clearly designated lines between perception, cognition, and action. Accepting an E-cognitive account of bias leads us to reject the idea that bias is locked away in the skull of an offender, or that it remains the sole responsibility of that offender.

Given arguments against cognitivism and liberal feminism and their individualistic nature, I urge for the development of an anti-cognitivist metaphysics of implicit bias, backed by a commitment to a materialist, collectivist feminist methodology.

Engineering is not a Luxury: Black Feminists and Logical Positivists on Ameliorative Inquiry for Political Change

Matthew J. Cull

University of Sheffield

Recently, analytic philosophy has returned to the topic of conceptual engineering - put roughly, the study of what our concepts ought to be, and how to decide on which concepts to adopt. In this paper I want to read two very different traditions in tandem on the topic of conceptual engineering: black feminism and logical positivism. I will suggest that reading the traditions in this way reveals a number of affinities, and that a model for conceptual engineering grounded in community activism emerges from both traditions.

I will begin by dispelling some myths about the logical positivists, suggesting that there are good biographical and philosophical reasons to think them committed to many of same emancipatory projects as the black feminists I will discuss. I will then take a look at the particular models of conceptual engineering (or in their terms 'explication') offered by Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath. Whilst Carnap's engineering perhaps seems a little narrow in its goals, and overly systematic for use in advancing political change, I will suggest that Neurath's additions to Carnap's work provide a model of conceptual engineering based on communities that is well-suited to seeking change in the light of those communities' political goals.

Turning to the black feminists, and following Sara Ahmed's work on 'sweaty concepts', I develop the idea that Audre Lorde's notion of 'poetry' can be read as a conceptual engineering project, aimed largely at individual emancipation. I then suggest that the model of conceptual engineering provided by Patricia Hill Collins shows an even closer fit between black feminist and logical positivist thought, developing concepts that meet the needs of particular communities of black women in particular contexts. Indeed, I will suggest that the projects described by Neurath and Collins are virtually identical.

Whilst this might just be thought to be of merely historical note, I will end by suggesting how such a way of doing conceptual engineering might, and indeed has, been implemented for political change. I will look in particular at the ways in which online trans communities are developing new gender concepts to suit their particular needs and goals. I suggest that such a practice is entirely in line with the Collins/Neurath line on conceptual engineering, though that trans people might also gain much from engaging with the work of Lorde.

Epistemic Vice, Institutional Corruption, and the Home Office

Taylor Matthews

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In March 2020, the Windrush Scandal in the UK culminated in the publication of an independent report, which sought to explain why British-Caribbean citizens had been wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation, and wrongfully deported by the UK Home Office. The Windrush Lessons Learned Review (Williams, 2020) explicitly described the Home Office as demonstrating institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards issues of race and the history of the Windrush generation (2020: 7).

Institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness are candidate institutional epistemic vices. That's to say, they prevent collective or institutional agents from gaining knowledge and reflect badly on these bodies. How do institutions such as the Home Office come to possess collective epistemic vices? In this talk, I draw on an emerging concept within vice epistemology called epistemic corruption to answer this question. Epistemic corruption occurs when one's epistemic character comes to be damaged due to the subject's interaction with persons, conditions or structures that facilitate the development and exercise of epistemic vices (Kidd, 2020; 2019). Using Kidd's account as a template, I argue for what I call institutional epistemic corruption.

To flesh this out, I briefly introduce Kidd's account epistemic corruption and isolate two key features: first, epistemic corruption requires an epistemic character to be damaged; second, this character damage corresponds to gaining bad epistemic motivations or losing good epistemic values. From here, I draw on Miranda Fricker and Margaret Gilbert's work on joint commitment and plural subjecthood to explain how institutions can reasonably be said to possess epistemic motivations, and through this, be virtuous or vicious. With a motivational component to hand, I illustrate how collective agents might also possess an epistemic

'character' by drawing on Fricker's Gilbertian-inspired account of 'institutional ethos' (2020).

