

OZSW Graduate Conference in Theoretical Philosophy (OZSW-GCTP2016)

How Philosophy Meets the World
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The 3TU.Centre for Ethics and Technology (3TU.Ethics)

The University of Twente

Venue: Drienerburgh Hotel, Drienerlolaan 5, 7522 NB Enschede (Rooms A, D, E)

Abstracts of Parallel-Session Talks

Wednesday April 20th:

Parallel Sessions I (12:00 – 13:15)

Philosophy of Science I: (Chair: TBA)

12:00 – 12:35:

Jan Potters – The Normativity of Science: What do Philosophers of Science Do? (*Universiteit Antwerpen*)

Contemporary philosophy of science is particularly interested in scientific models, as the literature on e.g. representation and idealization shows. Such reflection on specific issues in the sciences often goes together with more general philosophical accounts “*based on science*”. I aim to clarify how these two aspects of philosophical practice, studying science and answering philosophical questions, can relate.

A case study – the philosophical debate on the London & London model of superconductivity [e.g. 1, 3] – will allow me to sketch what many philosophical studies of models aim at: understanding how models idealize and abstract successfully. For [1], this is to be understood in terms of the model's theory. For [3], focusing only on theories can be problematic: other elements – other models, experiments, ... – can also contribute. This difference, I will argue, stems from the fact that they have different conceptions of *science*: for [1], science delivers true accounts of reality, captured in theories; [3] see science as producing instruments for all kinds of purposes.

I will then argue that these conceptions of science function influence how the different sides conceive doing philosophy based on science. For [4], philosophy is concerned with stances: philosophical accounts of how science relates to reality which are compared and evaluated via philosophical arguments. [2]'s conception of science entails a pluralistic conception of philosophy: philosophers should highlight and analyze those aspects of science that are of interest to our purposes; such analyses are evaluated not only on the basis of their correctness, but also regarding their influence and effectiveness.

[1] Bueno, French, & Ladyman. (2012). Models and Structures. *Stud. Hist. M. P.* 43: 43 – 46.

[2] Cartwright. (1999). *The Dappled World*. CUP.

[3] Cartwright & Suárez. (2008). Theories: Tools versus Models. *Stud. Hist. M. P.* 39(1): 62 – 81.

[4] Ladyman & Ross. (2007). *Every Thing Must Go*. OUP

12:40 – 13:15

Sophie van Baalen – Evidence Based Medicine versus Expertise (*University of Twente*)

In striving toward its goal to make clinical decisions more ‘scientific’, Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) has neglected the crucial role of medical expertise by pointing at the danger of authority or tradition based decision-making. In this paper, I will argue that expertise should be given a central role in thinking about clinical decision-making instead. However, to stave off the danger of an unwanted return to authoritybased decision making, I claim that it is necessary to develop a framework of expertise that enables to assess the quality and competence of a physician’s decision-making. The framework I propose follows Collins and Evans (2007) in their assertion that “tacit knowledge” plays a key role in expertise. However, I refuse to think of tacit knowledge as inarticulate and therefore hidden for evaluation. Instead, I point at the structure of tacit knowledge as proposed by Michael Polanyi (1958, 1966) to show how knowledge that is used tacitly in one situation, can be the object of focus in another. In addition, I will argue that an account of medical expertise should include a doctor’s competence in performing *epistemic actions*. This includes the gathering of relevant information from the patient, literature and other sources, critical assessment of information, and bringing together heterogeneous pieces of information to construct a coherent “picture” of the individual, that can be used as an *epistemic tool* for reasoning about the diagnosis and treatment of that patient. Explicating the tacit aspect of expertise through analysis of epistemic actions allows to assign expertise a central role in clinical decision-making, without having to refer to “subjective” qualities, like intuition, authority or tradition. Furthermore, it allows to teach young doctors relevant skills. Last, it offers a viable alternative to EBM that warrants a certain quality of clinical decision-making by developing the *epistemological responsibility* of doctors, instead of prescribing algorithmic reasoning.

Philosophical Ethics I: (Chair: TBA)

12:00 – 12:35

H.M. Veluwenkamp – Why Alethic Pluralism cannot rescue Objectivity in Ethics (*University of Groningen*)

The common sense view is that there are objective ethical truths. According to an influential argument, made famous by Mackie, this common sense view presupposes “queer” entities that in fact do not exist. So does the non-existence of moral entities imply that we should give up this idea and regard our moral discourse as fundamentally mistaken?

Alethic pluralists think this is not the case. They argue that different domains have different properties playing the truth-role. Scientific propositions, such as “the atomic number of lead is 82”, are true just when they represent the world correctly, while on the other hand mathematical and moral propositions are objectively true in virtue of some other property. The alethic pluralist is of course not committed to one particular property playing the truth-role in a specific domain. However, alethic pluralism is usually argued for by showing that correspondence is a plausible candidate for truth in the scientific domain, while some form of coherence can play this role in the moral and mathematical domain.

I argue against this motivation for alethic pluralism by showing that coherence is not the property in virtue of which moral propositions are true. I will proceed as follows. Firstly, I present alethic pluralism and its motivation. Secondly, I explain Michael Lynch’s version of the coherentist truth property, i.e., superwarrant. Finally I will show that superwarrant, as well as any other epistemic truth property, is implausible as the truth property for the moral domain. I will do this by arguing that it gives the wrong prediction in the case of possible disagreement; merely showing that actual disagreement does not occur is not enough for proponents of this view. So I conclude that the common sense view that morality concerns objective ethical truths cannot be saved by alethic pluralism.

