

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Gulin Akduygu: Parental Paternalism: The paradigm of a paternalistic action

| Friday the 3rd of December, 11h30-12h00 at Textiel

Abstract

“There is no question that some paternalism is all things considered justified. A mother’s forbidding her small children to play with matches, sharp knives, etc. for their own good is the very paradigm of a paternalistic action, and it is clearly morally permissible.” (Scoccia 2018, p.11)

Paternalism is an almost unavoidable part of our everyday life. We are all familiar with the notion from a larger or smaller degree. We are familiar with it, because even the most avid defenders of personal autonomy must have felt the urge to act paternalistically. But more significantly, we were all (at some point in our lives) the target of parental paternalism.

However, this almost unavoidable part of our lives, in its discursive use, almost always has a negative connotation. This is of course do to the fact that, even if the paternalistic interference is justified by various considerations, by very definition of the term, the target of the act would not prefer to be treated this way. This makes the question of justified paternalism an intriguing part of how we think of individual autonomy and the limits of respecting individual choices.

This paper focuses on what would make paternalism justified by comparing the standard definition of paternalism with parental paternalism, through the examination of a familiar case; a mother acting against the wishes of her child, to protect him from harm. Since parenting (by which I mean exclusively good parenting) is almost the very paradigm of paternalism, a closer look at the example of ‘justified parental paternalism can yield some answers on what justifies paternalism and separates it from coercion and oppression.

The close examination of the differences between these modes of paternalism reveals clues to what makes the parental paternalism justified and what may render standard paternalism more palatable. The paper concludes that, the importance of often neglected elements such as unquestionable epistemic superiority of the parent and the child’s trust in his parents’ good intentions (although he doesn’t like the parenting itself) and therefor his acceptance of parenting makes these acts different from (and much more tolerable than) standard paternalism.

Keywords: Paternalism, parental paternalism, autonomy, trust, epistemic superiority, nudges

Alfred Archer: Consigning to History

| Saturday the 4th of December, 11h45-12h15 at Textiel

Abstract: How might a society wrong people by the way in which it remembers its past? In recent years, philosophers have articulated a number of ways in which people may be harmed by dominant historical narratives. These narratives may ignore minority perspectives (Fabre 2016) or promote harmful ideologies (Burch-Brown 2017) or disrespectful attitudes (Schulz 2019). This paper will investigate a different way in which a society may wrong people by the way in which it remembers the past: the consigning of people to history. To be consigned to history is to have a central aspect of one's identity assigned an exclusively historical role in relation to some collective group and so to be denied membership in that group in the present and the future. The stories a society tells about its history may place certain identities, or practices central to those identities, as existing in a country's past but not its present or future.

I will begin by examining the role that national narratives play in constructing a national community. Historical narratives play a key role in constructing national communities (Anderson 2006). While these narratives are constructed out of past events, they are not fully determined by them and the narrative will be likely to serve present-day interests (Cooley 1918). I will then examine three examples of cases where these narratives consign people to history. First, national narratives that accompanied the deindustrialization of both France and Scotland that consigned industrial workers to the past (Clarke 2011; Clark & Gibbs 2020). Second, North American cultural portrayals of indigenous people that send the message that indigenous people have no place in the modern world (King 2013). Third, dominant national narratives in 1960s Germany about the need for the country to move on from the horrors of the holocaust that left no room for those unwilling to forgive and forget (Améry 2009). In all of these cases, a group of people are assigned an exclusively historical role in relation to the national community and so excluded from the national community of the present and future.

I will then analyze the wrong involved here. The fundamental wrong is one of exclusion. Those consigned to history are involuntarily excluded from the present-day national community. This exclusion is a form of marginalization and a denial of recognition. Moreover, those who are consigned to history are the subject of perlocutionary silencing because their views, judgements and emotional responses to these situations are not taken to be relevant for present-day national decision-making. Finally, this form of exclusion and marginalization can have important material consequences, as these narratives are used to justify social and economic policies that bring significant, material harm to those being excluded.

I will finish by arguing that people have a prima facie duty not to develop or employ national narratives that consign people to history and a responsibility to challenge and resist the use of such narratives. However, there may be cases when drawing on such narratives is morally justifiable.

Key words: social philosophy, moral philosophy, ethics of memory, cultural heritage, commemoration

Lieke Asma: The Nature of Implicit Bias

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30-17h00 at Ambacht

Abstract

Currently, the central question in the literature on implicit bias, for example implicit sexism, is how to explain the occurrence of these biases. How is it possible that we act out of line with what we explicitly believe and value? Most thinkers assume that certain mental states are responsible for implicit bias: implicit attitudes. In light of that, the main research aim is to find out what kind of mental states these implicit attitudes exactly are. It has been argued that they are associations (Holroyd, 2012), unconscious beliefs (Mandelbaum, 2016), or patchy endorsements (Levy, 2015).

This picture of implicit attitudes as mental states has been criticized by Machery (2016). He argues that the data on implicit measures - the fact that predictive validity and internal consistency are low for example - can best be explained by the view that an attitude is not a mental state, but a trait. A trait is a disposition to feel, think, decide, and behave in ways that correspond to our folk-psychological stereotype, e.g., what we take a person with a specific bias to be like. On the basis of that, Machery (2016) maintains, it no longer makes sense to talk about explicit and implicit attitudes, because 'the distinction between what is explicit and what is implicit is meaningful only when applied to mental states' (p. 105).

In this paper I argue that Machery (2016) is mistaken to reason, without further argument, from his claim that implicit attitudes do not exist to the claim that implicit bias does not exist. Machery does not sufficiently appreciate that implicit attitudes are merely ascribed to agents by virtue of their implicitly biased behavior. Ascribing an implicit attitude, or trait, as an explanation is the second step. And why can't biased behavior itself be implicit? Why assume that the term 'implicit' is limited to 'not available for introspection' (Machery 2016, p. 113)? The moral of a story can also be implicit. Similarly, I maintain, what agents do and say could be implicit. In order to explicate the sense in which implicit bias is implicit, I will use a central characteristic of action: actions are intentional under certain descriptions, but not under others (Anscombe, 1963). Similarly, I claim that a person is explicitly sexist if she acts under a sexist description and is implicitly sexist if she is not acting under that description, but merely expresses sexism in the way in which she behaves and decides.

Key words:

implicit bias, implicit attitude, Anscombe, acting under a description

Mandi Astola: Good vibes: An exemplarist grounding of collective virtues

| Saturday 4th of December 11h15-11h45 at Textiel

Abstract: In recent years, epistemologists and ethicists have begun to take an interest in whether groups can possess virtues in the way that individuals can. Attributing virtues to groups has several advantages in terms of extending the scope of virtue ethics. However, most of this work tends to assume that collective virtues are structured in a manner that is similar to individual virtues. Therefore, the authors go about making their claim by showing that groups can possess collective mental states, collective intentions or collective actions. This makes collective virtue theory vulnerable to various critiques, including arguments against groups having admirable intentions.

I argue that previous work has gone about grounding collective virtues in the wrong way. Previous work implicitly commits to agent-based virtue ethics. Agent-based virtue ethics grounds the goodness of virtue in the inherent goodness of mental states and virtuous emotions like love, desire for justice or the like. In requiring that collective virtues require collective emotions, previous work is committing implicitly to agent-based virtue theory. Agent-based virtues are however only one way to ground virtues. Another alternative is to ground virtues in an exemplarist manner.

Exemplarism, developed notably by Linda Zagzebski, states that the goodness of virtue is derived from the goodness of exemplary people. Exemplary people are recognized through the emotion of admiration. We cannot define what an exemplary person is, but we can recognize them and point to them as a means of reference. In this sense, exemplarist virtue theory mirrors the direct reference theory in philosophy of language. I argue that if we adopt an exemplarist grounding of virtue ethics, we can build a theory of collective virtues which is immune to many of the common criticisms of collective virtue.

My account rests on the following claim: We often admire groups, just like we admire individuals. An experience where this becomes particularly salient is if we spend time with a group of people and experience “good vibes.” The feeling of good vibes in a group can be a powerful and at times even overwhelming experience. It is often an experience which a person remembers for a whole lifetime. Having experienced good vibes, one desires to create or be part of such groups in the future. I reference anthropological literature from counterculture studies and other fields to support the existence of group admiration.

Group admiration or the feeling of good vibes, I argue, is the equivalent of the emotion of admiration in Zagzebski’s exemplarism. We recognize group virtue through this emotion. The content of group virtue is the best discovered through the types of groups that produce in us the experience of “good vibes.” I explore these features through anthropological literature. The features of admirable groups reveal that no collective mental states are required for an exemplarist understanding of group virtue. This makes exemplarist collective virtue theory more resilient to counterarguments than earlier accounts of collective virtues.

Key words: collectivism, virtue ethics, groups, good vibes, exemplarism, grounding of virtue

Sine Bagatur: The Relational Productive Justice View

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h15-11h45 at Restauratie

Abstract

The issue of justice in production, how the benefits and burdens are distributed in the realm of production, is traditionally neglected in political philosophy. The field of distributive justice mostly focused on the principles that should guide the distribution of goods, rights or capabilities and ignored how these goods are produced in the first place. Philosophical writing on normative issues related to work is recently growing. However, the discussion is somewhat tangent to the field of distributive justice: it is centred around the question of what prominent theories of justice--such as Rawls' theory-- require for the organization of production.

In this paper, I claim the study of the normative implications of work in philosophy and political theory has been shaped by two approaches, and I will propose a third alternative. The first approach, the allocative view, is the approach that focuses on the issue of production in as much as it is related to distribution. In its most developed form in the form of Rawlsian egalitarianism, this view addresses the issue of justice in production by reference to the ideal of fair equality of opportunity. I will argue that this approach is limited because it relies on a mistaken separation of the 'economics' and 'politics' of social cooperation.

The second approach is what I call the perfectionist approach. The most developed version of this approach is Gomberg's (2007; 2018) account of contributive justice or egalitarian perfectionism. This approach is grounded in the view that "work is a good" (Gomberg, 2018, 519) and proposed by Gomberg as an alternative to Rawlsian egalitarianism. According to this view, we should see distributive justice in a wider perspective that includes contribution. It is not goods and services we receive but what we contribute to society through our labour that makes life good.

Although I agree with Gomberg's critique of the ideal of fair equality of opportunity, I think the solution is not to go to the direction of perfectionism. Instead, drawing on the perspective of relational work in economic sociology and the critical theory of production, I propose a third approach: the relational productive justice view. This view overcomes the problems of the allocative and perfectionist views. Distinct from the allocative view, according to the relational productive justice view, egalitarian norms apply not only to the distribution of goods but also to the relations of production. Moreover, distinct from the perfectionist view, according to this view, there is no inherent value and meaning of work that can be revealed by philosophical postulation. Instead, the value and meaning of work is relational: it is established, transformed, and contested within interpersonal relations of production.

Key words:

The allocative view, the perfectionist view, contributive justice, relational productive justice

Gulzaar Barn: Sexual Preference and Justice

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h30-13h00 at Beton

Abstract

Sexual desires appear to track real-world oppression. That is, marginalised groups, including disabled, transgender, and racialised communities, often experience discrimination in the romantic realm, consistent with the disadvantage they are likely to face in other areas. Members of racialised groups can also be on the receiving end of desire that is predicated upon their racialised identity, through the expression of a 'preference' for their race. A's race may function as the intentional object of B's desire. This fetishisation of A's racialised identity is often rooted in appearance or behaviour-based stereotypes about that race. A crucial tension emerges, however, when we consider what, if anything, ought to be done about this contingent and ideological shaping of desire. Historical and persisting injustice have led to an unequal and discrimination-shaped distribution of purported sexual desirability. However, it would make little sense to advocate for a "patterned" theory of sex and force its equal redistribution in the manner we redistribute wealth through taxation, for example. Sex, and sexual desire, are crucially distinct from other social goods, and do not lend themselves to such reallocation. The element of coercion that would be involved would be a straightforward violation of bodily integrity.

Yet Cecile Fabre has argued that a commitment to the redistribution of material resources for sufficientarian purposes necessitates a parallel commitment in regards to body parts. If one thinks that the needy have a moral right, as a matter of justice, to the material resources they need in order to lead minimally decent lives, then one must also be committed to conferring on the sick a moral right that the healthy supply them the body parts they need, as these are also necessary to lead such a life. This may, in some cases, require the forced extraction of bone marrow, corneas, blood, and kidneys, from healthy live donors.

Fabre anticipates the problem posed by the potential redistribution of sex, however, arguing that sex is different because sexual intercourse consists in "making one's body itself available to someone else and in interacting, in the most intimate way possible (physically, if not emotionally), with that person." Therefore, to require that an individual engages in "such intimate relationships without their consent would constitute too much of a violation."

However, what if someone did not view sex as an emotionally intimate activity on Fabre's prescriptive view? What exactly make sex distinct? This paper will explore what this feature might be, exploring the social meaning and significance of sex that gives it this special status. It will be suggested that while peculiar bodily use might be an important feature of what makes sex something that is outside the bounds of coercive redistribution, this physicality cannot be all that it is, given our bodies are (justifiably) redistributed when we use them for labour that is then taxed. Indeed, this analysis might also serve to shed further light on why much coercive labour under capitalism might be considered unfree and in violation of bodily integrity.

Key words: sex, justice, labour, bodily integrity

Lisa Bastian: Enjoy It While It Lasts – The Rationality of Premature Happiness

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00-12h30 at De Glazen Hal

Abstract

Imagine you have been offered your dream job. The hiring committee has communicated their decision to you, the terms and conditions are clear and agreed upon by all parties. But you still have to wait until the HR department has processed the matter. Only then will you receive your contract. In such situations, we are often advised (or advise ourselves) to hold back on celebrating until everything is done and dusted. We are careful not to pop the champagne until we have signed the contract. In this paper, I want to explore the rationality of this strategy of “holding back”, or of what I call “premature happiness”. I first provide an analysis of situations like the above, which reveals the salient features (e.g. likelihood of the prospect, and attached value). Next, I identify two promising ways to understand the rationale behind holding back, and then argue that both of these fail to establish holding back as rational.

The first is based on expected utility theory: holding back maximises one’s expected utility. The thought is that the disappointment we feel should the prospect fall through outweighs the utility derived from allowing ourselves to be happy about it beforehand. This line of reasoning can be motivated by appealing to insights from Prospect Theory, such as that losses are weighted heavier than gains, and that changes in utility matter more than total outcomes. If we decide to be happy about a prospect in the future, we increase our baseline utility which means that our losses will be greater, resulting in experiencing more disutility if the prospect falls through after all. In reply to this first interpretation, I argue that the appeal to expected utility fails to establish the rationality of holding back in general. Whether this strategy is utility-maximising depends on the values in question. If the happiness experienced beforehand is sufficiently intense and persistent, and/or the likelihood of the prospect taking place sufficiently large, it might be utility-maximising to not hold back.

The second interpretation appeals to considerations of fit. We should avoid having unfitting attitudes, that is, we should only desire the desirable, believe the true, and, by extension, be happy about what there is to be happy about. Rejoicing in a prospect that is yet to materialise can be seen as violating this requirement of fitting attitudes. But there is an obvious reply to this concern. We can maintain fit by either specifying that our happiness attaches to the expectation that the prospect will materialise; or we could introduce degrees of happiness which account for and match the degree of uncertainty associated with the prospect.