With the requisite parts acquired, I explain how an account of institutional epistemic corruption might help vice epistemologists approach and diagnose institutional epistemic vices. According to my account, an institution becomes vicious in two ways. First, institutional epistemic corruption can occur passively when an institution is unable to develop or cultivate a good epistemic ethos because members of the institution's joint commitment hinder the development, or tolerate the loss, of good epistemic values. Alternatively, institutional epistemic corruption is active when an institution adopts a bad epistemic ethos. This occurs when an institutional joint commitment collectively encourages the exercise of bad epistemic values.

I conclude by applying this model of institutional epistemic corruption to the case of the UK Home Office and its vices of institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness. Either the Home Office suffered passive institutional epistemic corruption because those party to its joint commitment (civil servants, ministers etc.) tolerated or normalised policies and measures, which detracted from, or eroded, any epistemic ethos of intellectual rigour, diligence and sensitivity. Alternatively, the Home Office suffered active institutional epistemic corruption because members of its joint commitment (officials, ministers etc.) encouraged the exercise of intellectually insensitive, careless, and lazy attitudes towards issues of race and immigration.

GROUP 9: ETHICS AND VALUE THEORY

Friday 11th of December 2020 15:00-16:30 GMT

Better Moral World

Andreas Bruns

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Some arguments in moral philosophy take the form, 'It would be better if p, therefore p.' One prominent instance of this inference is Frances Kamm's defence of constraining rights. A constraining right is one that it is impermissible to violate even to minimise the overall number of violations of the same right. For instance, if we are protected by a constraining right against torture, then it is impermissible to torture any one of us even to prevent the torture of two or more others. Kamm argues that we have constraining rights because the elevated moral status they give expression to would make for a better moral world. There is controversy among philosophers as to whether this type of inference, 'the better world argument,' is a valid or cogent form of reasoning. After all, I cannot infer the truth of the statement, 'It is not raining on my head', from the truth of the statement, 'It would be better if it weren't raining on my head (because I am on a hike)'. Sometimes the world is not such that what would better be true is true. Analogue to the 'desperate hiker's argument', the better world argument may seem like an instance of wishful thinking. Some, like Thomas Nagel, have suggested that the better world argument may exhibit a cogent form of reasoning so long as one argues for a moral rather than a factual conclusion. Others, like David Enoch, have suspected that more needs to be said in order to make the better world argument plausible in moral discourses.

I argue that we should circumvent the debate about the cogency of the better world argument by rephrasing it as an argument about the normative preferability of possible worlds. For instance, if Kamm's claims about constraining rights and moral status are correct, then it is fitting for us to prefer, on moral grounds, any possible world in which we have constraining rights to any other possible world in which, other things being equal, we don't. If it is in this sense normatively preferable that we have constraining rights, then we have a decisive moral reason to represent the truth of the proposition that we have such rights in our

moral principles. This 'preferable world argument' does not establish anything less than the better world argument; yet it can be shown to exhibit an accepted form of cogent reasoning, whereas the better world argument, understood as an instance of the inference, 'It would be better if p , therefore p' , does not.

Value Assignment Under Moral Uncertainty: A Role for Desirability

Nicholas Makins

London School of Economics and Political Science

This paper presents a unifying diagnosis of a number of important problems facing existing models of rational choice under moral uncertainty and proposes a remedy. I argue that the problems of (i) intertheoretic value comparisons, (ii) severely limited scope and (iii) swamping by “fanatical” theories all stem from the way in which values are assigned to options in procedures such as Maximisation of Expected Choice-Worthiness (MEC). These problems can be avoided if one assigns values to options under a given moral theory by asking something like, “if this theory were true, how much would I desire this option?” rather than, “if this theory were true, how much value would it assign to this option?”. This method of value assignment provides a role for desirability that is curiously absent from the existing discussion of what agents rationally ought to do when uncertain about what they morally ought to do.