12:40 – 13:15

Marat Shardingaliev – Breaking the Rules? Wittgenstein’s Rule-Following Considerations and Legal Theory (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Ever since H.L.A. Hart, legal scholars have turned to the later philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein for new inspiration. Although many aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy are relevant with respect to law, it is only natural that the main interest of legal scholars in Wittgenstein's philosophy lies in his remarks on rule-following, because a correct understanding of (the notion of) rules is essential for legal theory and practice. The general question that is asked in this respect is to which extent Wittgenstein's remarks can be applied to legal rules and which consequences an application would have for our understanding of law.

In my presentation I will give a brief outline of three positions on the relation between legal theory and Wittgenstein's rule following remarks. One position (which I will call the community-based view) uses Wittgenstein to support the claim that statutory interpretation should be based on how a statute is understood by the community. The second position will be positivism. Positivists use Wittgenstein to defend their claim that legal rules can be understood independently from considerations of the purpose of the law and especially from moral considerations. Finally, there are legal theorists who are sceptical with respect to an application of Wittgenstein to legal issues. Proponents of his sceptical view claim that Wittgenstein's considerations are only aimed at the *unreflective* following of rules and therefore cannot play a role in legal-decision making which must be based on a detailed and deliberate interpretation of the law. I will argue that all three positions are based on a misguided interpretation of Wittgenstein. Finally, I will suggest that an application of Wittgenstein's remarks to legal rules should rather focus on his idea that rule-following should be understood as a practice and therefore take characteristics of the legal practice into account.

Parallel Sessions II (14:15 – 15:30)

Philosophy of Mind I: (Chair: TBA)

14:15 – 14:50

Alexander Green – The Origins of Number Knowledge (University of Warwick)

Innateness and concept acquisition have been the subject of debate amongst philosophers from Plato to the British empiricists. More recently Jerry Fodor has argued against the possibility of learning (1975, 1980). Briefly put, the argument is: all learning is hypothesis testing, so individuals cannot learn what they cannot represent as a hypothesis. Thus concept acquisition is only possible if individuals can already represent (i.e. possess) the concept.

In *The Origin of Concepts* (2009) Susan Carey aims to resolve the debate and overcome Fodor's paradox by offering a model of concept acquisition - Quinian Bootstrapping - which appeals to core cognition, social interaction, and inductive reasoning. Infants' acquisition of the concept of the number line is Carey's flagship example of her model, so I focus on this in my presentation.

It has been argued that Carey's account of the development of the number line is circular. The successor function (that the numerical n refers to a set just like that of numerical $n-1$, but with one additional individual) is inherent in the notion of the number line itself, yet Carey fails to explain its development in infants. My contribution is to modify Quinian Bootstrapping by providing a non-circular account of the development of the successor function.

In this presentation I initially provide some background to Carey's model before explaining its application to the number line. I then explain the circularity objection and demonstrate why Carey's response (2014) is ineffective. I finally offer a solution such that Carey's account overcomes this objection. Given this modification, Quinian Bootstrapping is able to overcome Fodor's paradox about the

development of the concept of the number line. However Carey's model is not as useful as she takes it to be because it does not extend non-trivially to further cases of concept acquisition.

14:55 – 15:30

Vaios Koliofotis – Basic Emotions as Evolved Commitment Devices (*Erasmus University Rotterdam*)

Though Adam Smith (1759) highlighted the role of emotions in economic processes, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Elster, 1995, 1998, 2000; Hirschleifer, 1987, 2001; Loewenstein 1996, 2000), research examining affects in the field of economic literature is scant. In recent years, considerations of emotions and their effects on decision making have emerged again with most of the existing work focusing on Frank's framework (Frank, 1987; 1988; 2004; 2006). Frank argues that emotions serve as commitment devices that facilitate agents to make beneficial decisions beyond their narrow self-interest by signalling an individual's behavioral type and by helping to discern these signals in others. He advances a broad evolutionary thesis where emotional responses are inherent to the biological nature of interactants, and thus, they are completely, or to a great extent, resistant to cultural influences.

My goal is to outline the ways the emotions influence economic action and to demonstrate how Frank's arguments would have benefited from a link to the burgeoning literature in Basic Emotion Theory (e.g. Ekman, 1992, 1999, 1994; Izard, 1977, 1992; Griffiths, 1997) and cultural evolutionary process. I argue that while Frank has emphasized that affects are universal products of biological evolution, he has paid insufficient attention to culturally evolved norms and the social environment in which agents are embedded. Many of the complex emotions that are important for Frank's arguments are embodying individuals' cultural evaluations expressed by an individuals' decision to cooperate. I propose a novel direction of inquiry that invokes gene-culture co-evolution theory (e.g. Boyd & Richerson, 1985; Richerson & Boyd, 2005) where cultural norms and conventions influence emotional predispositions in strategic decision. The result would be a more precise description of 2 emotions as commitment devices and a framework that unifies disconnected fields of research like psychology, biology and economics.