Following these considerations, I explore the alternative conclusion: holding back is not always rational, and premature happiness can be rational. I conclude by exploring some additional conditions for premature happiness to be rational.

Key words: Rationality, prospect, utility

Anna Bellomo: Are collections always sets?

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30-12h00 at Kunst

Abstract

The Bohemian priest and polymath Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848) is famous as an ignored precursor of great thinkers. In analysis, he is a precursor to Weierstrass and Cauchy, in logic, to Tarski, and in mathematical foundations, to Cantor, the father of set theory. This last claim rests on an assumption that had long been made about Bolzano's own theory of collections, namely, that it is a theory of sets in disguise. But are Bolzano's collections really sets? This question can be given two different types of answer — a metaphysical answer, about what collections **really** are according to Bolzano, and a functional answer, about what collections are **supposed to do** for Bolzano.

The metaphysical question is the one that has received the most attention over the years. Thanks especially to Simons (1997) and Krickel (1995) it is now more or less accepted by Bolzano scholars that Bolzano's collections cannot be merely assumed to be sets, without further qualifications of such a claim. Despite this apparent consensus, beyond the metaphysically-informed literature on Bolzano it is still the norm to treat Bolzano's collections as sets. This is especially true of literature in the history and philosophy of mathematics (see e.g. Ferreirós 2007, Parker 2008, Felgner 2010). If the metaphysical question seems to be more or less settled, why is its solution pretty much ignored in some quarters?

My diagnosis is that the metaphysical answers provided so far do not address the functional concern, that is, whether Bolzano's collections play the same role sets do within mathematical foundations. I therefore make two attempts at convincing philosophers and historians of mathematics that Bolzano's collections are not functionally the same as sets.

First, I give a metaphysical answer to the question of what Bolzano's collections are that emphasises their difference from sets on a point that is at the heart of the usefulness of sets in mathematical foundations, namely, extensionality. I argue that, contrary to what is usually held, Bolzano's collections as they appear in his mathematical writings are not all extensional.

Second, I argue that, partly because of this metaphysical (or, conceptual) difference, partly because of differences between Bolzano's foundational goals and those of set theory as sketched by Maddy (2017), Bolzano's collections are not just metaphysically different from sets. They are also functionally different from them.

Key words:

Bolzano, set theory, mathematical foundations, 19th century philosophy of mathematics

Tom van den berg & Luigi Corrias: Moral Foundation Theory and the Narrative Self

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00-12h30 at Boardroom

Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to the debate on the philosophical presuppositions of theories of moral decision making. More specifically, it inquires into the concept of the moral self that underlies some of these theories. Within the empirical study of decision making, measuring people's basic and general moral values through a general moral questionnaire has become a popular practice to map out people's morality and link it to other attitudes and behaviour. Prominent examples of widely adopted theories and measurement tools for this purpose are Schwartz Theory of Basic Values (Schwartz, 1992) and Moral Foundation Theory (MFT) (Graham e.a., 2013). However, though the measured general moral values are usually presented as determinants of behaviour, the success of these theories in predicting actual moral behaviour has so far been disappointing (Van den Berg e.a., forthcoming; Graham, 2012; Boyd, 2015). This is problematic as predicting and explaining individual differences in actual moral behaviour seems to be a central goal when measuring people's morality (Ellemers et al., 2019).

In this paper we use insights from hermeneutics and phenomenology, primarily as developed by Paul Ricoeur, to argue that a possible key to the lack of predictive value of –what could be called- 'empirical moral value theories' and their measures lies in an underdeveloped concept of the moral self. Taking MFT as a prominent example, we make clear that MFT and its questionnaire implicitly assume an essentialist concept of the moral self that consists of fairly stable psychological dispositions latently existing within the individual. As these can be measured outside of any context, defining one's moral personality, they are assumed to have a relatively stable efficacy across contexts. It is pointed out that this conception seems to be at odds with findings from within psychology itself that refer to the contextuality of moral decisions, like the situational critique on virtue ethics and personality theories.

Alternatively, we propose a more dynamic conception of the moral self that is always contextually embedded, based on Ricoeur's narrative notion of personal identity. Following Ricoeur's insights on the dynamic interplay of the two poles of personal identity –idem and ipse– that is mediated by narrativity, it is made clear that the moral self –and in its wake the meaning that is given to moral values and the role these play in moral decision making and action– cannot be abstracted from the narrative context in which a moral agent is situated. Accordingly, we argue that to get a better understanding of the role of moral considerations within individual decision making as well as a better explanation and prediction of moral behaviour, we need empirical moral theories and measurement tools that take this narrative context into account.

Key words:

Moral self, Moral values, Moral decision making, Moral Foundation Theory, Moral psychology, Paul Ricoeur, Phenomenology

Sabrina De Biasio: Myths, typification and normality: a phenomenological interpretation of myths in *The Second Sex*

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h30-13h00 at Boardroom

Abstract: Myths and their role in establishing fixed categories within society are at the core of Beauvoir's philosophy. Beauvoir approaches the question of myth in a twofold and rather ambiguous way: on the one hand, as rooted in existentialism, she claims, against myths, that our existence precedes any pre-established essence. On the contrary, as argued in *The Second Sex*, certain myths systematically legitimise hegemonic structures and help to justify male dominance by substituting an unchanging feminine essence for women's existential freedom. On the other hand, influenced by phenomenology, Beauvoir acknowledges that we cannot live in a world where there is no objective truth and that we always rely on myths as archetypes that form the basis of our society. Within this tension, it remains unclear whether Beauvoir argues for the necessity to overcome mythologies or demands for a mere modification of them. That is, whether she admits or not the possibility of a non-myth-grounded society. I maintain that this tension can be fruitfully addressed by applying the phenomenological concepts of typification and (ab)normality to Beauvoir's analysis.

I will start by outlining the conceptual framework in which my analysis is grounded, laying the basis to set Beauvoir's analysis within the phenomenological background. First, I will present the phenomenological concepts of (ab)normality and typification, putting forward their relation. Second, by analysing the central passages of *The Second Sex* on mythology, I will introduce Beauvoir's concept of myth. In the central part of the paper, I will link the notion of myths to that of (ab)normality to show how mythology represents the essential tool to posit a fixed and unchangeable normality. Applying Husserl's concepts of homeworld and alien world to *The Second Sex*, I will explain how myths are used as tools to establish normality at the level of the community. Moreover, I will show how the concept of (ab)normality applies to others. Describing women as Others means labelling them as abnormal and condemning them to be included within normality only as excluded others.

Next, I will analyse the notion of typification in Beauvoir's work. Although rooted in existentialism, Beauvoir's approach does not interfere with the social processes of type-attribution. Applying Schütz' theory of typification to *The Second Sex*, I will discuss the essential distinction between typification and normality and show how types are not directly responsible for establishing a fixed feminine essence. To conclude, I will suggest that the tension in Beauvoir's treatment of myths can be solved by overcoming mythology while maintaining social typification. Indeed, rejecting myths as an illegitimate normalisation of types can allow both (a) to establish a fluid normality that leaves free types flowing and (b) to maintain an objective social identity given by the use of types. Thus, the paper will show how the elimination of myths doesn't cause a gap in the social processes of role definition; rather, it allows for a new kind of unfixated and changeable normality.

Key words: Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Phenomenology, Husserl, Schütz, Myths, Normality, Abnormality, Typification

Charlie Blunden: Brace Yourself: Can we improve the cognitive environment of democratic politics?

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00-12h30 at Beton

Abstract: The average voter has low levels of information about politics and processes political information in biased ways (Brennan 2016, 2020; Somin 2013; Caplan 2007; Achen and Bartels 2016; Ipsos MORI 2016). Political scientists, political philosophers, and economists have suggested measures to ameliorate these problems (see for example López-Guerra 2011; Rosenberg 2017; Heath 2014; Jones 2020; Somin 2020; Brennan 2019). In my paper I argue that there is a cluster of related proposals in the literature which have not yet been systematically described and which could prove useful tools in tackling problems of political ignorance and irrationality (Heath 2014; Levy 2012; Rini 2017; Frey and Stutzer 2006).

I call these policy tools braces: they are policy interventions which aim to structure the cognitive environment (Gallagher 2013; Heath and Anderson 2010; Clark 1997) in order to reduce the influence of false beliefs and biases on people's reasoning about politics. The problems of political ignorance and irrationality are caused by an interaction between individual cognition and the environment in which this cognition occurs: an environment in which people have very little incentive to form accurate beliefs about politics and in which people's cognitive and social biases (such as the availability heuristic, confirmation bias, and in-group bias) can easily be exploited. I argue that making people individually better reasoners has its limits due to the limited cognitive resources and time that people possess (Stanovich 2018; Evans and Frankish 2009; Stanovich 2004), and thus that focussing on the environment in which people cognise is likely to be more promising than more individual-focused approaches to ameliorating political ignorance and irrationality. I then argue that there are several promising *prima facie* justifications for brace policies: they can be argued for on the grounds that they promote autonomy, on the grounds that they are instances of justified paternalism, or on the grounds of promoting welfare.

Lastly, grouping together the various proposals for brace policies in the literature enables me to describe systematic problems with brace policies. I describe two systematic problems for brace policies, both of which are bootstrapping problems: they are problems which suggest that the environment of political ignorance and irrationality which braces are intended to ameliorate will itself prevent braces from being supported, from being carried out competently, and from being seen as legitimate. If citizens are, on average, ignorant and irrational when they form their political beliefs then it is unclear (1) where the political will and support for brace policies come from (the democratic bootstrapping problem) and (2) whether we can trust civil servants, fact-checkers, and other implementers of brace policies to be sufficiently informed and un-biased to implement these policies (the implementation bootstrapping problem). I conclude that both problems have been insufficiently considered by authors who have suggested measures to ameliorate political ignorance and irrationality, and that, while braces may be effective policy measures if implemented correctly, it is unclear whether such implementation is possible.

Key words: Cognitive environment, Ecological engineering, Political Ignorance, Political Irrationality, Cognitive bias

Rachel Boddy & Robert May: Definition and the Proof of Referentiality

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30-17h00 at Kunst

Abstract

In Grundgesetze, Frege attempted to demonstrate that his logical language, the Begriffsschrift is a fully referential language. Although Frege's proof of referentiality fails (Russell's Paradox), Frege's reasons for requiring referentiality remain of interest, and these reasons are our topic. We argue that Frege's core purpose was to legitimize the use of definitions, and accordingly the proof must be considered in the context of Frege's broader concern with canons of proper definition that is, definitions that are scientifically useful. We start from the observation that the sections of Grundgesetze where the proof of referentiality is located are placed by Frege in the Table of Contents under the heading "Definitions". This encompasses §§26-33, labelled "General remarks" on definitions, which are placed just before the sections containing the definitions of arithmetical notions. Building on this, we explore how and why Frege saw the proof of referentiality as essential to the justification of definitions.

Key words:

Definitions, Proof of Referentiality, Russell's Paradox, Frege

Roland den Boef: Non-causal explanations in the humanities: some examples

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h45-12h15 at Ambacht

Abstract:

Traditional theories of explanation have focused mostly on (1) causal explanations in (2) the natural sciences. However, recent developments in the philosophy of science include a growing interest in non-causal explanations in the natural sciences and mathematics. This paper further broadens the horizon to include discussion of non-causal explanations that are found in the humanities, specifically, in the fields of history, linguistics, literary theory, and archaeology. It presents the results of a survey of forty widely used textbooks written by respected scholars in their fields. The results include formal explanations in linguistics about semantic and syntactical phenomena, randomness explanations, structural explanations in literary studies, and normative explanations in various disciplines. It turns out that there are various forms of non-causal explanations that are central to humanistic fields, especially linguistics but also literary studies and perhaps history. A better understanding of humanities explanations can enrich philosophy of science debates and shed light on the nature of the humanities vis-à-vis the sciences. Open questions and potential directions for future research are included.

Key words:

non-causal explanations, scientific explanation, humanities, history, linguistics, archaeology, literary studies, formal explanations, randomness explanations, structural explanations

Anita van der bos: The implications of Locke's theory of personal identity on the belief of the resurrection of the same body: The debate between Whitby and Bold

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30-12h00 at Terra

Abstract: Locke's distinction between 'man', 'person', and 'body' was a big innovation in the seventeenth century. His theory of personal identity was the centre of many debates and is still discussed today. The term 'personal identity' and the man-person-body distinction that Locke introduced were difficult to understand for his contemporaries, whether they tried to critique or defend him. Little is known about the contemporary responses to Locke's theory, we are mostly familiar with the debate between Locke and Stillingfleet. The focal point of this debate is on the implications that Locke's theory has for the belief in the resurrection of the same body. According to Locke, for the diachronic identity of a person we do not need identity of soul or body. We have the same person at the resurrection when this person has the same consciousness as the pre-death person. For Stillingfleet, consciousness is not a suitable candidate for the resurrection of the same human being. He argues for the necessity of sameness of body. Arguing against Locke he fails to understand what Locke meant with 'man', 'person', and 'body'.

In this paper I research the lesser-known debate between Whitby and Bold. This debate shares similarities with the Locke-Stillingfleet debate. Here too problems are raised with Locke's notion of personal identity, in particular the notion of sameness of body. Like Stillingfleet, Whitby believes that consciousness is not what needs to be resurrected. Instead, we need identity of body and soul to get the same man at the resurrection. I argue (1) that Whitby misunderstands the Lockean man-person-body distinction; he confuses 'body' and 'man' and conflates 'person' and 'man'. As a result, Whitby's argument misses the mark. Bold rightfully points this out to Whitby, and in defending Locke, consistently applies the Lockean definitions of 'man', 'person', and 'body'. If Whitby wants to oppose Locke, Bold argues, he has to maintain the same definition of 'body' as Locke, namely a mass of matter that is "a continued Body under one immutable Superficies, existing in a determined time and place." (Locke, Essay, 2.27.3.). The definition of Body upheld by Whitby comes closer to what Locke defines as an organism: a living body consisting "in nothing but a participation of the same continued Life, by constantly fleeting Particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized Body." (Locke, Essay, 2.27.6). I argue (2) that, even though Bold understands Locke correctly, he does not have a knock-down argument against Whitby. To oppose Locke, Whitby can argue for the necessity of the resurrection of the body without upholding the same definition of body. Udo Thiel accuses Bold of the same mistake that Bold accuses Whitby of, namely conflating Lockean terms. Thiel argues that Bold conflates 'person' and 'soul' and tries to defend Locke's position by showing that the identity of the person consists in sameness of soul. I argue (3) that Thiel is wrong. Of Locke's critics and defenders, Bold is one of the few who does understand the different meanings of Lockean terms.