Given that MEC and other similar proposals are presented as principles of rationality, it is noteworthy that they make little or no mention of agents’ desires, preferences, ends or goals – notions that are central to traditional theories of rationality – but rather work solely with the values provided by whichever moral theories are under consideration. I will show how one might assign values to options according to how desirable they would be if a given moral theory were true. These values are arrived at through a process of compromise between one’s narrow self-interest and the conditional moral commitments that arise from partial moral beliefs. This builds on an earlier debate between Amartya Sen and Daniel Hausman concerning the ways in which moral considerations might come to feature in conventional models of rational choice.

This method of value assignment would allow one to adopt something like MEC, but sidestep the biggest obstacles facing its

conventional application. Firstly, the proposed approach does not require the intertheoretic value comparisons that undermine other forms of “moral hedging”, since the values are taken to represent the same entity, namely desirability.

Secondly, it would allow one to factor in moral theories that do not provide the right kind of values, or indeed any values at all, such as those within deontological or contractualist ethics. Even if a given theory simply ascribes a deontic status to some option, an agent can take this into consideration when evaluating its desirability and this may be numerically representable.

Lastly, assigning values in this way avoids those instances where calculations of expected choice-worthiness are skewed by “fanatical” theories that are considered highly unlikely, but produce values so large that they swamp all other views. If an agent is not rationally required to assign the exact values that a given theory would, then such distorting values need never enter their decision calculus.

While avoiding these problems, this modified approach would preserve a crucial advantage of MEC over other procedures: the sensitivity of an agent’s choice to both the degree of belief they have in a theory and how much that theory suggests is at stake.

Why Not Maximize Expected Choiceworthiness

Amit Pinsker

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Cases of normative moral uncertainty are those in which we know all the empirical facts, but are uncertain regarding which moral theory is correct. The dominant approach in the literature to dealing with normative uncertainty is Maximizing Expected Choiceworthiness (MEC), according to which agents should maximize the expected moral value of their actions, just as they would maximize expected utility under empirical uncertainty. In this paper I give an account of, and defend, a principle for decisions under normative uncertainty known as “My Favorite Option” (MFO), which instructs agents to choose the action they believe is most likely to be morally right.

I argue that the best argument for MEC and against MFO relies on inter-theoretical comparisons of moral value - that is, it relies on a background assumption that there is a common cardinal unit between the scales of different moral theories. However, the main reason given in favor of MFO in the literature is that there is no such common cardinal unit, and that moral theories are in principle incomparable. Therefore the argument for MEC is, at the very least, confused.

I then argue that even if we grant that moral theories are comparable and share a common cardinal unit, MFO is still preferable to MEC, as it successfully reflects the motivation of agents under normative uncertainty: motivation to do the right thing *de dicto*. That is, motivation to do the right thing as such, whatever it may be. I show that MEC fails to reflect this motivation, since (1) it requires agents to choose an action they are certain is morally wrong, and (2) it instructs them to take huge moral risks, even when there is an alternative they are certain is morally right. MFO, on the other hand, never requires agents to choose against their motivation, and is thus preferable to MEC. While some argue against moral motivation *de dicto*, claiming that it is fetishistic, it is widely accepted that agents under moral uncertainty are necessarily motivated

this way. If so, this kind of objection is not available to proponents of MEC - they ought to be committed to that assumption as well.

My argument thus creates an asymmetry between empirical uncertainty and normative uncertainty which, from a theoretical perspective, is considered an undesired result. Nevertheless, I argue that all plausible accounts of MEC implicitly create a partial asymmetry between normative and empirical uncertainty as well. While the asymmetry in the case of MFO is more extensive, it should be considered a virtue: the same reasons that support MFO provide an explanation for that asymmetry. The partial asymmetry imposed by different accounts of MEC, on the other hand, remains unexplained.