Philosophy of Science II: (Chair: TBA)

14:15 – 14:50

Gijs Leegwater – From Reversible Measurements to a Worldview Thrown Upside Down (*Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam*)

In this talk we consider Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen-Bohm (EPRB) experiments with a twist: we assume that the measurement process can be reversed. Adopting a “no-collapse” view of quantum mechanics, we consider a thought experiment where each of the two EPRB measurements, call them *A* and *B*, can be “undone”. While a measurement seems to be an irreversible process where the system to be measured collapses into a state corresponding to a single definite outcome, in principle there is a transformation of the post-measurement system and measurement apparatus that takes them back to the pre-measurement state. After this transformation, the measurement outcome is destroyed and the measurement can be performed again. We consider the case where measurement *A* is performed *n* times, by reversing it *n* - 1 times, while measurement *B* is performed *m* times, reversing it *m* - 1 times. While quantum mechanics predicts how the outcomes of the final measurements at both sides are correlated, it is not clear what it says about the correlations between the other outcomes. Using Bell's theorem it can be shown that not all outcomes can be correlated according to the standard quantum mechanical predictions.

Next, it is considered how various approaches to quantum mechanics could deal with this thought experiment: Bohmian Mechanics, the Many-Worlds Interpretation, and no-collapse approaches more generally. While at first sight this thought experiment seems little relevant for what is going on outside the

walls of academia, it can provide support to a certain approach to quantum mechanics. For example, someone might become an adherent of the Many-Worlds Interpretation after seeing how it deals with this (and other) thought experiments. This would radically change the person's worldview and actions. More generally, finding the correct approach to quantum mechanics could lead the way to future fundamental theories in physics.

14:55 – 15:30

Osman Çağlar Dede – Assessing the Evidence-Base of Behavioral Policies (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

The behavioral evidence that is usually cited by the public policy designers –such as randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and experimental evidence about the failures of rationality in economics- are uninformative about the underlying mechanisms through which intended behavioral changes are achieved. When we lack such information, we are unable to determine whether an intervention that “works” in an experimental context could also be effective in the changing policy contexts. In this paper, I investigate how behavioral public policy programs for smoking cessation (Halpern et al 2015) fare with regards to this challenge. I argue that when we pursue the demand for more mechanistic information, we encounter deeper challenges regarding the evidence-base of behavioral policies. In particular, we also need to assess the theoretical underpinnings and methodological relevance of the mechanistic evidence used for justifying behavioral policy interventions. This task, I argue, goes beyond the methodological external validity challenge that is currently emphasized in the literature. I illustrate this issue by contrasting the behavioral and the epidemiological evidence paradigms pertaining to smoking behavior and its change, claiming that a comprehensive and concrete look at the behavioral economic evidence base makes the philosophical analysis of behavioral analysis both interesting and challenging.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, I introduce the challenge from mechanistic evidence to behavioral policies in relation to the problem of external validity. Then I focus on smoking cessation policies and describe the current evidence underpinning them in section 3. Thereafter, in section 4, I apply the mechanistic evidence challenge to the evidential assessment of the smoking policy case; and illustrate that more mechanistic evidence opens up further challenges about evidence-base of the behavioral smoking policies. In section 5, I conclude by reflecting on the challenges raised and by drawing lessons for the methodological literature about behavioral policies.

Parallel Sessions III (16:00 – 17:15):

Philosophy of Mind II: (Chair: TBA)

16:00 – 16:35

James D. Grayot – Selves and Methodological Anti-Individualism: Implications for Modeling Human Behavior (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Proponents of anti-individualism (Satz & Ferejohn, 1994) argue that RCT does not model the behavior of individual persons; rather, it models the social, political, and economic institutions that act as constraints on individuals' behaviors. This interpretation of RCT makes no assumptions about the psychology of individual persons. Furthermore, it is argued that persons are atypical economic agents, and that economics should not be viewed as the study of human behavior per se, but as the study of the dynamics of systems whose members behave consistently. It follows from arguments for anti-individualism that there is no need for economics to concern itself with human psychology because economic agency is not a function of the underlying motives or machinery of persons, but of well-defined institutional parameters (Ross, 2013, *forthcoming*).

While I agree with proponents of anti-individualism that institutions are the primary engines of economic behavior, attempts to salvage economic agency by positing “selves” as the stabilizers of behavior are problematic (cf. Ross, 2005, 2006). The concept of selves is built upon Daniel Dennett’s ‘intentional stance’, which suggests that agency can be attributed to any well-behaved system. As such, selves are believed to be ideal economic agents that reside “within” persons. This allows RCT to capture macrolevel behavior without relying individual persons to act as ideal agents. My paper argues that not only are selves a contentious concept, but that this interpretation of RCT gives rise to an unfavorable constructive dilemma: Either selves are purely theoretical entities (have no basis in reality), or they are constituent parts of an individual’s person (have basis in reality). (1) If selves have a basis in reality, then they are objects of cognitive and psychological interest. (2) If selves have no basis in reality, then they cannot be affected by real-world institutions that act as constraints on individuals’ behaviors.

16:40 – 17:15

Frank van Caspel – Changing Our Minds (*Open University of the Netherlands*)

What if an evolutionary biologist, neuroscientist or even an interested layperson wants to study the mind? One would think they could turn to philosophy, particularly philosophy of mind, for a definition from which to start their investigation. And indeed: they can. But the definition they will get will probably confuse them, or at least not enable them to study the mind as a purely empirical phenomenon. This poses a problem, particularly for the scientists. Although nearly all philosophers of mind are physicalists, this doesn’t preclude them from conceiving of mental properties (like the ones the mind is said to have, or to consist of) as non-physical properties. These properties are usually taken to be irreducible to whatever physical brain (or chip) realizes or constitutes them, which distinguishes the mind from its material substrate. Material substrates we can study, but non-physical properties aren’t as accommodating. They don’t fossilize, and neither can they be uncovered through brain scans. This is bad for science, and a failure on the part of philosophy of mind. It is also where my research comes in, in which I descend to metaphysics to argue for a process metaphysics which does not feature ontological emergence. In my presentation I attempt to explain this metaphysics, and hope to show how it opens a way to move past the long-standing debate on mental causation and irreducibility of mental properties, and towards a definition of being minded which brings the phenomenon fully into the domain of the sciences.