Key words: John Locke, Personal Identity, Resurrection, Diachronic Identity, Early Modern Philosophy, Daniel Whitby, Samuel Bold

Huub Brouwer: Reflections Inspired by Elon Musk: Why a property-owning democracy may not be enough

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00-12h30 at De Glazen Zaal

Abstract

The universal basic income is surprising popular policy amongst tech-billionaires. Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk, for instance, recently remarked that “there is a pretty good chance we end up with a universal basic income, or something like that, due to automation. Yeah, I am not sure what else one would do. [...] People have time to do other things. Complex things. More interesting things.” Sam Altman, Richard Branson, Steward Butterfield, and Mark Zuckerberg have all indicated that they are sympathetic to a universal basic income as way to counteract the negative effects of rising structural technological unemployment. This paper starts out by assuming that the tech billionaires are right: automation will lead to an enormous increase in structural technological unemployment. It then asks: if we are committed to (Rawlsian) egalitarianism, how should the gains and losses of automation be distributed? Or, in Elon Musk’s phrase: besides a basic income, what else would one do?

The main claim of this paper is that the ownership of AI should be collectivized. I argue for this claim in three steps. First, I defend the claim that if technological unemployment rises significantly, a basic income would be unstable, for two (familiar) reasons: (1) the contribution problem: the working will be unwilling to contribute to funding the basic incomes of those who do not work (cf. Susskind 2020), and (2) the capital capture problem: rising capital inequalities will provide the rich with disproportional political influence, which they will use to lobby for tax and transfer schemes that are favorable to them (cf. Christiano 2012, Robeyns 2017). I then argue that a property-owning democracy scheme (or at least, the version proposed by Thad Williamson, 2014), which is, in many ways, designed to avoid the contribution and the capital capture problem, will suffer from these very problems if there is significant technological unemployment. Thirdly, I defend the claim that collectivizing the ownership of AI will avoid the contribution problem and the capital capture problem.

Key words:

Automation, Basic income, Limitarianism, Property-owning democracy

Daniele Conti: Against a Phenomenological Argument for Probabilities of Free Actions

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h45-12h15 at Boardroom

Abstract

Libertarians about free will maintain that whenever we face a free choice, there are multiple possible actions open to us. Often, however, libertarians hold a further thesis, according to which possible actions have objective probabilities of being performed (by objective probabilities we mean probabilities that, broadly speaking, refer to facts or properties of the world, independent of anyone's credences or expectations). Let us call such thesis 'Objective Probability Thesis'.

According to it, for instance, not only it is undetermined whether tonight I will go to the local pub or I will stay home, but there is also a 0.8 probability (say) that I will undertake the first course of action, and a 0.2 probability that I will undertake the latter. But why posit such probabilities? One often-cited reason rests on phenomenological considerations. Typically, when we face a choice, we are not inclined in the same way towards the options open to us. Rather, we are more motivated to choose some of them over others. Many libertarians hold that this phenomenon points to the fact that some possible actions are objectively more likely to be performed than others.

In this paper I will argue that such reasoning, albeit intuitive, is mistaken, as it violates a widely accepted principle informing our understanding of probabilities. According to it, "chances at a particular time [are] equal to a convex combination of the possible chances at some later time" (Dziurosz-Serafinowicz 2021). If this principle is true, then motivation and probabilities split up: how much I am motivated now to perform a certain action is something intrinsic to my current psychology in a way that the current probability that I will perform that action is not. Thus, the phenomenon of being more motivated towards certain actions than others cannot support the claim that such actions are objectively more probable than others: advocates of objective probabilities of actions need to justify the Objective Probability Thesis in other ways.

Key words:

Free Will Libertarianism, Objective Probability, Motivational Strength

Josette Daemen: Freedom, Security, and the COVID-19 Pandemic

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h15-11h45 at Beton

Abstract

Freedom and security are often portrayed as things that have to be traded off against one another, but this view does not capture the full intricacy of the freedom-security relationship. Rather, there seem to be four different ways in which freedom and security connect to each other: freedom can come at the cost of security, security can come at the cost of freedom, freedom can work to the benefit of security, and security can work to the benefit of freedom. This paper analyses each of these connections in turn. It shows that particular understandings of freedom can help us to see particular connections between freedom and security. The practical examples used to illustrate these connections are drawn from the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be suggested that, in situations such as this one, public decision-makers would be wise to take into account all four connections between freedom and security.

Willem van der Deijl & Dick Timmer: Is flying worth it

| Saturday 4th of December, 13h45-14h15 at Textiel

Abstract

The Sixth Assessment Report (2021) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) once again highlights the urgency of the climate problem. One significant contributor to climate change is travel, and air travel in particular. Air travel poses a particular challenge. Not only are people likely to fly more in the decades to come, air travel is also difficult to electrify, or make carbon-neutral in another way.

This raises the question whether individuals have duties to limit their air travel, or whether societies have duties to institutionalize barriers to limit flying, such as taxes, specific to the airline industry. Whether they do depends on part on the harm of climate change, but also on the benefit of flying. In this paper, we investigate to what extent flying can provide benefits that could potentially justify the practice. In order to do so, we survey different theories of wellbeing. First, we discuss the desire theory. On this theory, flying has benefits in virtue of the fact that people want (desire) to go to destinations that they reach by flying. While the benefits of flying are clear on this picture, desire theory has been criticized particularly in contexts of consumer goods, in light of the fact that desires for faraway trips may be driven by marketing, and may disappoint. Simple desire theories are therefore not plausible in this context, and informed desire theories may not straightforwardly see such trips as a benefit.

Second, on hedonistic theories, travel is good in virtue of the enjoyment it brings; this includes that fact that people typically feel less stressed on vacation. On eudaimonistic theories, wellbeing consists in the fulfillment of a person's nature, such as capacities to learn, achievement, and friendship. Eudaimonistically, vacations can provide benefits in virtue of the fact that it creates opportunities to achieve such goods that we may miss out on outside of vacations: experience nature when we live in cities, learn about new cultures when we live in homogeneous towns, relax when our work is stressful.

We argue that while vacations more generally do provide clear benefits, it is not obvious whether the long-distance aspect which makes flying necessary provides sufficient additional benefit to justify flying regularly. Moreover, insofar as such benefits do exist, they in part do so contingently, in light of the fact that our everyday lives miss out on specific goods. While such benefits may justify flying for particular individuals (e.g. a stressed out worker, who needs to get away to get some perspective), they do not justify an institutional acceptance of air travel.

Key words:

climate change, flying, well-being, duties of abatement

Savriël Dillingh: Moral Context and the Employment Contract

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00-16h30 at De Glazen Zaal

Abstract

Recently, political philosophers have started morally differentiating between market contracts and employment contracts. On this view, both types of contract are fundamentally different not only qua legal content and economic function, but qua normative content, as well. In the present paper, I add to this growing body of work by arguing that a. the difference between these two types of contract should be expressed as a moral context change within a single conceptual framework, and that b. construing it as such implies that employers have moral duties towards their employees beyond what is specified in the employment contract itself.

I develop my argument as follows. First, I reiterate that market contracts and employment contracts are tied to the same broad economic framework. Where market contracts occur between two legal entities of equal standing (be they real or fictional), employment contracts see one of these entities cede some legal equality in exchange for economic security. Therefore, so I argue, the moral context change that occurs when an employee signs a contract occurs within a single conceptual framework. In a phrase: we are born employers, and become employees.

Second, building on Abraham Singer's work, I show that this moral context change encourages a change in moral duties, as well. Singer argues that the planned organization of a firm appeals to cooperative social norms as opposed to the market's competitive social norms. In doing so, it creates space for social norms of equality to find purchase in the firm. Thus, and insofar as we find equality important, even if an employee has to some extent voluntarily exchanged some equality for security there exists a moral duty to substitute the employee's ceded equality.

Finally, I argue that the responsibility to fulfill this moral duty falls to the employer — and not to the state — because of the nature of the employment contract. This contract is necessarily incomplete for efficiency's sake, so as to allow an employer to direct employees in various and changing market circumstances. However, this also gives employers power over their employees that is, to some extent, unaccountable and unpredictable. Thus, it is the contract's incompleteness that generates a relationship of vulnerability between employer and employee. Simply completing the contract, however, would turn the employment contract back into a market contract, forgoing the efficiency gains of the former. I conclude with one somewhat more progressive, and one somewhat more reformist suggestion on how to solve this conundrum.

Key words:

Political Philosophy, Business Ethics, Moral Context Change, Legal Equality, Employment Contract

Silvia Donker: Connecting the dots. A multiplex network of early modern natural philosophers

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00-17h30 at Boardroom

Abstract

My poster will present my ongoing work on the investigation of how teaching practices shaped the scientific revolution by reconstructing social networks of natural philosophers between 1600-1800. The objective is to gain insight in the knowledge evolution of the time by means of a more 'big data' approach: by using large amounts of publications and a database of the authors and some their properties, I have created a multiplex network consisting of four layers of social networks of 143 authors of works on natural philosophy. These social knowledge environments are the author's affiliation, the affiliation place, their publisher and the publication place. The four layers represent spaces of close proximity, and thereby spaces of potential interaction- where interaction should be understood not simply as physical encounters between the authors, but more as the interaction environments of ideas, where they were produced, kept and shared over time.

This information will be shared in an introduction section on the poster, and in a methodology section I will explain a bit about social networks and the tools of retrieving them (the programming language Python).

Next, There will be attention to some of the main findings of this research, including the structure of each network layer, clusters of epistemic communities and authors that fulfilled a bridging position, indicating possibly important figures in the dissemination of knowledge. For example, in the publication place layer, I found the network shows clusters or cliques by city rather than country. We see Paris and London being the main publication hubs. Within the Dutch context, we see differences in the types of works being published in a certain city. From looking closely at the clusters, we learn that in Leiden there are no Cartesian authors publishing, but these are found in Franeker or Amsterdam. This suggests the existence of segregated groups of authors based on their philosophical orientation.

Aside from a general introduction, explanation of methods and findings, the poster will include visualisations of the social multiplex network that are particularly interesting for presentation on a poster. Since the building and statistical analysis of the networks have been done using Python, the poster will also include snippets of code. The presentation will show a balance of the theoretical background, the digital tools and methods and what we can learn from it.

Key words:

scientific revolution, natural philosophy, science evolution, digital humanities, social network analysis

Yvette Drissen & Bart Engelen: Competition: What It Is and Why It Is Morally Problematic

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00-16h30 at Beton

Abstract

Competition plays a big role in structuring and shaping our everyday lives. Many practices regulated by basic social institutions, such as the labor market, the workplace, education, and even leisure are organized – at least in part – competitively. Despite competition's obvious topicality and importance, it has received relatively little attention in the politico-philosophical debate up until now. While there is some discussion amongst economists, sociologists and psychologists, a distinct philosophical literature has yet to emerge. We hope this paper helps in kick starting much needed politico-philosophical debates about both the nature of competition (what it is) and how to evaluate it (why it is morally problematic).

Our argument mainly builds on Waheed Hussain's recent claims about competition's specific 'moral defect'. In his 'Pitting People Against Each Other,' Hussain (2020) defends his 'Estrangement Account,' arguing that this moral defect lies in the fact competition leads to a worrisome failure in solidarity amongst members of a political community.

Apart from estranging people, however, this paper explores an additional 'moral defect' that follows from what is definitional to competition. A can only succeed in formulating and carrying out a plan to realize A's aspirations at the cost of B's formulating and successfully carrying out a plan to realize B's aspirations within the framework of the rules. Especially when it comes to vital goods, such as access to education and health care, the social basis of self-respect and career opportunities, which are provided by what Hussain calls 'substantially engulfing institutions,' we argue that competitions inevitably impose harm on losers. This provides a pro tanto reason not to organize substantially engulfing competitions, that is, they require special justifications in order to be permissible.

To assess the extent of the harm inflicted on the losers, we propose four normative criteria to evaluate a competitive practice:

- (i) voluntariness (i.e. how easy it is to exit this particular competition);
- (ii) stakes (i.e. the size of the benefits for the winners and the costs for the losers);
- (iii) scope (i.e. how big the impact of a competition is in other spheres of life); and
- (iv) intensity (of the participant's attitudes, ranging from hate to empathy).

The more competitions are characterized by a lack of voluntariness, high stakes, a wide scope and great intensity, the more morally problematic the competitions are and thus the stronger the justificatory reasons need to be to override the pro tanto reasons not to organize them. Conversely, one can make substantially engulfing competitions less harmful (and even more morally acceptable) by diminishing the four criteria just mentioned.

Key words: competition Institutions, estrangement, harm, stakes, winners, losers

Marije Dümmer: Iconicity as a mechanism for signal production in language emergence

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15-12h45 at Kunst

Abstract: As research on animal and AI cognition and social behaviour leads us to re-evaluate our image of the human species, language remains to be considered a uniquely human feat. A main aim of research on language evolution is to arrive at an explanation of how language was able to emerge in humankind's evolutionary history. How might human language have taken off from such comparatively very limited communication we are familiar with from our closest ape relatives? Iconicity, the resemblance of sign and meaning, has been proposed as a key feature that bootstrapped communication because it is an obvious way to introduce new signs. A shared sensorimotor experience can ground producing and understanding signals through mimicry or pantomime. This shared experience of the referent gives the producer and the interpreter a common base for their communicative interaction in absence of this referent, allowing for the displacement so central to human communication.

This paper challenges this narrative and discusses two alternatives, settling on one. The main point is that it is likely that iconicity was crucial for signal introduction at the earliest stages of language emergence, but hindered expanding and transmitting the lexicon, favouring the development of arbitrary signals instead. The challenges come from empirical evidence from ape communication, child language acquisition and Artificial Intelligence research. Especially important is the confusability argument, which entails iconic symbols for related referents are too similar, and therefore easily confused, which hinders understanding, transmission, and the creation of signs for nuanced meanings.

In light of these challenges, I consider whether a viable alternative mechanism for language emergence can be offered in the absence of iconicity, with arbitrary signs introduced through conventions. A discussion of concrete evolutionary relevant scenarios unveils two drawbacks. The first being that new signs can only be formed when the referent is present, but with the referent present, pre-existing communicative actions such as pointing would be available, thus killing the need to, in that situation, produce a new sign. Secondly, it is unclear what would make that any grunt, hand movement or body position that is randomly produced in a certain situation be such that it would stand out from other behaviour of for instance excitement, and be associated with the intended meaning.

Thus demonstrating that completely disregarding iconicity as a relevant factor in language emergence does not provide us with a satisfactory explanation either, I develop an explanation of the role of iconicity that unifies the evidence on both sides. On this comprehensive view, iconicity plays a crucial role in the earliest stages of language development, when there is no vocabulary yet and signs can denote somewhat broader meanings based in a shared sensorimotor experience. However, as language developed and became more complex and extensive, iconicity became too cognitively demanding. At this stage, signs became more abstract with arbitrary mappings, allowing for a complex and large lexicon that can easily be learned. This paper closes by discussing avenues for further research.

Key words: iconicity, language evolution, pantomime, protolanguage, symbolism, arbitrariness, ape gesture

Daan Evers: How to explain the possibility of wholesale moral error

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h15-11h45 at Boardroom

Abstract

Farbod Akhlaghi (2021) argues that noncognitivists and naturalists cannot explain the epistemic possibility of wholesale moral error. This would show that noncognitivism and naturalism are false. I argue that noncognitivists and naturalists have no trouble explaining the epistemic possibility of wholesale moral error and that the requirement to explain this possibility is plausible only on one particular conception of epistemic possibility.