Thursday April 21st :

Parallel Sessions IV (10:30 – 11:45):

Metaphysics: (Chair: TBA)

10:30 – 11:05:

Boris van Meurs – Truth as Dialogue: Metaphysics as Ethics Philosophy and the Other in Levinas (*Radboud University Nijmegen*)

The question central to this conference is what the relevance of philosophy is in terms of how it meets the world. This seem to ask of us philosopher to defend our practice in terms of the world, to show its purpose in the light of some criterion that ‘the world’ upholds. In this paper I will argue that this is not what philosophy can or should do, since philosophy precisely involves putting question marks behind such criterions. Rather than being valuable relative to some already present value, philosophy itself is about the constitution and unveiling of such very values.

To explore this position, I will delve into the thought of Emmanuel Levinas in his work *Totalité et Infini*. Levinas here states that first philosophy is *ethics*, rather than *ontology*. This specifically means that

philosophy is an attempt to relate to the Other [*Autrui*], without subjugating it to some system of thought in which it would be completed contained. This applies both to our relations to other human beings as to thinking in general. Metaphysics is conceptualized as the Desire towards what is the absolute Other: not just towards the beings as they are found amongst us, but towards what they are separate from our modes of understanding them.

This way of thinking turns the question of the relevance of philosophy around. Conceived like this, philosophy cannot be defended in terms outside of it, because it is itself the attempt find the right words to speak about justice in relation what is Other. In Levinas' thought, philosophy marks the openness towards this Other, and it is this openness that can install meaning. Philosophy then is its own process of justification.

Bibliography

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Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totalité et Infini: essai sur l'extériorité*. 16th ed. Paris: Le Livre De Poche, 2015.

11:10 – 11:45

Hesam Hossein-Pour – Philosophy Meets the World like Other Sciences (*Sharif University of Technology*)

To think about the way philosophy meets the world we can step back and ask about the meaningfulness condition of this subject. Therefore I put forward this query: “why does it make sense to ask about the relation between philosophy and reality?” In the early twenty century, when physics experienced a dramatic paradigm shift from classical to modern physics, scientists were faced with difficulties of explaining Quantum formula in accordance with common sense. As a result physics close relation with reality became questionable. We can come to conclusion that whenever it becomes difficult to bridge the gap between theory and common sense, asking about the relation between theory and reality becomes meaningful. Since philosophy thinks about its subject in an abstract way, bridging between philosophical theory and reality seems out of reach. Therefore doubt about any contact of philosophy with reality is legitimate. Just like other sciences (e.g. physics, mathematic, biology etc.), philosophy thinks about the real world and reality and tries to understand and interpret the world. In spite of some differences between philosophy and other above-mentioned majors, in questions, methodology and level of abstraction, they all work on reality. In other words, whatever we think the relation between biology and reality is, we can attribute it to the relation between philosophy and reality.

Philosophical Ethics II: (Chair: TBA)

10:30 – 11:05:

Margoth González Woge – Ethical Considerations on Design and Technological Mediations (*University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU and National Autonomous University of México UNAM*)

It is still common that the ethical literature that aims to discuss the impact of technologies takes as its starting point the moment when they become available for application. But technologies do not arise fully-formed to present ethical problems about their consequences, rather, they are shaped by material factors, interests and perspectives of value-laden social actors involved in the processes of technological creation, regulation and use.

Until recently, the relevance of design has been pointed out as an anticipatory strategy that could inform *how* to model and remodel the dynamics of humantechnology relations. Nevertheless, despite the conceptualizations of technology have moved beyond the understanding of it as a neutral tool, as a world view or as a historical necessity, assessments often come short to address the importance that technology has in our lives. An interesting alternative to this problem is postphenomenology, which acknowledges technology as a constitutive phenomenon that shapes and transforms our perception, the quality of our experiences, and the knowledge we construct about the world. Postphenomenology allows to understand *how technologies mediate* the relations between humans and their lifeworlds and consequently, to analyse how these mediations lead to meaningful changes in the symbolic and material spheres of their existence. Although mediation analysis allows disclosing the non-neutral character of technologies, such studies have been criticised because their mainly descriptive approach does not clearly commit with relevant ethical issues. In this sense, I aim to discuss the importance of conceiving technologies *and* mediation design as a social process that needs to go further than the expert knowledge, in order to deliver better advice for engineers and policy makers. For doing so, I will consider the following questions: What makes a technology be appropriate? Who should be involved in the design process of technological mediations? What role should multicultural values play in the assessment of technological mediations? To what extent should social assessment of innovation be considered in design processes? How should the outcomes of mediations be analysed within different biocultural contexts?

11:10 – 11:45

Michael Klenk – Old Wine in New Bottles? Evolutionary Debunking Arguments against Moral Realism are either Instances of the Benacerraf-Field Problem or Trapped in a Dilemma (*Utrecht University*)

Philosophy ‘meets the world’ when we are making moral judgements. Moral norms seem to be more *objective* than aesthetic judgements or expressions of taste. But what grounds moral objectivity? According to robust moral realism, a metaethical position often claimed to represent best the ‘folk’s’ notion of morality, moral objectivity depends on the existence of non-natural and mind-independent moral properties and facts.

However, this conception of moral objectivity is threatened by evolutionary debunking arguments (EDAs), which are often presented as a powerful new tool in (moral) epistemology. Proponents of EDAs or ‘debunkers’ such as Sharon Street argue that realist conceptions of moral objectivity and the nature of moral knowledge are untenable by invoking our evolutionary history. Moral knowledge is unlikely, debunkers claim, because mind-independent moral truths were evolutionary irrelevant and beliefs about those moral truths were not selected for. EDAs bear wider relevance for epistemology in general. They might show how empirical theory could drastically confine the scope of what David Wiggins called our “philosophical imagination”, that is, our theorising about the universe and our place within it.

I present a compounded dilemma for EDAs. Either EDAs reduce to the Benacerraf-Field challenge, which is a distinct problem, well-known from the philosophy of mathematics, albeit it does not require an empirical premise about human evolution. Alternatively, EDAs face the following dilemma: either they are of limited scope, and affect only first-order normative theories, and or they beg the question against moral realism.

I conclude that EDAs do not add a novel problem for moral realism – they merely present the ‘old wine’ of the Benacerraf-Field problem ‘in new bottles’, namely in an illustrative, but ultimately redundant veneer of Darwinian considerations. Realist conceptions of moral objectivity are not curtailed by Darwinian considerations alone and we, for that matter, need not limit our “philosophical imagination”.

Parallel Sessions V (13:45 – 15:00):

Philosophy of Science III: (Chair: TBA)

13:45 – 14:20

Jorrit Smit – Making a Common World: Thinking Landscapes for Valorization (Leiden University)

The buzzword *valorization* has by now trickled down from the ephemeral regions of science policy to the practices of funding councils and scientific research. Its meaning has stabilized into something like this: ‘the process of value creation from knowledge, by making it appropriate and/or available for economic and societal utilization’ (VSNU, 2013). Use of the term keeps spreading in practice, while philosophical inquiry into the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of *valorization* remains wanting. Instead of reproducing outworn arguments from the international post-war policy discourse I will ‘slow down’ and think differently, in two steps, the implied science-society relationship. First I breach the wall that separates science from social values, secondly I destabilize the fact/value distinction as such. Starting at the other end of the ‘value-free ideal of science’, I discuss Heather Douglas’ (2009) historical genesis and critique of this persisting idea. The alternative ‘landscape of values’ that she proposes breaks down science’s projected dichotomy between acceptable epistemic values and ‘unacceptable’ social and ethical values. *Valorization* then appears to be an explicit demand for such a new topology of values in science. But this approach leaves the underlying strict separation between knowledge and politics, or facts and values, untouched. In an attempt to destabilize also this dichotomy, I adopt the ‘mode of laughter’ that Isabelle Stengers (2000; 2010) prescribes when thinking about science. She understands science as a whole foremost as subject of history and scientists ‘like any other in the life of a city’. Creation of scientific knowledge and politics are thus part of the same historical contingent process of ‘world-making’. This ‘cosmopolitics’ stages the demand for *valorization* in a society where politics and knowledge deeply interrelate. I propose that this rethinking of the science-society patchwork can refresh public debate and calls for a new kind of knowledge politics.

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14:25 – 15:00

Tom Kayzel – Philosophy of Science as Diplomacy (University of Amsterdam)

In this talk I want to explore a new possibility of how philosophy of science can contribute to the process of science and the public debates surrounding science. This new possibility is inspired by Bruno Latour’s notion of ‘diplomacy’, a term introduced as the main goal in his latest project *An Inquiry into the Modes of Existence* (2013). Diplomacy seeks a way to allow for a plurality of ontologies refraining from developing a meta-language. Diplomacy thus would allow for a mutual understanding between different ontologies. Since modern science is a very plural endeavour, with many different disciplines employing their own ontology, diplomacy is also of relevance to science. Philosophy of science can take on the task of diplomacy. As such philosophy of science should avoid clashes between disciplines and foster discussions, without providing answers. I want to flesh out this new task for philosophers of science in three steps: first, I will investigate the methods of how ontologies can be detected and described without falling into a meta-language. It is my belief that also the philosopher of science cannot refrain from using his own ontology, but the philosopher can avoid making his ontology all-encompassing by using ‘the principle of comparative ontology. Secondly, I will briefly analyse an example of a controversy that could benefit from the diplomacy

of the philosopher of science. This example is the introduction of the latest version of the Diagnostics and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders, the so called DSM-V. I will try to show that the (sometimes heated) debate surrounding DSM-V was riddled with confusing different ontologies, or even worse, oppressive ontologies. Finally, I would argue that understanding the different ontologies surrounding the DSM-V will provide a better start for discussing its issues.

Philosophy of Economics: (Chair: TBA)

13:45 – 14:20:

Felix den Ottolander – Causal Mechanisms: A Potential Tool for Economic Policy? (*Erasmus University Rotterdam*)

Over the past few decades, philosophers of science as well as social scientists have debated about the role of mechanisms as a method of inquiry. Most of their research has focused on the potential of mechanisms in terms of causal explanation, i.e. whether mechanisms are capable to sufficiently explain the occurrence of social phenomena. However, few scholars have explicitly assessed the potential of causal mechanisms with respect to the realm of economic policy. For instance, in what sense would we be able to better understand the phenomenon of a bank run when we take a mechanistic perspective?

The aim of this presentation is to briefly explore the virtues and limitations of causal mechanisms within the context of one specific case study, which will be part of my Research Master's thesis. Although the choice of case study is not definite yet, it will most likely be the Single Resolution Mechanisms (SRM) – an important part of the recently set up European banking union. In short, it is a regulatory mechanism that takes preventive measures against ailing banks through all kinds of financial instruments.