Key words:

moral error theory, moral naturalism, noncognitivism, epistemic possibility, metaethics

Kris Goffin: Feeling is Believing: Recalcitrant Emotion & Spinozan Belief Formation

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h30-13h00 at Ambacht

Abstract: In this paper, I defend the judgementalist theory of emotion against the argument from recalcitrant emotions. Judgementalism holds that a necessary condition for being in an emotional state is that an evaluative belief is formed. For instance, fear of a dog entails believing that the dog is dangerous. Judgementalism has been taken to be refuted by the argument from recalcitrant emotions (Greenspan, 1988). Recalcitrant emotions are emotions that contradict endorsed beliefs and judgements.

The argument from recalcitrant emotions states that a judgementalist explanation of recalcitrant emotions results in the absurd conclusion that one would hold two contradictory beliefs. Consider this example. Fido is a harmless dog who has no teeth. One has a recalcitrant emotion when one is afraid of Fido while holding the belief that Fido is harmless (Greenspan, 1988). If judgementalism is true, this would imply that people have contradictory beliefs all the time (because recalcitrant emotions occur quite often). The judgementalist theory of recalcitrant emotion is, therefore, absurd. Thus, cognitivism is false. This is the argument from recalcitrant emotions.

I argue that emotion involves a so-called Spinozan belief-forming process: a process which automatically generates beliefs, without taking all available information into account. The generated beliefs might contradict something one already believes, as the so-called Fragmentation of Belief Hypothesis predicts. The argument from recalcitrant emotions presupposes that any theory which ascribes (many) contradictory beliefs to a subject would be

absurd. This presupposed claim is rejected by the defenders of the “fragmentation of belief” hypothesis: Instead of having one consistent set of beliefs, human beings have different compartmentalized systems of belief. A consequence of having separate systems of belief is that human beings often have contradictory beliefs.

Some defenders of the fragmentation of belief hypothesis make a distinction between a Cartesian belief-forming mechanism and a Spinozan belief-forming mechanism (Gilbert, 1991; Egan, 2008; Mandelbaum, 2013). A Cartesian belief-forming mechanism entails that you first entertain a content and then evaluate its truth value. You can evaluate it as true, and then you believe it, or you can reject it. A Cartesian mechanism requires extra effort to go from entertaining a content to believing it: you need to attach the tag “true” to it yourself.

A Spinozan belief-forming mechanism automatically results in a belief that is added on to the stack of beliefs you already have. This belief is automatically tagged with the label “true”. One can evaluate whether this belief is actually true, but this takes extra effort. You need to remove the label yourself. I will argue that a recalcitrant emotion entails a Spinozan belief-forming mechanism. When Ruth is afraid of Fido, the belief that the dog is dangerous is automatically added to her stack of beliefs. It already has the label “true”. It takes more effort to evaluate this belief by taking other beliefs, such as “the dog has no teeth”, into account. Thus the judgementalist explanation of recalcitrant emotions does not lead to an absurd conclusion and therefore the argument from recalcitrant emotions is refuted.

Key words: Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Psychology, Recalcitrant Emotion, Belief Fixation, Fragmentation of Belief

James Grayot, Lukas Beck & Thijs Heijmeskamp: On the supposed explanatory power of dual process theory

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h15-11h45 at Kunst

Abstract:

Despite on-going debates in philosophy and cognitive science, dual process theory (DPT) remains a popular framework for theorizing about human cognition. Its central hypothesis is that the majority of cognitive processing can be subsumed under two modes, or types: Type 1 processing is fast, automatic, and reactive, whereas Type 2 processing is slow, controlled, and deliberative. Supporters of DPT argue that the framework not only provides a general schema for categorizing cognitive processing types, but that it both predicts and explains how the differential processing of information (fast vs. slow; automatic vs. controlled) affects and essentially governs much of our everyday behavior.

In this paper, we argue that the explanatory success and subsequent popularity of this framework is both overstated and deeply misunderstood. We begin by arguing that if DPT has explanatory power at all, it is through offering functional (i.e., non-mechanistic) explanations of cognitive phenomena. We suggest that there are at least three ways DPT could be interpreted as a functional theory:

- a) via abstraction (i.e., black-box) of discrete neural processes and mechanisms;
- b) via reification of non-discrete neural processes and mechanisms;
- c) via fictionalization of non-existent neural processes and mechanisms.

We argue that those who think that DPT provides legitimate explanations of cognitive processing can't accept (a) since it's not currently empirically supported, so they're stuck with interpretations (b) and (c)—that is, DPT is either a reification of non-discrete neural mechanisms or it's a fiction, meaning there is nothing going on at the neural level that resembles a strictly dualistic cognitive architecture. We suggest that proponents of DPT will not want to accept (c) because this opens it up to further criticisms. So, their best bet is to go with interpretation (b), that it explains via reification.

We argue that two things follow from interpretation (b). First, it requires supporters to appeal to theories and evidence external to DPT to substantiate its explanatory power, such as theories of working memory or goal-directed behavior. While this is not a problem in and of itself, it signifies theoretical limitations of DPT. Second, and more importantly, interpretation (b) gives rise to a number of empirical problems, such as lack of counterfactual power, difficulty making causal interventions on cognitive processes, nonspecific predictions, and so on. We take these shortcomings to indicate that if DPT is to be legitimately explanatory, it must offer some additional epistemic virtues. We consider several candidate virtues (e.g., generality, simplification, etc.).

We argue that, while these are useful epistemic virtues, they aren't sufficient to render DPT legitimately explanatory according to received theories of functional explanation. Thus, interpretation (b) and (c) amount to the same implication—that DPT does not explain.

We conclude by considering how our analysis of DPT should affect the scientific ambitions of empirical researchers in the domains of moral reasoning, judgment, and decision-making under uncertainty.

Key words:

Dual process theory cognitive processing, Functionalism, Functional explanation, Philosophy of science and psychology

Job de Grefte: Autonomy, Rationality, Paternalism

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00-17h30 at Beton

Abstract: Autonomy is crucial for well-being and the appropriateness of reactive attitudes like praise and blame. On the other hand, our autonomy is constantly besieged. We are influenced in many ways, with or without our knowledge. Sometimes, we are influenced to buy certain products, and the limitation of our autonomy serves the interests of someone else. But we may also be influenced by actors having our own interests in mind, a phenomenon which is called paternalism after the way parents interfere with their children's freedom for their own good. While paternalism in the latter case is relatively uncontroversial, recently much discussion is devoted to the question whether and if so, under what conditions, paternalism in the adult human case is warranted. This paper aims to contribute to this discussion.

The idea of paternalism is controversial. It has received various kinds of criticism, but it is safe to say that one of the main objections focusses on the reduction autonomy that seems to accompany paternalistic interventions. Even if the reduction of our autonomy is for our own good, critics allege, it still violates fundamental liberal principles (Grüne-Yanoff, 2012). To the extent that we want to uphold those liberal principles, we should refrain from paternalistic intervention.

In this paper, I will undercut arguments like this by arguing that paternalism can actually, under certain conditions, increase our autonomy. If so, then at least for interventions under those conditions, the autonomy critique loses its force.

In my paper I focus only on a specific kind of paternalism; epistemic paternalism. This is paternalism that interferes with people's inquiry in certain ways (Ahlstrom-Vij, 2013). I argue that under specific conditions, certain forms of epistemic paternalism will increase autonomy in two important senses of the term. First, epistemic paternalism may increase our autonomy in the Kantian sense that autonomous agents are universal rational legislators. Second, epistemic paternalism may increase our autonomy in the utilitarian sense that autonomous agents effectively coordinate their actions towards achieving their goals.

While there are of course some limitations and qualifications to my argument, it is nevertheless more ambitious than extant defences of (epistemic) paternalism in the literature. These either only defend the more modest claim that certain forms of paternalism are compatible with preserving autonomy (Ahlstrom-Vij, 2013), or defend the claim that certain forms of paternalism may increase rationality but say nothing on the relation between rationality and autonomy (Engelen, 2019; Schmidt, 2019). On my account, however, paternalism is not merely compatible with autonomy, but may contribute towards it through increasing our rationality. This not only gives us a strong argument in favour of investigating paternalistic interventions of the kind at issue in this paper, it also shows how rationality and autonomy are intimately related and not only constrained but also scaffolded by our social environment.

Key words: autonomy, Rationality, epistemic paternalism

Victor Gijsbers: The possible and the actual

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h45-12h15 at Terra

Abstract

In *The Logical Alien* (2020, p. 387) James Conant argues that a crucial feature of Leibniz's doctrine of modality is that "the domain of all possible worlds has a determinate logical topology prior to there being any actual world." This priority is grounded and made intelligible by a distinction between two of God's faculties: His understanding and His will. The first thing God does – not temporally first, of course, since God is not in time, but logically first – is to survey with His understanding the realm of all possible worlds. Only after that – again, a logical after – does He use His will to create one of those worlds, making it actual. So possibility is logically prior to actuality. The realm of the possible can be grasped independently of any grasp of what is actual.

Shorn of its theological elements, Leibniz's picture is intimately familiar to everyone who has been trained in contemporary analytic philosophy, where possible worlds semantics is the go-to tool for understanding and analysing statements with modal import. In such analyses, philosophers tend to speak about 'all possible worlds' as a set or class the nature and extent of which does not depend on our world. And this comes with a tendency to think of 'actual' as an indexical term, belonging in the same family as 'here' and 'now'. Just as 'here' is a word we use to indicate that place, among all the places, which is occupied by the current speaker; so we use 'actual' to indicate that world, among all the worlds, which is occupied by the current speaker. And just as such an understanding of the word 'here' presupposes a physical space that can be grasped independently of any knowledge of the speaker's current location, so such an understanding of the word 'actual' presupposes a realm of possible worlds that can be grasped independently of any knowledge of which of the worlds is the speaker's. Hence the possible is prior to and independent of the actual. Indeed the opposite claim may seem absurd – how could what is possible depend on what is actually the case?

In the current paper, I will sketch out an alternative to the Leibnizian view. Starting from Aristotle's distinction between first and second potentiality, I argue that the logical topology of the possible is like a series of concentric circles, each of which allows for further departures from the actual, but at the price of becoming increasingly empty of content. The limit case where the possible becomes unmoored from the actual is not, pace the possible worlds tradition, the case where the fundamental meaning of possibility becomes clear; but instead the point at which the concept of possibility loses its content. I illustrate these claims through an engagement with two aspects of David Lewis's theory of modality: his Principle of Recombination and his handling of alien properties.

Key words:

Modality, possibility, actuality, possible worlds, potentiality, David Lewis, James Conant, Aristotle, Leibniz

Michael Gregory: Does the Kantian Republic Dominate?

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30-12h00 at Beton

Abstract

Pauline Kleingeld envisions a picture of Kant's political philosophy which takes there to be both a negative notion of freedom (independence from another's will) and a positive notion of freedom (dependence only on self-legislated laws). She rightly complains that scholarship on Kant's political thought has often taken Kant idea of political freedom to be merely negative, ignoring or downplaying the positive notion. Kleingeld understands the negative notion of freedom to imply the necessity of the positive notion, insofar as the only way to become genuinely independent from the will of another is to be equally dependent on co-legislated public laws. Indeed, Kleingeld understands the positive idea of freedom in a republican way, whereby the subject must be subjected only to laws of their own making in order to be genuinely free.

However, this version of political freedom (being subjected to only laws of your own making) raises several question on the way in which laws can be legislated by the people in a political state. As Kleingeld points out, Kant rejects the idea of a nonrepresentational democratic system as being necessarily despotic "because it establishes an executive power in which all decide for and, if need be, against one (who thus does not agree), so that all, who are nevertheless not all, decide; and this is a contradiction with the general will with itself and with freedom." (8:352). This seems to reject the idea that legislating through a majority of votes is possible if the people are not to be constantly dominated by some group of particular wills. However, this puts the standards for legitimate legislation far out of reach for modern pluralistic democratic states.

I will argue that Kant's positive notion of freedom does indeed imply that legislating through an aggregate of actual wills, even if this aggregate is filtered through a representational system, is necessarily dominating. Against Rousseau, Kant thinks that persons cannot be legitimately dominated by the majority. Yet, Kant does seem to endorse the majority principle (that legislation precedes on a majority of votes) as the realistic goal which actual states should aim for. Kant justifies this by saying that "the very principle of letting such a majority be sufficient, adopted as with universal agreement and so by contract, must be the ultimate basis on which a civil constitution is established" (8:297). Kant insists that to not endorse the majority principle is to invite a conflict of right (*Rechtstreit*) between opposing parties which would delegitimize the legislative authority of the sovereign because a higher authority would be needed to decide between them.

Key words:

Kant, Political Theory, Non-Domination, Democracy

Eveline Groot: Between Sense and Sensibility: Germaine de Staël's 'Philosophie Sensible'

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00-16h30 at Terra

Abstract: As one of the first cosmopolitans, a host to important salons in Paris, a first-hand witness of the horrors of the French Revolution, and a politically involved author, Germaine de Staël (1766–1817) is a unique figure in the early modern world. Intellectually, she was influenced by a broad range of traditions, most importantly by the late French and Scottish Enlightenment, 18th century sentimentalism, and Early German Romanticism. These intellectual movements, however, embrace different perspectives on the nature of human beings. My view is that De Staël's philosophical work can be regarded as an original attempt to unite the Enlightened and Romantic traditions and that this comes to the fore in her image of human beings.

In my presentation, I will analyze De Staël's idea of the passionate nature of human beings, as explicated in *De l'influence des passions* (1796), in relation to the portrait of her 'fictional' character Corinne in the novel *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807). The analysis will pivot around De Staël's theory that literature is a form of 'philosophy sensible', as set out in *De la Litterature* (1800).

In *De l'influence des passions*, De Staël tries to develop a new way of thinking about the immersive disruptive historical events of the French Revolution, while incorporating a theory of the sentiments (Fontana: 2016). A central question to *De l'influence des passions* is how we, as rational 'enlightened' human beings, are capable of individual and collective horrors, and how we can morally better ourselves. De Staël's answer to this problem seems to be that reason alone is not sufficient to attain moral control over ourselves. Human beings are essentially impassioned. Thus, in order to act morally, human beings should be allowed to incorporate sentiments in their process of decision making. Therefore, a clear understanding of our impassioned nature is needed in order to determine what actions are to be understood as morally right and wrong.

In *De la Litterature*, De Staël understands sensibilité in Rousseauian terms: as the foundation that awakens an openness for internalising abstract ideas, and thus offers a condition for knowledge. Additionally, the same sensibilité evokes political open-mindedness and virtuous behaviour. Furthermore, following Rousseau's theory of perfectibility, De Staël is of the opinion that human beings have the capacity to learn, develop, and improve themselves. Being a form of sensible philosophy, literature has the potential to attribute to human progress.