A mechanistic analysis of the SRM is not only philosophically interesting, it can also be relevant for actual economic policy makers. Understanding the methodological foundations of this fairly new initiative is crucial for economists and politicians to implement the SRM effectively, and thereby contributes to the reform of the European financial sector in a safe and sustainable way. This last point shows how the philosophy of science meets the world of practical economic issues: knowledge of causal mechanisms as a potential tool for the development of economic policy.

14:25 – 15:00:

Henrik Roeland Visser – Epistemically Beneficial Biases in Applied Economic Research (*Bielefeld University & Erasmus University Rotterdam*)

As a philosophy of science PhD-student who was originally trained as an economist, I aim to make philosophy useful for practicing economists and their clients. In my current research I engage with policy applications of (macro)economic forecasts, not only as relevant case study material, but as if these economists themselves take part in a philosophical discussion. For instance, I investigate how economists and their clients themselves conceptualize, formalize and debate about typical philosophy of science topics such as objectivity, research quality, values, bias, neutrality, etc. This comparison reveals how useful philosophical debates on the role of science in society really are to the economists and policy-makers who struggle with similar questions. I believe such a conversation is much needed, given the often criticized yet still very powerful role that economic advisers have in policy-making and society.

In this talk I will discuss the role of the CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Research in Dutch policymaking decisions, based on an internship I did there last year. This institute produces the official forecasts on which the Dutch government bases its budgetary decisions, and has a central role in political negotiations around parliamentary elections. Rather than to always provide the most objective forecasts in the statistical sense, with accompanying indications of forecast uncertainty, the CPB sometimes adjusts its forecasts because of political and social welfare considerations. The CPB argues that it is not

only responsible for the creation of scientific knowledge, but also for the consequences of how such knowledge is subsequently applied in the real world. If biased forecasts can indeed act as useful coordination devices for collective decision-making problems, this means that bias in research is not only an often unavoidable evil, but can also have epistemically beneficial effects. How should philosophers of science evaluate such arguments?

Parallel Sessions 6 (15:30 – 16:05):

Practical Philosophy I: (Chair: TBA)

15:30 – 16:05

Daan Keij – Disagreement and Philosophy in Everyday Life (Radboud University Nijmegen)

My talk is on disagreement, both in everyday life and in philosophy. The world in which we live is characterized by numerous forms of disagreement. I will focus on disagreement not with regard to certain arguments, but with regard to the means by which we argue in general. We hold certain methods to be fit for arriving at truth, while others use and recommend other methods. Even though we sometimes fail to convince others, we nevertheless stick to our beliefs. How can we take this disagreement into account in our own thinking? A philosophy of disagreement can help us understand such instances of disagreement and perhaps offer new means to deal with them.

In my talk, I will therefore sketch two positions that aim to take disagreement into account in developing their own philosophies. The first position is taken by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel takes disagreement into account by turning it into the main drive of his argumentation. By following the reasons for disagreement each philosophical position has with regard to another, Hegel traces a line of argument in historical positions to his own philosophy of absolute knowledge. The second position I will discuss is taken by Lyotard in *The Differend*. While also emphasizing the relevance of disagreement for philosophical investigation, Lyotard denies that the disagreeing positions can be reconciled under one heading. Rather than seeking to distill a unified theory from the disagreeing positions, Lyotard tries to testify to what he sees as irreconcilable differences. This means that the problem of disagreement appears in the confrontation between Hegel and Lyotard itself. I will conclude by pointing to some difficulties this appearance causes for a philosophy of disagreement.

Philosophy of Medicine: (Chair: TBA)

15:30 – 16:05

Bas de Boer & Jonne Hoek – The Technological Status of Brain Death Criteria (University of Twente)

The medical determination of death is inextricably wound up with technologies. Though the concept of, for instance, ‘brain death’ is broadly discussed in the literature (e.g., Bernat, 2002, 2010; Iltis & Cherry, 2010; Lock, 1996, 2002; Shewmon, 2010), the particular role that technologies play in constituting this category has rarely been assessed from a mediated perspective (exception: Rosenfeld, 2015). In this presentation, we will discern epistemological- and existential difficulties that the technological mediation of death presents us with. (Maeterlinck, 2012) A post-phenomenological reflection on the supposed ‘irreversibility’ of death will reveal that 1) epistemologically speaking, it is impossible to understand what a category like ‘brain death’ means without appreciating also the technologies determining and treating it. 2) Existentially speaking, technologies actively provoke us to take a stance with regard to death’s enigmatic character that science cannot comprehend. Both epistemologically, and existentially speaking, the categories we use to speak about - and relate to death, change in relation with the technologies we use to address it.