However, unlike Rousseau, De Staël does not seek a necessary foundation of morality within the realm of the sentiments. Our sense of duty is closely linked to our consciousness; only in the interplay between sentimentality and rationality can morality emerge and flourish. This idea lies at the core of De Staël's moral philosophy and emerges in literary form in *Corinne, ou l'Italie*. A philosophical enquiry into Corinne demonstrates both the coherence and the practical implications of De Staël's thoughts.

Key words: Rationality, Sensibility, Literature, French Revolution, Enlightenment, Romanticism

Nina de Groot: Moving beyond the individual - A call for collectiveness on using Commercial DNA databases for criminal investigations

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00-12h30 at Restauratie

Abstract

Over 35 million people worldwide have taken a commercial DNA test to find out about their ancestry, distant relatives, genetic predisposition for diseases, or simply coriander taste aversion. But these commercial genetic DNA databases could also be used for a completely different purpose: identification of criminal suspects. By uploading a DNA profile, found at a crime-scene, into a genetic genealogical database, police can identify very distant relatives of the suspect. By mapping both family trees and their overlap, an expert can identify the unknown perpetrator. This method has been used in over 200 criminal cases, mostly in the US. In the Netherlands, the possibility of using IGG in criminal investigations is currently explored. Yet, this so-called investigative genetic genealogy (IGG) raises multiple (bio)ethical issues.

I discuss two ethical concerns; valid informed consent for forensic use and the privacy protection of DNA data from individuals. However, I argue that there are more pressing ethical problems that extend beyond this individual approach. This is mainly because the technique can identify very distant relatives. As such, when only a fraction of the population will consent to forensic use of their DNA data, it will be possible to identify, in practice, almost the entire population. I discuss the limitations of an individual bioethical approach to IGG, by discussing the ethical framework of informed consent and privacy for relatives in the genetic medical-clinical context. This framework, I argue, cannot be transposed to the IGG setting.

Instead, I propose a collective ethical approach to IGG, one that includes the international and commercial nature of this practice. I discuss how other approaches, outside the traditional bioethical perspective, can be helpful for the ethical debate on IGG. I discuss several options for an effective ethical framework on IGG. I explore the similarities and differences between IGG and, on the one hand, a universal population-wide database, and, on the other, familial searching in forensic DNA databases. I propose a collective ethical perspective towards IGG that takes the interpersonal, commercial, transnational, and societal nature of the practice at its core. I conclude that IGG should be primarily approached from this collective perspective, and not from an individual one.

Key words:

Bioethics, medical ethics, genetics, ethics, DNA

Frank Hindriks: When to Start Saving the Planet?

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00-17h30 at De Glazen Hal

Abstract

Global warming reduces crop yields, increases species extinction, and threatens the future of Pacific Island Nations (IPCC 2018). Intuitively, such alarming climate harms call for immediate action. However, the claim that individuals have a duty to prevent climate harms faces two important problems. First, individuals can rarely if ever avert a climate harm on their own. Second, often too few people are willing to contribute. Climate duty skeptics take the first problem to entail that individuals are never obligated to reduce their carbon footprint, unless their government forces them to (Sinnott-Armstrong 2005, Cripps 2013). A couple of considerations suggests that things are not so bleak. Individuals can in some cases help prevent climate harms. Furthermore, they can often activate others and thereby increase the number of people who are willing to contribute. But there is a further problem. The process of activating enough people takes time. This poses a threat to what I call ‘the urgency intuition’ according to which preventive action is required soon, if not immediately.

Saving this intuition requires a new conception of the duty not to harm, or, more precisely, of its causal and epistemic preconditions. Robert Goodin (2012), Holly Lawford-Smith (2015a, 2015b), and Stephanie Collins (2019) have argued that an individual is obligated to contribute to a collective outcome only if enough others are willing to do so as well. The underlying idea is that the morally desirable outcome can be brought about successfully only if there is a critical mass of willing individuals. This forms the core of what I call ‘the success proviso.’ However, as just mentioned, often too few individuals are willing to contribute and take preventive action (Batson 2015; Bandura 2016). When this is the case, the success proviso entails that people become obligated to take preventive action only once enough others have been activated. For instance, turning off your air conditioning at night or taking the plane rather than the train will be required only once enough others are willing to do the same. Because of this, the success proviso fails to preserve the urgency intuition.

The alternative that I propose here turns on the prospect of success. In order for an individual to be obligated to take preventive action, this prospect must be good enough. By this I mean that it must be reasonably likely and suitably clear that the individual can help prevent the harm. As I argue below, this ‘prospect proviso’ sometimes requires taking preventive action right from the start. And when others have to be activated first, this activation process might progress in such a promising manner that preventive actions are already required before it has been completed. For this to be the case, individuals must have enough reason to believe that a sufficient number of others will be activated. Strikingly, an individual will then be required to initiate preventive action already before the harm can in fact be prevented. In this way, the prospect proviso preserves the urgency intuition.

Key words:

Activation, climate change, collective responsibility, moralization, obligation to activate signaling

Aldo Houterman: Sport in an Algorithmic Age: Metamorphosing bodies in the work of Michel Serres

| Saturday 4th of December, 13h45-14h15 at Terra

Abstract

How can we think of a metamorphosis of the human body during the pandemic? The so-called 'intelligent lockdown' made us Cartesians again, working from home behind a desk, experiencing others only through a window, and constantly adopting the same point of view. At the same time, we learned that sports and physical exercise improve our immunological status and counteracts fatigue, anxiety and depression. Typically, the role of the body and sport are seen as instrumental for labor productivity, mental health or gathering data. But can we also think of the intrinsic value of the human body and sport in times of zoonosis, co-immunity, global warming, and surveillance capitalism?

In this paper, I aim to conceptualize the sporting body in the light of current global challenges by consulting the work of French philosopher Michel Serres (1930-2019). I will show that throughout his oeuvre, Serres develops a radically unique and systematic view of the metamorphosis of the human body. Besides, I will argue that Serres' analyses of sports bring forward a number of creative insights that can contribute to current transformations in thinking about sport.

During his work on the philosophy of science in the 1970s, Serres tracks down three ways of conceptualizing the body since modernity. These are the body as a "mechanical statue" that is moved by natural forces during the 17th and 18th century, as a "thermodynamic motor" that runs on heat in the 19th century, and as an "information-processing network" that receives, stocks and emits small-scale energies mid-20th century. In his seminal works, *The Parasite* (1980) and *The Five Senses* (1985), Serres develops the idea of the human body as a sensuous network that processes information from noise, often by making use of examples from sports, such as rugby, football, gymnastics and athletics.

In a more recent work, *Hominescence* (2001), Serres narrowly relates embodiment to societal and scientific changes. Serres' provoking idea is that, against the backdrop of developments such as vaccination, biotechnology, urbanization, hygiene procedures, telecommunication and algorithms, "during the recent decades, a new body was born" (p. 25). He calls this new body "hominiscent", entering a phase of fast changes, mirroring the process of adolescence, and becoming more responsible for life and death.

Interestingly, Serres argues that exercise and training provide us tools for dealing with complexity, deviation and turbulence. Physical exercise enables us to enhance our "global intuition": it opens up new bodily techniques and the creative ability to deal with the global challenges we face today.

Key words: Philosophy of the Body, Philosophy of Sport, Philosophy of Medicine

Pei-Hua Huang: Uncertainty, Vaccination, and the Duties of Liberal States

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15-12h45 at Restauratie

Abstract

Earlier this year, several governments decided to suspend part of their vaccination programmes for fear of exposing people to undue risks of developing the rare but severe cerebral venous thrombosis from the AstraZeneca vaccine. The investigation launched by the European Medicines Agencies concluded that the overall health benefits of receiving an AstraZeneca vaccine significantly outweigh the risks. However, some states remained their suspension policy, citing the reason that they had “better alternatives” for their people.

Most of the criticisms against the decision are based on the concern of the time-sensitive nature of the combat of COVID-19, arguing that the suspension cause unnecessary death by creating logistic problems and delaying the vaccine rollout. While arguments based on risk-benefit analysis has their strength, in a highly uncertain situation like the COVID-19 pandemic we are still experiencing, these arguments against the suspensions might also be undermined by the latest epidemiological data. Therefore, focusing on the risk-benefit analysis provides less helpful normative guidance for public health policymaking in the time of uncertainty.

In this paper, I propose a duty-based critique of the suspension of vaccine rollouts and the “better alternatives” account. I first consider the argument that a government has a general duty to protect its people from undue health risks and other hazards (duty of protection). I argue that defending the decision by appealing to the duty of protection faces several challenges from both scientific and moral angles. The suspensions of vaccine rollout disproportionately focused on shielding people from the undue risk of developing cerebral venous thrombosis, failing to recognise that suspending the vaccine rollout also exposed people to a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. The suspensions infringe people’s right to take the risks they deem worth taking for their health.

The “better alternatives” account also fails to provide moral support for the decision. The epistemic uncertainty undermines the strength of the argument — the latest research on the efficacy shows that AstraZeneca outperforms Pfizer in generating longer-lasting immunity. The research regarding the long-term efficacy of different vaccines also reveals that a vital issue advocates of the “better alternatives” didn’t address, i.e. better in terms of what? Side effects, the strength of immunity, and the efficacy against different variants are all reasonable but incommensurable considerations. It is morally problematic for any liberal government to dictate which consideration ought to be prioritised, for this violates the principle of neutrality. A liberal government should uphold its commitment to value pluralism and facilitate its people to make decisions as well-informed as possible.

Key words:

covid-19, liberalism, reasonable pluralism, vaccination

Carlo Ierna: Husserl on the Ethics of Cognitive Artifacts

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30-12h00 at Restauratie

Abstract

In his 1900 Prolegomena, Husserl analyzes the two roles of mathematical symbols: the semantical role of referring to the corresponding number concepts and the syntactical role of “operational signs” (Hua XVIII, 202). Due to this ambiguity, mathematical symbols enable us to perform computations simply through symbol manipulation. For instance, by exploiting the structure of our decimal, positional number system, we can perform the calculation “times 10” by appending a zero. This can be done without conceptual insight into the meaning of the symbols or operations. Numeral systems are designed precisely to have such features, to render calculations as simple and quick as possible, despite our contingent psychological limits. We require a suitable numeral system to do mathematics with as little thought as possible, performing computations according to “blind psychological rules” (Hua XII, 357). Mathematics itself is “the most amazing mental machine” (Hua XII, 350), furthermore this psychological symbol system can be outsourced to a physical symbol system: an actual machine (Hua XII, 364). Just like we do, the machine exploits the syntactic characteristics of the symbols and symbol system, with no regard to the semantics: “we perform additions, multiplications, etc., with decimal numbers purely mechanically, if we don’t even use machines to infer the results.” (Hua Mat I, 247). Our own blind, un insightful calculations and those done with computing machinery have the same epistemic status, since both implement the same algorithm. That is why Husserl can make the broader claim that “Science also has a subjective side. [...] Here belong the modern methods of calculation with calculating machines, logarithmic tables, etc.” (Hua Mat II, 294). Implementing an algorithm in a machine does not make it more objective or less psychological, since it was designed by humans for humans and therefore still follows the same psychological rules of human thought economy.

This leads to a normative concern: the ethical consequences of outsourcing our thinking to machines. According to Husserl, I should ultimately be able to justify my actions in a self-sufficient manner, “from autonomous insight”, but he also cautions that “If I were to apply this principle with full rigor, then I would not be allowed to use any logarithmic table, any calculating machine, without having knowledge in all seriousness of the theory.” (Hua XLII, 272). Ethically, I should only accept the outcomes of computations which I could have performed myself insightfully, i.e. with full awareness of the semantics involved in the symbols and operations. Yet, Husserl acknowledges that this is impossible in practice: we cannot know and do all that is needed to satisfy this rigorous principle. The world, both natural and cultural, is far too complex for that. Hence, we cannot avoid relying on tools for thought. Husserl’s theory of symbolic computation leads to a very timely conclusion: in order to understand the world and act ethically in it, we need to understand the tools to which we have outsourced our thinking and the theories on which this very possibility is based.

Key words:

Edmund Husserl, History of Philosophy, History and Philosophy of Technology, History and Philosophy of Mathematics, Computer Ethics

Bjørn Jespersen: A misdiagnosed conundrum about *woodchuck* and 'groundhog'

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00-16h30 at Kunst

Abstract

The fauna of logical semantics is teeming with woodchucks and groundhogs, pumas and cougars. Likewise, its flora boasts both furze and gorse. Nor is its viticulture a stranger to either Zinfandel or Primitivo grapes.

But consider a pair of lexically synonymous predicates such as 'is a woodchuck' and 'is a groundhog'. Are they intersubstitutable within an attitude attribution without affecting either the truth-value of the attribution or the content of the belief? The received view is in the negative. I argue the answer ought to be in the affirmative, basically because the predicates are assumed to be synonymous. I suggest the received view is informed by a confusion of predicates and properties, thus drawing semantic and logical distinctions where only syntactic distinctions should be drawn.

The most common move is to argue that an agent may know the predicate 'is a groundhog', but not the predicate 'is a woodchuck', and so it would be not only misleading but also false to use the latter in a report of the agent's attitude toward groundhogs / woodchucks. Moreover, the received view allows it to be rational to believe that Fs are not Fs, as in the report "Phil believes that groundhogs are not woodchucks". Note that this report is emphatically not put forward as a shorthand for something like "Phil believes that the animals called 'groundhogs' are not woodchucks", which just reports Phil's lack of command of a predicate.

My objection is that an attributee's ignorance of a (semantically speaking redundant) predicate is irrelevant to which predicates the attributer is allowed to use when reporting the content of the attitude. I find the arguments in favour of the received view to be nothing other than a rehash of Mates's puzzle revolving around the pair 'to chew' and 'to masticate'. My own position draws inspiration from, *inter alia*, the Church-Langford translation test. The issue with predicates is parallel to the issue with pairs of proper names like 'Cicero' and 'Tully', whenever these are deemed synonymous.

If my line of reasoning is agreed to, the intensions of standard possible-world semantics will suffice for substitutability. Still, in some cases the complements need to be hyperpropositions (propositions more fine-grained than up to necessary equivalence). The reason is that otherwise the belief that woodchucks are groundhogs and the belief that natural numbers are natural numbers, being analytically trivial, will be one and the same belief, thus relating agents to the entire logical space. Thus, there are cases where we do need fine-grained meanings. But I suggest that the reason for fine-graining has been misdiagnosed.

I discuss two theories supporting the received view and then present my own account of believing that woodchucks are groundhogs and believing that woodchucks are poisonous.