Friday April 22nd:

Parallel Session VII (10:30 – 11:45):

Philosophy of Technology I: (Chair: TBA)

10:30 – 11:05

Stefano Canali – The Role of Technology Today and the Value of Philosophical Questions (*Leibniz Universität Hannover*)

It is often argued that philosophy has no utility and hence no real value; recently, scientists Stephen Hawking (Warman, 2011) and Neil deGrasse Tyson (Pigliucci, 2014) have argued in these terms. Philosophers have often reacted to this critique by saying that philosophy is useless on the practical level but still valuable; Aristotle (1.982b) argued that philosophy seeks knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and not for any practical utility". In my opinion, we should not separate the value of philosophy from usefulness and utility: actually, I think that philosophy can be useful and thus prove to be a valuable discipline. In this talk I show one of the ways philosophy can be useful to us today, by focusing on the role of technology in our society. We often hear that technologies are revolutionising society and creating crucial issues; on my view, a philosophical approach to these changes can be significantly helpful. From a constructionist perspective (see Floridi, 2011), philosophy is the discipline which helps us correctly frame the issues, ask the right questions and design concepts capable of developing our understanding. Consequently, applying this constructionist approach to technology, philosophy can clarify the nature of technological changes by asking three kinds of foundational questions, regarding (i) how technology changes things, (ii) how technology changes the way we think about things and (iii) how technological changes can be assessed. In the talk, I intend to show how these questions can be applied to a number of technology-related issues and, at the same time, how I apply them in my work on the epistemology of big data science. By asking foundational questions, philosophy is capable of proving to be one of the timely, valuable and useful disciplines we need today in our society.

References of the Proposal

Aristotle, "Metaphysics", in Aristotle in 23 Volumes. Edited by Hugh Tredennick. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Pigliucci, M. 2014. "Neil deGrasse Tyson and the value of philosophy", Scientia Salon. URL: <https://scientiasalon.wordpress.com/2014/05/12/neildegrasse-tyson-and-the-value-of-philosophy/t>.

Warman, M. 2011. "Stephen Hawking tells Google philosophy is dead", The Telegraph. URL: telegraph.co.uk/technology/google/8520033/Hawking-tell-Google-philosophy-is-dead.html.

Floridi, I. 2011. "Defence of Constructionism: Philosophy as Conceptual Engineering", *Metaphilosophy* 42 (3).

11:10 – 11:45

Gerald Munters & Thomas ter Wijlen – Humanoids Robots from an Interdisciplinary Perspective (*University of Twente*)

Humanoid robots will have an impact on our daily lives in the future. Currently, most debates in Europe concerning the role of humanoid robots in our society are either technical or social orientated. However, we argue that we should move towards an interdisciplinary perspective, as a specific discipline centered approach only provides insights into one specific domain, resulting in an impasse. Humanoids mediate our perception of the world and it is, therefore, important to understand humanoids not solely as a technical artefact for instrumental purposes. Instead, Europe needs a solid interdisciplinary framework and a vision that presents humanoids as part of the European society; not solely as an economic tool, but also as co-

existing entities in our everyday lives. By using an interdisciplinary approach, including interviews, a post-phenomenological account of humanoid robots is elucidated. This unaccustomed account is exemplified in a clear and concise manner by means of a concrete application in care robotics, which is much debated in government funding. This philosophical account reveals new connections between disciplines that otherwise would be neglected. We also dwell on the impact of this perspective, as our perception of ourselves and others will change, and suggest some approaches to assure a framework to work from.

Practical Philosophy II: (Chair: TBA)

10:30 – 11:05

Humbert van Straalen – Why Philosophy might be Normative (University of Amsterdam)

In my opinion, it is absolutely certain that doing philosophy is supposed to be a normative project. It seems important to do, and what philosophers say seems important to know. If the opinions of philosophers do not match those of the general public, that is just too bad for the general public. Doesn't every philosopher implicitly agree? Yet it is not easy to conceptualize *why* this should be the case.

And some people think it is not. It is interesting that some philosophers ('X-Phi) have recently claimed that philosophy should make an 'experimental turn'. (Theoretical) philosophy should in fact get out of the armchair, and into the streets. This is interesting because it is annoying. Most philosophers, me included, do not really feel comfortable doing this. Asking everyone's opinion seems very 'unphilosophical'. But this raises the question: if the opinions of philosophers might not in fact match those of the general population, then *why* are they allowed to think that their opinion is somehow 'better' (and normative)?

There is a bunch of answers to this question which I will discuss. Some options, for instance, are: 0. Give in to X-Phi, 1. A form of Platonism about concepts; 2. Pushing consistency constraints; 3. Philosophy as defining and explicating; 4. Philosophy as critique of ideology; and 5. Pushing elements of re-iteration, and deny the opposition between philosophy and common sense. But more options are available. The research of the audience itself will surely insist on some other options. And it seems to me that raising this question is important, even if the answer might be ambiguous and not that clear at all.

11:10 – 11:45

Necdet Yildiz – A Metaphilosophical Perspective on the Practical Justification of Philosophy (Middle East Technical University)

From Aristotle on, philosophy was, by many, understood to be about the disinterested inquiry on the truths whatsoever. In the modern period, with the allegedly full authority of the conscious subject, this understanding got complicated further. In other words, *theoria* was claimed to be sought for itself regardless of *praxis* for ages. However, with thinkers like Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx, it was understood not only that disinterested inquiry was impossible, but also how we human beings interpret the world was conditioned by our position in the world and our philosophies were the product of some material conditions.

In this paper, I would like to perform a justification of philosophy as *theoria* which can be possible only in relation with *praxis*. For this, I will firstly appeal to the Nietzschean understanding of perspectivism and his idea that any interpretation of the World must be perspectival. In this understanding, philosophy is the extension of the bodily interpretation of the living being based on the power-perspective of the body. Then, I will introduce two senses in which the term "World" is used, and will claim that philosophy changes the material world by changing how the human beings understand the material World. In other words, philosophy makes the living interpreter interpret their material and axiological perspectives better, and gives the chance to enrich the personal and the common accumulation of knowledge. Then, with the light of the above, I will claim that, philosophy is effective in the material World by following one of two possible major trajectories which have the tasks of improving 1) scientific and technical knowledge by the

clarification of concepts, and 2) the value perspectives which are effective on our interpretation of what and how we live.