Key words: Predicates, Logical semantics, Substitution, Attitude, Fine-grained meaning

Akshath Jitendranath: The Formulation of Rational Choice

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00-17h30 at Kunst

Abstract

My objective here is to argue that the phenomena of hard choices undermines the standard formulation of rational choice. I start, however, with a defence of the standard formulation against Ruth Chang's influential argument for the very same claim. In particular, I scrutinize Chang's claim that hard choices are situations where the alternatives are comparable by a sui generis binary relation called on a par with. The upshot of this, Chang believes, is the following: the standard story about rationality (at least within choice theory) needs to be abandoned or reformulated because the primitive concept of at least as good as cannot account for this sui generis evaluative relation. Against this, I show that it is Chang's case for the relation on a par with that cannot be sustained. I then turn to show why I believe the theory of rational choice needs to be reformulated in the light of the phenomena of hard choices. More specifically, I show that hard choices puts the—undefended but almost universally invoked—assumption of decisiveness under stress. To see what this assumption is, recall that in the standard theory, a choice is represented by a choice function C that specifies, for any choice situation A , a choice $C(A)$ which is a non-empty subset of A . That non-emptiness is built into the definition of a choice function is the assumption of decisiveness. Hard choices puts this assumption under stress because a hard choice is, by definition, a situation in which a deliberating agent cannot make a rationally justified choice from a given menu of alternatives. To account for the phenomena of hard choices, then, the assumption of decisiveness needs to be dropped. However, when decisiveness is abandoned some classic results fail. For example, I show that a choice function that satisfies Amartya Sen's famous α and β does not characterize a transitive preference relation (when we allow for indecisiveness). An axiom that is new to the literature and due to Martin van Hees—van Hees' ξ —is required in addition to α and β in order to ensure that the underlying preference relation is transitive. Thus, a result that makes an initial contribution to the required reformulation of rational choice theory is also presented.

Key words:

practical philosophy, rationality, practical reason, rational choice theory, hard choices

Michael Klenk: Design, Alignment, and the Structure of Values

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00-17h30 at Textiel

Abstract

The development of AI raises urgent questions about which and whose values it should be aligned with. This has come to be known as the value alignment problem (Russell 2019; Gabriel 2020). Policymakers such as the IEEE or the EU High-Level Expert group are increasingly alert to the issue and call for technology in general, including AI-based technology, to be aligned with or designed for ethical values (EU 2020; IEEE 2019). Solving the value alignment problem may be a pre-condition for safe and legitimate development of more advanced AI-based technologies (Aguirre et al. 2020).

Apart from the technical question of how to embed values in technological artefacts by way of design, the normative question of what values – and whose – to align with has attracted some much needed attention. For instance, the value concept in value sensitive design has been criticised as inappropriately descriptive (Manders-Huits 2011), problematically universal (Borning and Muller 2012), and researchers have urged for the need to justify the targets of value alignment with normative theory (Jacobs and Huldtgren 2018; Albrechtslund 2007, p. 67). In the light of disagreement about normative theory, others argued in favour of procedural democratic approaches to determine fairly the values targeted for alignment (Gabriel 2020; Taebi et al. 2014).

These are important contributions because, in different ways, they highlight the normativity of values. Values are normative in the sense that they give us reasons to believe, desire, feel, or act rather than merely (de facto) inciting or motivating us. However, these approaches are marred by normative disagreement, and they lack a metaethical substantiation.

This paper seeks to contribute to the solution of the value alignment problem by introducing an metaethical framework that will help researchers to assess the structure of value. Rather than defending a substantive metaethical view about what values are or a particular normative theory to identify values (e.g. deontology), the paper shows that any solution to the value alignment problem necessitates a normative explanation of the sort ‘x is of value because y.’ It then shows how to account for such claims by way of different metaethical structures of value. I distinguish valuing as a subjective or intersubjective responses from value, understood as a normative fact. Though valuing may serve as evidence for value, it must be grounded by a normative claim that associates descriptive properties (e.g. ‘is safe’) with evaluative or normative properties (e.g. ‘is good’). The rest of the paper spells out different possible value structures instantiated by such grounding claims. Some grounding claims are normative laws that explain the normative force of valuing. There may be more fundamental metaethical laws, also expressible as grounding claims, which explain normative laws. An important property of these laws is their stability, which determines how small changes in the grounds affect the grounded values. This, I argue, is of crucial importance the design of technologies aligned with our values.

Key words: Artificial intelligence, value alignment, moral philosophy, metaethics

Koen Kramer: The role of technologies in the instrumentalization of animals: a technological mediation perspective on human-animal relations

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00-16h30 at Restauratie

Abstract

Animal ethicists have raised concerns about the possible instrumentalization and objectification of animals in various technological practices, including precision livestock farming and the biotechnological ‘improvement’ of animals in livestock breeding and biomedical research. Helpful conceptualizations of instrumentalization and objectification have been developed from Kantian and feminist perspectives, but a systematic account of the instrumentalizing and objectifying potential of technologies is currently lacking. According to the account presented in this contribution, which is based on technological mediation theory, technologies can contribute to instrumentalization and objectification by amplifying and reducing certain features of animals in human perception or by inviting and inhibiting certain human actions towards animals. We illustrate how this account can give direction to ethical and empirical inquiries with respect to the instrumentalization and objectification of animals by means of technology, taking genetic selection technologies in livestock breeding as a case study. While this contribution focuses on the technological mediation of instrumentalizing and objectifying relations towards animals, the account offered is also relevant for analyzing how technologies may foster different relations towards animals, or analyzing how instrumentalizing and objectifying relations among humans can be mediated by technology.

Key words:

animal ethics, ethics of technology, instrumentalization, objectification, technological mediation, genomic selection

Matthias Kramm: Problematizing “Western philosophy”

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00-17h30 at Ambacht

Abstract

African philosophy, Asian philosophy, and Indigenous philosophies are just three examples of how the philosophical world is becoming more diverse. During the last decades, the label “Western philosophy” has been employed by many philosophers to distinguish a specific philosophical tradition that supposedly originated in the “West” from these other philosophical traditions. The philosophical motives for introducing this distinction range from attempts of decolonizing philosophy and challenging the hegemony of “Western philosophy” to attempts of defending “Western philosophy” against alternative philosophical paradigms and methodologies.

In many respects, the label of “Western philosophy” can be considered a successor of the labels “analytic philosophy” and “continental philosophy”. In an initial phase, both “analytic philosophers” and “continental philosophers” emphasized the difference between their ways of doing philosophy, and the prevailing view was that there was “no perceptible convergence between the two philosophical worlds” (Quinton 2005, p. 170). Contemporary philosophers challenge the assumption that “analytic philosophy” and “continental philosophy” can be clearly distinguished from each other in terms of topics, method, or style. According to Dan Zahavi, such an approach results in “oversimplification and reification” and ignores the various overlaps between the two traditions (Zahavi 2016, p. 91). Currently, the label of “Western philosophy” is most often employed in such a way that it encompasses both “analytical philosophy” and “continental philosophy”. But the debate on whether “Western philosophy” and “non-Western philosophy” can be clearly distinguished from each other or whether there are overlaps between them in many ways replicates earlier debates on the relationship between “analytical philosophy” and “continental philosophy”.

Although the label of “Western philosophy” raises a lot of questions, I do not argue that the label should be abandoned. If philosophers follow certain guidelines when defining “Western philosophy”, the label can fulfil an important task, be it in terms of decolonial critique, critical self-reflection, or challenging epistemic marginalization. In this paper, I therefore examine the label of “Western philosophy”. First, I differentiate among essentialist, anti-essentialist, and non-essentialist ways of defining “Western philosophy” (Mallon 2007; Phillips 2010). I then provide an overview of different types of criteria – such as political, geographical, or linguistic criteria – that philosophers have used to delimit “Western philosophy” from “Non-Western philosophy” (Gordon 2019). Finally, I offer three guidelines that philosophers should adhere to when problematizing “Western philosophy”.

Key words:

Western philosophy, Decoloniality, Essentialism, Pluralism

Thirza Lagewaard: An agonistic response to deep disagreement

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h45-12h15 at Restauratie

Abstract: This paper challenges a Rawlsian solution to epistemic deep disagreement by criticizing Michael Lynch's Method Game both from within contemporary deliberative theory and by proposing an alternative way of dealing with deep disagreement: an agonistic answer. Some disagreements are solved in a heartbeat. Others lead to divides that are seemingly impossible to cross. Such deep disagreement is sometimes seen as a problem for democratic societies. When policy needs to be made on contested issues, like vaccines, climate change, or immigration policies, deep disagreement about these topics can hamper decision making. In such cases, the disagreement has to be resolved or otherwise be dealt with.

However, many argue that deep disagreements are not rationally resolvable. If this is indeed the case, how to deal with such disagreements in a democracy? In his book *In Praise of Reason*, Lynch proposes a practical solution that is inspired by and very similar to Rawls's *Veil of Ignorance: the Method Game*. The goal of the game is to arrive at a list of epistemic principles that every reasonable person can commit to. This solution fits very well into the widely accepted deliberative approach to democracy, because the Method Game focuses on public reason and aims for consensus.

Lynch's Rawlsian solution to deep disagreements stands hitherto mostly unchallenged. However, given existing diversity and structural epistemic injustices, a Rawlsian response might not be a realistic or even a desirable practical way to deal with deep disagreement in a democratic society. It's not realistic because the Method Game has no bearing on the actual world we live in. It is not desirable because it puts many restrictions on which kind of reasons can be used. Restricting what counts as a valid public reason, increases the risk of excluding the reasons given by marginalized people.

This paper challenges Lynch's solution from two perspectives: from the contemporary deliberative approach and from the agonistic approach to democracy.

Lynch's practical solution does not take into consideration recent work within the deliberative approach that, since Rawls, has moved away from a focus on consensus and reason giving. Contemporary deliberativism takes into account the diversity of society and the different ways people contribute to a public debate. Lynch's method game would improve by including these recent trends.

The Method Game is also challenged by an alternative answer to deep disagreement: An agonistic answer that does not aim at consensus, rational or otherwise, but instead focuses on the value of conflict and diversity. This answer to deep disagreement is more realistic, because it focuses on our actual world and is more in line with the entrenched and unresolvable nature of deep disagreements. An agonistic answer would also be more sensitive to epistemic diversity and the inclusion of marginalized voices. This paper contributes to the epistemology of deep disagreement by challenging Lynch's Rawlsian solution. At the same time this paper draws attention to the relevance of the agonistic approach for the emerging field of political epistemology.

Key words: Deep Disagreement, Deliberative democracy, Agonistic democracy, Conflict, Epistemic Injustice

Laura Lamers, Jeroen Meijerink, Giedo Jansen and Mieke Boon: A Capability Approach to Worker Dignity under Algorithmic Management

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h45-12h15 at De Glazen Hal

Abstract

This paper develops a conceptual framework to study and evaluate the impact of 'Algorithmic Management' (AM) on worker dignity. While the literature on AM addresses many concerns that relate to the dignity of workers, a shared understanding of what worker dignity means, and a framework to study it, in the context of software algorithms at work is lacking. We advance a conceptual framework based on a Capability Approach (CA) as a route to understanding worker dignity under AM. This paper contributes to the existing AM literature which currently is mainly focused on exploitation and violations of dignity and its protection. By using a CA, we expand this focus and can evaluate the possibility that AM might also enable and promote dignity. We conclude that our CA-based conceptual framework provides a valuable means to study AM and then discuss avenues for future research into the complex relationship between worker dignity and AM systems.

Key words:

Algorithmic Management, Capability Approach, Human Resource Management, Worker Dignity, Human Dignity

Maud van Lier: Introducing a four-fold way to conceptualize Artificial Agency

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30-17h00 at Restauratie

Abstract

Recent developments in AI research suggest that an AI-driven science might not be that far off. The research of for example Melnikov et al. (2018) and that of Evans et al. (2018) show that automated systems can already have a distinctive role in the design of experiments and in directing future research. Common practice in many of the papers devoted to this automation of basic research is to refer to these systems as 'agents'. What is this attribution of agency based on? And to what extent can these artificial agents automate the research practice? Would it even be possible for them to make scientific discoveries? An initial step in answering these questions is to determine what we mean by 'artificial agent' in the context of basic research. This paper proposes for this conceptualization a new methodological framework, which allows researchers to model artificial agency according to four distinct strategies that complement each other. Three of these modeling strategies - Gricean modeling, analogical modeling and theoretical modeling - were already identified and used by Sarkia (2021) to conceptualize 'intentional agency'. In the paper, I show that 'artificial agency' in a basic research setting bears similarities to 'intentional agency'. Given these similarities, I argue that the same modeling strategies that Sarkia proposes to use to conceptualize intentional agency might be useful for the conceptualization of artificial agency as well. However, taken together, these three strategies are insufficient for a complete account of artificial agency. This is because all of them are normative in nature, and do not allow the researcher to analyze the actual use of the bigram 'artificial agency'. Since a conceptualization of artificial agency is incomplete without the study of the actual use of the term, I propose to add a fourth modeling strategy, called contextual modeling, to the existing three. This fourth strategy complements the other three by being descriptive rather than normative in nature. Lastly, I show through the use of examples how these four modeling strategies complement one another in the conceptualization of artificial agency in a basic research context, and, taken together, bring about a more complete account of this kind of agency.

Key words:

Artificial Agency, AI-driven science, Methodological framework, Basic Research, Intentional Agency

Pilar Lopez Cantero: Duties to preserve romantic relationships

| Saturday 4th of December, 13h45-14h15 at Kunst

Abstract

Romantic break-ups can be a really painful experience, and it is not uncommon for people to offer well-meaning advice: “you need to move on!”, “time to re-assess your priorities”, “you weren’t than happy with them anyway”. Given that break-up motivated suffering can be greatly disrupting, it may be the case that if the sufferer can do something to overcome this, they have a self-directed obligation to do so. In this paper, I explore three possible duties to oneself after romantic break ups. First, I discuss that suffering in break-ups can be a type of self-victimization identified by Gheaus (2021: 10). This could give rise to a duty to stop one’s own suffering, which I believe is best captured through a duty of self-compassion: the cultivation of the right relationship with oneself, which requires to look at one’s own suffering from an observer stance (Keller and Huppert 2021). Second, I look into a possible duty of critical revision of the past relationship, and one’s self-understanding as it was shaped within the relationship. After a break-up, understanding of the past may fall into two extremes: either romanticizing the relationship, or trying to ‘erase’ the relationship to return to a previous self-conception. Critical revision will avoid falling between these two extremes and discerning when complete erasure may be warranted, which is true in certain submissive relationships (Lopez-Cantero & Archer 2020). Finally, I look into a duty of moving forward and argue that the content of this duty will be defined by three factors: whether the break-up is a case of disorientation (Harbin 2016), whether it is a damaging transformative experience (Carel and Kidd 2019) and whether the break-up is the starting point for a new relationship of ex-partnership.

Key words:

Ethics, emotions, love, duty, break-ups

Kritika Maheshwari: Russian Roulettes, Exploding Toasters, and Thomsons' Problem of Risk Imposition

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h15-11h45 at De Glazen Zaal

Abstract

The concept of risk imposition is central to discussions in moral and political philosophy of risk. It is now a standard position in the literature to think that risk impositions per se are morally significant – in and of themselves. However, few discussants have made any efforts to provide an account or analysis of what exactly is involved in imposing risks on others. For instance, do I “impose” a risk on you, or innocently assume one, when I buy a lawn mower that has some non-negligible risk of exploding, thereby destroying your garden gnome? Or, do I “impose” a risk on you, rather than merely inform you of it, when I take you mountain climbing, telling you well in advance that carrying such an activity is generally dangerous? Does an employer “impose” risk on you, rather than merely offer you one, when he hires you to do a dangerous job that comes with rewards?

These examples of everyday conduct or behaviour that involve some serious risk of harm for others cannot, without further clarification, be immediately regarded as imposition of risk on part of the agent. Yet, this seems to be the trend in existing literature. Moreover, little, if anything, is said about exactly why such instances properly qualify – or should qualify as genuine instances of morally problematic risk impositions. This theoretical oversight is surprising, insofar any normative framework of risk imposition must include, at its very foundation, an account of the nature of risk imposition (Oberdiek 2017). Absent such an account, it is unclear how we are to make sense of something’s moral significance without having a clear idea of whatever it is that possesses moral significance.

In this talk, I aim to make progress in this direction by offering a moralised account of what it is to impose risk. I do this by, in part, defending morally relevant distinctions between imposing risks, exposing others to risk, and attempting, or trying to risk harm onto others. These distinctions, I argue, matter to our moral assessment of a particular agent’s risky conduct, and in particular, the degree of blame we can attribute to them for wrongly subjecting others to risk.

My discussion divides into three parts. First, I offer a brief overview of existing literature, focussing closely on the so-called paradigmatic cases of risk imposition, and argue that these cases by themselves fail to establish that theorists operate with a clear, unified understanding of what risk impositions constitute. Second, I consider whether Frances Kamm’s (2013) and David DeGrazia’s (2014) lesser-known distinction between merely exposing others to harm versus imposing harm on them that tracks causal responsibility to distinguish between two. Against Kamm and DeGrazia, I argue that this distinction should track moral rather than causal responsibility. And third, I consider the implications of a moral responsibility-centered analysis of what it is to impose risks for existing debates one (im)permissibility of imposing risks.

Key words: risk, impositions, moral responsibility

Diana Martin: Macroethical duties: framing the collective responsibility of engineers

| Saturday 4th of December, 13h45-14h15 at Restauratie

Abstract

The two major approaches in engineering ethics are macro- and micro-ethical in nature (Herkert, 2005). At the core of the distinction between these, we find questions about the scope of engineers' responsibilities, the capacity to exercise their public duty, as well as the nature of the constraints for doing so. The aim of the presentation is to explore the "responsibility dilemma" arising from misattributed duties by both approaches, in order to frame the group responsibility of engineers in terms of macroethical duties that are not undermined or overridden by asking too much of its bearers.

The responsibility dilemma that arises is that microethical individualistic approaches ascribe duties which in some cases engineers cannot fulfil from an individual standpoint, while macroethics, given its focus on the broader mission of engineering, ascribes societal duties that treat engineers as part of a collective, when, following Collins' (2019) tripartite distinction, they would be members of groups or coalitions. As such, by not taking adequate account of the structural pressures engineers face, as well as of their decision-making capabilities, there is a danger of moralism, with unrealistic expectations being placed.

To address this dilemma, I argue that individual engineers, despite the limited agency to correct the structural features identified as problematic from an ethical standpoint, have two macroethical duties:

- (i) The first macroethical duty, inspired by Collins' (2019) work on group duties, is to join collectives in such a way as to favour responsible decision-making and systematic change. An example of collective groups are professional associations and societies, whose actions can help strengthen support structures (i.e. civic coalitions), or develop and modify the tools that affect engineering practice, such as regulations, policies and legislation (Zandvoort, 2005). Another example are citizen movements, who demanded accountability for the social and environmental impact of engineering developments, and played a role in replacing in the US professional code the primacy of engineers' duty towards the employer with the duty towards society (Weil, 1984; Mitcham, 2009), or the more recent March against Climate Change.
- (ii) The second macroethical duty is to promote a value driven stance that requires members of collective groups to reflect on the society engineering can develop (Son, 2008). This might refer to an active involvement in formulating rules and regulations that promote socially just practices (Martin and Schinzinger, 2013) or protocols for the development of technologies that are congruent with egalitarian and democratic values (Vanderburg, 1989). The scope of macroethical duties would go beyond the physical consequences of engineering artefacts as to include also its nonphysical consequences, such as globalization or inequality (Hansson 2017).

Key words: engineering ethics, collective responsibility, engineering duties

Niels Martens: Semantic realism

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h15-11h45 at Ambacht

Abstract

Scientific realism about unobservable entities has three dimensions; it requires three types of commitment. The first, metaphysical dimension is concerned with belief in a mind-independent external world. The second, semantic dimension, is concerned with whether the unobservable terms postulated by scientific theories, say electrons, are a) well-defined, and b) should be understood literally. The third, epistemological dimension considers, roughly speaking, whether we should be optimistic or pessimistic about science being able to determine the truth of claims about specific unobservables.

Much of the literature a) assumes that it only makes sense to consider the epistemological dimension once the semantic dimension has been affirmed; b) focuses on principled, universal, non-naturalistic motivations for semantic anti-realism (i.e. violation of the semantic commitment), and c) focuses on issues of reference change that threaten semantic realism, rather than on the prior issue of whether the reference was ever well-defined. In this paper I push back against all three claims by considering a range of case studies: dark matter, dark energy, genes, singularities and symmetry-to-reality inferences. Each of these cases constitute an example of a well-confirmed theory with a central unobservable entity or structure that is semantically lacking, albeit in different ways in each of the case studies. I contend that the specific empirical and theoretical contexts of each of these unobservables should commit us to selective (potentially only temporary) semantic anti-realism about those unobservables (contra, for instance, Dewar's qualified realism). At the same time we will see that this failure to satisfy the semantic dimension as of right now is compatible with either affirming or violating the epistemological dimension of realism about those same unobservables.

Key words:

philosophy of physics, metaphysics, scientific realism, dark matter, genes, dark energy, symmetries, semantics

Basil Nyaku: Max Scheler's concept of humility in relations to the Other

| Saturday 4th of December, 13h45- 14h15 at Ambacht

Abstract

In this paper I explore the nature and implications of the concept of humility for otherness, as developed primarily in the phenomenological works of the German philosopher Max Scheler (1874 –1928). Scheler is one of the understudied pioneers of the phenomenological movement at the beginning of the 20th century, for whom phenomenology is an attitude instead of a method.

Scheler's account of humility (*Dienmut*), as a mode of love, suggests that humility, like love, is also a given, fundamental and non-formal concept which constitutes an essential part of the structure of human beings and their experience in the world. This rather radical view of a non-formal, non-volitional, concept of humility that is experienced in the human emotional sphere is different from other formal, intellectual, notions of humility that stem from the subjective sphere of the human ego. Examples of formal views of humility are found in concepts such as intellectual humility, epistemological humility, or doctrinal humility, in most of which humility is mainly conceived of as a subject's awareness of the limitations of their capabilities, or their indifference to status, etc. (See for example Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood (2007), Mark Button (2005), Catherine Conille (2013), Kent Dunnington (2017), James Kellenberger (2010), Norvin Richards (1988), just to mention a few).

I will focus in this paper on Scheler's concept of humility as a given mode of a fundamental, transcendental and preexisting, concept of love. That is, humility understood as a spiritual drive at the core of human beings. I will argue that Scheler conceives of this humility as a movement, motivated by love, to serve all things. This movement enables the realization of values that transcend the spatio-temporal world, and structure human experience in the world. I will further argue that Scheler's humility, as movement, provides the grounds for participating in Otherness—for example the postcolonial Other—and as such it can be interpreted as providing a broad understanding of humanity as a whole. My emphasis will therefore not be on phenomenology per se, nor will I be providing a historiographical account of Scheler's thought. Rather, I will focus on his contribution to the development of the concept of humility as service.

I believe this paper will provide more insight not only into the essential structure of humility, but it will also provide an opportunity to take a fresh look at the presuppositions that underlie the concept of the Other as developed by thinkers such as Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida.

Key words: Max Scheler, Love, Humility, Movement, Other, Post-colonial

Thomas Nys and Bart Engelen: Moral Nudging: Oxymoron or Imperative?

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h00-12h30 at Textiel

Abstract

Although the initial focus was on paternalistic nudges (promoting the wellbeing of nudgees; Thaler & Sunstein 2008), the literature now also discusses nudges that can be labeled as prosocial nudges (e.g. donating to charities; Capraro et al 2019), civic nudges (e.g. paying taxes; John et al 2009; Niker 2018) and green nudges (e.g. reducing energy or water consumption; Byerly et al 2018). Relatively little attention has been paid, however, to what we call 'moral nudges': deliberate nudging techniques aimed at facilitating, encouraging and, if successful, promoting moral thinking, feeling and acting amongst nudgees.

After defining nudging as deliberately designing choice environments, we analyze how this plausibly relates to morality (section 1). Next, we provide some tentative examples of moral nudges, borrowing from the existing literature (e.g. Bohnet 2016; Capraro et al 2019; Ramirez et al 2021) as well as adding some ourselves (section 2).

In section 3, we discuss and largely defuse worries about moral nudging being an oxymoron. The main worry is that nudging techniques are antithetical to and undermine specific kinds of motives or attitudes that are arguably needed for genuine moral thinking, feeling and acting (e.g. Furedi 2011). The quasi-automaticity, thoughtlessness and effortlessness (of the heuristics and biases) that nudges tap into is arguably at odds with the autonomy, reflectiveness, responsibility and authenticity that genuine moral decision-making supposedly requires. We tease out the different reasons why nudging and morality are arguably at odds with each other, while putting aside those that have already been investigated in the literature (i.e. issues related to autonomy and responsibility; e.g. Alfano & Robichaud 2018). We focus on the objection that moral nudges are an oxymoron because nudges inhibit people from doing what morality requires, i.e. doing the right thing for the right reasons. While granting that there are clear constraints on (legitimate) moral nudging, we argue that most nudges, when designed and implemented wisely, do not necessarily undermine this kind of attentiveness to the right reasons (pace e.g. Waldron 2014), nor do they crowd out intrinsic motivation (Gråd et al 2021) or lead to uncritically accepting whatever bias exists.

Having shown that moral nudging is possible, we next discuss its potential normative benefits in promoting morality (section 4). Building on existing literature on (Mill's notion of) "moral ethology" (Ball 2000) and recent conceptions of "public ecology" (Hurley 2011), we argue that thinking about how to design what we call a 'moral ecology' is a crucial and indispensable part of living a good. Because doing the right thing can be hard, and ethics can demand that we go against (instead of go along with) our quasi-automatic responses, choice architectures that facilitate instead of inhibit acting morally are crucial. Designing choice architectures that largely avoid or prevent immoral behavior and that help focus scarce cognitive resources on what really matters is key. Moral nudging then is arguably an imperative, not an oxymoron.

Key words: Nudging, Morality, behavioral science, autonomy, responsibility, Mill

Rutger van Oeveren: In Defense of the De Re View of Moral Praiseworthiness

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00-16h30 at Textiel

Abstract

It is commonly assumed that an agent is morally praiseworthy for performing a right act only if it is not an accident that she performed the right act. That is, the act should be non-accidentally right. To illustrate using an example by Kant: when a grocer is motivated to put fair prices by self-interest only, then his doing the right thing is merely accidental. This case suggests that one way in which an act can be merely accidentally right is by performing it for the wrong reasons. So what are the right reasons to perform a morally right act?

On the De Dicto View, the only right reason to perform the right act is the very fact that it is right. Therefore, an agent is morally praiseworthy for an act *only if* it is performed for the very fact that it is right. Others deny this, holding that an agent is morally praiseworthy for an act *if* it is performed for its right-making features (e.g. “the act is fair”). Importantly, one can act on such reasons without knowing or believing that the act is the right thing to do. Call this the De Re View.

Zoë Johnson King (2020) levels a powerful objection against the De Re View. Starting from non-moral cases, she argues that “someone accidentally As if she has no idea that she is performing an act of type A when she does so.” Johnson King then extrapolates from non-moral cases to moral cases: “[s]omeone accidentally does the right thing if she has no idea that she is performing a morally right act when she does so.” It would follow that acting for an act’s right-making features (e.g. its fairness) is not sufficient for moral praiseworthiness.

I first argue that Johnson King’s cases fail to support her view that someone accidentally As if she has no idea that she is Aing. I present two cases in which the first agent accidentally and the second agent non-accidentally reads an aesthetically superior book, despite both not having any idea that they are reading an aesthetically superior book. This implies, contra Johnson King, that it is possible that someone non-accidentally As despite having no idea that she is Aing. I then extrapolate to the moral case, arguing that an agent can non-accidentally perform the right act despite not having any idea that it is the right act. In particular, she can do so by acting for the right-making features of the act (e.g. “it is fair”), thereby putting the De Re View back into play.

I also suggest and expand on one possible explanation of the difference between accidentally and non-accidentally Aing, an explanation in terms of (the lack of) a conceptual connection between the reasons agents act on and that act being of type A. For example, “the act is fair” is conceptually connected with “the act is right”, “the act is in my best interest” is not.

Key words:

moral praiseworthiness, accidentally right action, right reasons, right de re, right de dicto

Ryan Oomen: Love as Conflict: The Hegelian Structure of Sartre's and Žižek's concept of love

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15- 12h45 at Textiel

Abstract

Since Plato's Symposium, the question of love has been a central topic of philosophical reflection. In contrast to the romantic view of love as a matter of blissful infatuation and unification, Jean-Paul Sartre and Slavoj Žižek present love as a disruptive phenomenon that violently alters our social interaction, thereby raising immediate and practical concerns about freedom and autonomy. Although Sartre and Žižek significantly differ in their philosophical views, which contain distinctive approaches to the dialectic of self and Other, they share the motif of 'love as conflict', stating that love constitutes a tragic impasse that cannot be overcome by the unification of lover and beloved.

The goal of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of the conception of 'love as conflict' in Sartre's *Being And Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (2003) and Žižek's *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and The Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (2012). I will do so by asking, 'what is love's underlying theoretical structure and what are the implications if love is inherently conflictual?'. My wider aim is, first, to advance the discussion on Sartre's phenomenological ontology, as his conception of love relations reveals a 'disintegrated Hegelianism'. Second, to contribute to the systematization of Žižek's work on love as — even though Žižek himself often mentions 'love' — its elaboration is rather fragmented throughout his oeuvre.

More specifically, I will survey the motif of 'love as conflict', first, by examining Sartre's theoretical model of love in his *Being And Nothingness* (2003), while contending that his concept of love contains a Hegelian structure. Second, I will assess how this Hegelian structure relates to Žižek's idea of love, while asserting that Žižek's idea of love is structurally similar to his conception of trauma. Furthermore, I will confront Sartre's phenomenologically limited conception of relationships with Žižek's disparate conception of intersubjectivity.

My investigation shows that there is a paradox regarding love relations, according to Sartre and Žižek, which suggests that love is inherently antagonistic and that this antagonism manifests itself as multiplicity, thus denying the possibility of love as a harmonious affair as it consistently ends up as a passion divided against itself.