Parallel Sessions VIII (14:00 – 15:15)

Philosophy of Science IV: (Chair: TBA)

14:00 – 14:35

Line Edslev Andersen & Henrik Kragh Sørensen – Trusting Others in Mathematics (Aarhus University)

According to traditional philosophical accounts of when a mathematician can be said to know that a mathematical proposition p is true, the mathematician must have gone through a proof of p , step by step. This fosters an ideal of the mathematician as autonomous, as relying only on herself to justify her results. According to this ideal, a mathematician should avoid relying on others' results without checking their proofs. Autonomy is also idealized by the mathematicians themselves. This is so even though mathematicians would often not have the option of using previous results in their own proofs if that required them to know the proofs of them. For most proofs are unsurveyable to most individual mathematicians. For example, many mathematical research articles are written in collaborations. When the collaborations are vast and span different types of expertise, their proofs can usually not be read, comprehended and evaluated by an individual within a reasonable time span.

This raises the question of *when* a mathematician can rationally rely on others. It could be that the autonomy ideal is present in mathematical practice partly because the answer is not clear. In this paper, we begin to develop an account of when a mathematician can rely on a mathematical proposition p without knowing a proof of p . We do so by showing how John Hardwig's (1985, 1991) classical account of the role of trust in knowledge can be revised to accommodate mathematics. On this basis, we evaluate the role of the autonomy ideal in mathematical practice.

Hardwig, J. (1985). Epistemic Dependence. *Journal of Philosophy* **82**: 335–349.

Hardwig, J. (1991). The Role of Trust in Knowledge. *Journal of Philosophy* **88**: 693–708.

14:40 – 15:15

Michael Musielewicz – A Leviathan in the Lab? Problems of Democracy and Well-Ordered Science (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin)

The importance of the sciences in today's world is hardly questioned as being a fact. When we consider many of the world's problems (e.g. climate change) it seems that the expert knowledge of various specialists from many different fields is needed to resolve such problems in their complexity. Yet when it comes to formulating science policy, the modes by which it is established are left unclear. One question to help clarify this matter is, how should we understand science in relation to the state? In this paper I will argue that pure science - as such - may be subverted when it is subsidiary to the state. To argue this point I will present a sketch of the views of the autonomy of science in the view of Philip Kitcher and examine issues concerning his democratic image of a well-ordered science. The importance of this question I believe is well summarized by an observation made by Louis Pasteur "*Le savant a une patrie, la science n'en a pas*" (The scientist has a homeland, science does not). Pure science ought to be oriented towards truth, and is normatively not bound by the concerns and matters of state in this pursuit. Yet the same cannot be said the

scientists -and other specialists- who are the pursuers of this truth. By being members of the body politic, scientists and scientific institutions, may have their actions limited by the state for various social pressures, security or merely the *raison d'état*. This then gives rise to the possibility where the demands made upon the scientists both by the state and by his vocation may conflict with one another and lead to the subversion of one or the other. To avoid this conflict it is important to understand the relationship between science and the state.

Philosophy of Technology II: (Chair: TBA)

14:00 – 14:35:

Duuk Baten & Gijs de Boer – Biopolitics: towards Democratic Biotechnology (*University of Twente*)

In a healthy symbiosis, technology shapes society as much as society shapes technology. Yet biotechnology reveals an imbalance. While new developments like synthetic biology will shape our lives, citizens seem to have little influence on their development. And as Sclove (1992) puts it “citizens ought to be empowered to participate in determining the collective conditions of their existence”. How can this be realized and are democratic initiatives desirable?

Based on field research and philosophical analysis, we argue that it is both possible and desirable for people to contribute to the goals of research, but not the content. To this end, we look at the role of funding, research and discourse in decision making. In funding, democratic guiding can strengthen research impact and collaboration even though it is a trade-off with efficiency. In research, the complexity of biotech hinders lay interference, however, we suggest that its goals and values can be publically evaluated/guided. This requires a discourse that allows critical reflections upon implications of research; we suggest that honest science journalism and speculative design proposals strengthen such a discourse. We identify four pathways towards democratic biotechnology - representation, participation, market, and discourse – that go beyond the regular representative parliament. In sum, we suggest that even though the complexity of synthetic biology opposes people mingling with research content, in funding, research and discourse there is a potential for democratic guiding of values and goals.

14:40 – 15:15:

Bart Wolbers & Melle Koedijk – The Quantified Self: The influence of Advanced Self-measuring Technologies on Individual Lives and Society (*University of Twente*)

In this talk we will focus on one important contemporary phenomena which sheds light on the ways in which advanced technologies influence our personal lives and the societies we live in: the so called Quantified Self (QS). QS embodies the idea that we will identify advanced self-measuring technologies for self-knowledge. As a first step of analysis, a basic logical structure that underlies the goal of QS is identified, namely: data → information → knowledge → wisdom. Each step in this sequence is critically assessed and subsequently problematized. One quintessential Philosophy of Science problem is that of underdetermination. We subsequently apply this problem of underdetermination to QS. We argue firstly that all QS measurements necessarily need *interpretation* ; secondly that QS measurements also need *background knowledge* to make sense; thirdly that measurements only make sense within a certain *context*; and lastly that the numbers of the measurements are *not in-themselves objective*. This entails that QS measurements do not allow for altogether objective measurements and/or a privileged interpretation. In turn, this shows that the translation of information into knowledge might not be as straightforward as generally assumed.