Key words:

Conflict, Dialectics, Love, Jean-Paul Sartre, Slavoj Žižek

Rik Peels: Vice explanations for extreme behavior and extreme belief

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30- 12h00 at Ambacht

Abstract

An important issue in the literature on various phenomena that are in some sense 'extreme', such as conspiricism, fundamentalism, extremism, fanaticism, and terrorism, is whether we can explain the extreme behavior and extreme beliefs that they involve. Among the explanations of such extreme behavior and extreme beliefs are so-called \neg vice explanations. These appeal to subjects' character traits, both moral vices, like arrogance and vengefulness, and cognitive vices, closed-mindedness, and dogmatism. Yet, such vice explanations hold water only if they can meet the so-called situationist challenge, which argues on the basis of various experiments that either there are no vices or that they are not robust. Behavior and belief, so is the idea, are much better explained by appeal to numerous irrelevant situational factors, like one's mood or how orderly one's environment is. This paper explores the situationist challenge to vice explanations for extreme behavior and extreme beliefs in more detail by assessing the empirical evidence, analyzing the argumentation based on it, and drawing conclusions for where this leaves vice explanations. The main conclusion is that vice explanations for extreme behavior and extreme beliefs need to be fine-tuned on various points, but that there is no reason to think that they have been discredited by empirical evidence. Moreover, sensitivity is needed for distinguishing when vice explanations are appropriate, when appeal to situational factors is more fitting, and when the two can be combined.

Key words:

Explanation, Extremism, Fundamentalism, Situationism, Terrorism, Vice, Virtue

Ibo van de Poel: Value realism and the possibility of value change

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15- 12h45 at Boardroom

Abstract

In recent years, several authors have discussed the possibility of moral change, moral revolutions or value change. Against this, it may be argued that moral values cannot change. It seems that at least moral realists or value realists would need to deny the possibility of value change. But do they? The answer will, at least in part, depend on how one characterizes value realism.

I propose to distinguish between two views on value realism. On the first, values are in the world; more specifically this view holds that there are (non-natural) value properties that supervene on natural properties. For example, Oddie (2005) holds that there are value properties in the world that supervene on, but cannot be reduced to, natural properties. According to this view, value bearers (state-of-affairs) are instantiations of value properties. Since such value properties supervene on natural properties, there cannot be a change in value properties without a change in natural properties. If we take natural properties to be given, as abstract universals, it would follow that value properties, and hence values, cannot change.

The second view holds that there are no value properties, but only natural properties. On this view, values may be understood as normative concepts that (objectively) refer to natural properties, but their normativity is in the representation, not in the world. Such a view is, for example, defended by Eklund (2017), which characterizes it as 'broadly realist'. While this view holds that values have an objective referent, it does not locate their normativity in the world (like the first view) but in the representation. Since different concepts may refer to the same referent, conceptual value change would seem possible, even if natural properties cannot change.

I will argue that both views have theoretical shortcomings. The first view may successfully show that there are second-order properties, but it does not clarify what makes these properties normative (value) properties. The second view would seem to deny the commonly accepted idea that values supervene on natural properties. I then argue that these shortcomings can be overcome by combining both views into a new view that has room for both value properties and value concepts.

On this combined view, value properties are irreducible second-order properties that supervene on natural properties (following Oddie) which are normative due to what Eklund calls their normative role. Value concepts are then mental representations of such value properties. On this combined view, value properties cannot change although we may discover new ones over time. Value concepts can change, both in the sense that we may introduce new value concepts to refer to newly discovered value properties, as well as in the sense that there may be new value concepts with the same referent as existing ones but with a new meaning.

Key words: value, moral change, moral realism

Paul Rehren: Why using behavioral research to make philosophical points is difficult

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00- 16h30 at Boardroom

Abstract

Today, philosophers routinely appeal to empirical results from the behavioral sciences (especially psychology and neuroscience) in order to make philosophical points. While I am wholeheartedly in favor of this development, it also comes with new challenges. One challenge that has received significant attention is that in order for behavioral research to be useful for philosophical arguments, it has to be done right. This challenge looms particularly large in light of the replication crisis in psychology, where for over a decade, strong criticisms of virtually every aspect of the science have been piling up, including data collection, management and analysis, study design, and publishing (for overviews, Fidler and Wilcox 2018; Shrout and Rodgers 2018). Many philosophers have taken note of this, and have cautioned against uncritically drawing on behavioral results in philosophical arguments (e.g. Cova et al. 2018; Polonioli 2017; Polonioli et al. 2018; Seyedsayamdost 2015; Strickland and Suben 2012; Stuart, Colaço, and Machery 2019).

Another set of challenges, however, has flown much more under the radar, despite being at least as important. A study can be methodologically sound, but its results can still fail to be at all useful for making a philosophical argument. The reason is that there are often large gaps between what a study shows and what it would have to show in order to support or undermine the descriptive premise(s) involved in the philosophical argument. Most notably, a behavioral study can:

1. be about a different subject matter than the premise(s); for example, the premise is about people's intuitions, but the study does not reveal anything about people's intuitions (Bengson 2013; Cullen 2010; Kauppinen 2007).
2. demonstrate an effect that is much smaller or of a different shape than what is claimed in the premise(s); for example, the premise states that emotions play a major role in moral judgment, but studies only find a tiny effect of the manipulation of emotion on moral judgment (May 2014).
3. have much smaller scope than the premise(s); for example, the premise states that a large proportion of moral judgments is affected by framing effects, but studies only demonstrate an effect of framing on judgments about sacrificial moral dilemmas.

In my paper, I explain and illustrate each challenge. I then argue that due to the nature of the descriptive premises that philosophers tend to use in their arguments, all three challenges are likely to affect many philosophical arguments (that contain empirical premises). I end with the suggestion that while philosophers should continue to use behavioral results in their work, they would frequently do well to do be more cautious and less confident when doing so.

Key words: philosophical method, empirically-informed philosophy, experimental philosophy, psychology, neuroscience

Noelia Iranzo Ribera: Counternomic Reasoning as Make-Believe

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00- 12h30 at Ambacht

Abstract

The aim of this talk is to motivate an account of counternomics in terms of make-believe, the type of imagination employed in Walton's (1990) pretense theory of fiction and recently carried over to fiction views of models, most notably by Frigg (2010), Nguyen & Frigg (2020), and Frigg & Salis (2020). Why counternomics? Counternomics are counterfactual conditionals with nomologically impossible antecedents; they have a looser connection to the features of the actual world than regular counterfactuals. Despite their appeal to nomological impossibilities, they pervade scientific practice: they inform scientific explanations, reasoning about superseded theories, and above all else, model-based reasoning (Tan 2019, pp. 37-38). In short, they are an interesting subset to focus on.

Moreover, they highlight the shortcomings and aggravate the prospects for the semantic analyses of counterfactuals proposed by Stalnaker (1968) and Lewis (1973), which have traditionally been used to assign truth-values to counterfactuals. I argue that there are several problems with these semantic accounts. In a nutshell, the resulting implicit epistemology of modality is underdeveloped (Kment 2006, Roca-Royes 2012), possible worlds contain too much information for successful counterfactual evaluation (Salis & Frigg 2020), and they offer a bad reconstruction of counternomic reasoning in practice. Furthermore, and specific to counternomics, when conjoined with the view that laws of nature are metaphysically necessary possible worlds semantics output vacuous counternomic truths, as there are no possible worlds where the laws are violated (excluding impossible worlds).

For the above reasons I propose to turn to the underexplored strategy of examining counternomics through the lens of fiction as imagination, where imagination is understood as pretense in terms of games of make-believe à la Walton (1990). Briefly, games of make-believe are initiated by props, objects or texts which trigger some direct imaginings, which together with principles of generation (PGs) prescribe additional imaginings. Applied to counternomics, make-believe results in the following framework: their antecedents become prescriptions to engage in legitimate pretenses, where legitimacy is no other than the demand that these imaginings serve scientific aims such as driving empirical discovery or enhancing theoretical understanding.

In conclusion, what makes fiction attractive is its insensitiveness to the modal status or truth of counternomics' antecedents as well as its accurate rational reconstruction of counternomic reasoning. However, it has been resisted on the basis that it leads to a dualism about truth. In this case, counternomics are fictionally true (f-true) iff their consequents are prescribed for imagination by their antecedents and pertinent PGs (Kimpton-Nye 2020), which in the case of science are, I defend, reality-oriented principles. Via an example, I show that this dualism is innocuous, and that fictional truths are more connected to truths simpliciter than expected.

Key words: counternomics, Fiction, possible worlds, truth

Leon van Rijsbergen: Flawless Moral Disagreement in Kantian Moral Theory?: A Critique of Flikschuh's Kantian Contextualist Relativism

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30- 17h00 at Terra

Abstract

Kant conceives of the rational human being as a free, autonomous person that is capable of acting in accord with self-legislated moral principles. For most of his career, Kant problematically believed that only white men were capable of personifying this ideal. In recent years, anthropologically-informed critics have gone even further than this, suggesting that Kant's conception of the rational human being as such is modeled on a specific, not universally representative variant of personhood. If this is true, there may be devastating consequences for Kant's (and Kantians') moral universalist aspirations. After all, the categorical imperative is commonly thought to be universally authoritative for all finite beings. If this idea relies on a conception of a rational finite agent that is not universally representative, the categorical imperative is likely not to be universally authoritative either.

In response to this concern, Katrin Flikschuh proposes an interpretation of Kantian ethics that she takes to be more 'sensitive to context' than common moral universalistic interpretations, and thereby actually applicable on a global scale. Flikschuh defends a form of Kantian contextualist relativism. In short, she maintains that the idea of the categorical imperative as the universal form of moral reasoning is compatible with the thesis that there can be flawless, substantive differences in the moral judgments that people arrive at. In other words, while the universal purpose of moral deliberation is to figure out whether a maxim can at the same time be willed as a universal law (and thereby permissible or forbidden to act upon), people can flawlessly arrive at opposing judgments. Flikschuh's argumentation relies heavily on Kant's emphasis that moral judgment involves autonomous self-legislation from the first-person perspective, and on the idea that since situational contexts differ, people will likely arrive at divergent self-legislated moral judgments.

This paper investigates whether Flikschuh's Kantian contextualist relativism is in a better position to leave room for cultural and agential diversity than Kantian universalism. I argue that while the former certainly is more 'flexible' than the latter, this flexibility comes at the cost of neglecting core components of Kantian ethics. Among these are the idea that humanity must always be used as an end in itself, the notion that a rational contradiction in moral deliberation pertains to a rational impossibility, and the idea that all agents must be conceived as members in a realm of ends under common moral laws. Furthermore, I will show that this heavy cost is unnecessary to make, because the categorical imperative-test can leave ample room for cultural and agential diversity on a Kantian universalist account of morality.

Key words:

Kantian ethics, Moral universalism, Moral relativism, Katrin Flikschuh

Barend de Rooij: A Functionalist Account of Group Character

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30- 17h00 at Textiel

Abstract

In our everyday linguistic practices, we frequently use the language of virtue and vice to evaluate the conduct of various kinds of social groups. For instance, we may commend fire brigades for their bravery, congratulate an hiring committee for its open-mindedness, or blame unscrupulous corporations for their greed. Despite a rich history of philosophical analysis of such character-based evaluations in the case of individual agents, we know relatively little about the metaphysical status of character-based evaluations applied to group agents. Using novel insights about the nature of group agency, I argue that we can often characterize the collective character of group agents as virtuous or vicious in its own right – that is, qua group, independently of the character of its members. On the functionalist account of group character I defend, collective virtues and vices arise when organizations or other collective actors are organized so as to function in a virtuous or vicious way.

My argument proceeds in three stages. I first consider – and reject – a summativist analysis of group character, according to which collective virtues and vices are simply aggregates of individual character traits. I argue that summativists fail to account for so-called ‘divergence cases’ in which traits realized at the collective level come apart from the traits of individual members in interesting ways. This motivates the search for a non-summativist (or inflationary) account of group character, according to which group agents can be the bearer of virtues and vices as subjects in their own right. One such account has been suggested by Miranda Fricker, who argues that we can model group character using Margaret Gilbert’s plural subject theory. While we find in Fricker’s account a promising point of departure, I argue – in the second stage of my argument – that it faces two objections. First, plural subject accounts run the risk of making what should be a significant achievement – the acquisition of virtue (or indeed vice) – too easy for groups to realize. Second, plural virtues and vices are often unstable, and therefore no virtues or vices in the traditional sense of the word. Drawing on the work of Christian List and Philip Pettit, I conclude by showing how a functionalist analysis of group character avoids both objections and provides a compelling account of group character in its own right.

Key words:

virtue theory, group virtue, group agency, social ontology, functionalism

Marcello Ruta: Explicating Reasons in the Right Moment: The Kairological and Improvisatory Dimensions of Recollection in Robert Brandom's Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00- 17h30 at Terra

Abstract

Brandom's reading of Hegel's Phenomenology is based, among others, on the opposition between two notions of human agency, one pre-modern, tragic and heroic, and one characterizing modernity, as embodying the "rise of subjectivity". While in the heroic agency the doer takes responsibility for whatever consequences her/his action entails, the modern notion of agency limits the responsibility to the intentional part of the action (Brandom 2019: 626).

According to Brandom, such an opposition should be overcome by a post-modern, "neoheroic" notion of agency (Brandom 2019: 756). The main difference between this post-modern notion of heroic agency and the pre-modern one consists in the elimination of the tragic character of it, as the non-envisaged consequences are not anymore seen as the result of the force of the irrational and blind destiny; while they are initially regarded as simple contingencies, it is the task of the human community to explicate the reasons which were underlying them (Brandom 2019: 756). Such a recollective activity is repeatedly defined by Brandom as the activity of "turning a past into a history" (Brandom 2019: 17, 102, 439, 681).

An aspect, which, in my view, deserves most attention in such activity, is the temporal one: the performance of recollection, as explicating the historical reasons of an apparently irrational past, can give very different results according to the moment in which it is executed. Traditions can be constructed and reconstructed not whenever and wherever, but in the right moments and in the right places. Recollection is in this respect the grasping of an opportunity, and different historical situations offer different recollective opportunities. This is what I define as the kairological dimension of recollection.

There is more than that: the theoretical interest of such dimension consists, among others, in stressing the improvisatory character of the Hegelian notion of human agency in general, at least in Brandom's interpretation of it, as well as, more specifically, of the recollective activity of making history, conceived as the collective performance in which human communities are steadily engaged: such performance is not only constantly at risk of failure, as improvisational performances are, but its chances of success heavily depends on both the capacity of identifying past mistakes as present opportunities, as well as in choosing the right moment of execution (Vollzug) of it.

The main aim of this presentation is therefore double: on the one side, to investigate the kairological aspect of recollection; on the other side, to stress the improvisatory character of it, as well as of human agency in general, according to the Hegelian conception of it as interpreted by Brandom. The theoretical yields of such operation consist, among others, in the possibility

of making use of a series of concepts formulated in these decades in the studies dedicated to improvisation (where musical improvisation plays the role of paradigmatic case), which can thereby become precious hermeneutical tools for a further, Brandom-inspired reading of the Hegelian text.

Key words:

Brandom, Hegel, Recollection, Improvisation, Kairological Time

Mateo Sanchez: Philosophy in Mental Health: Psychedelic Therapy as Reality Transformation

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30- 12h00 at Boardroom

Abstract: This paper concerns the application of philosophy to the domain of mental health issues, with special regards to the growing popularity of the use of psychedelic drugs in the treatment of depression. From the perspective of embodied subjectivity proper to phenomenological psychiatry, I argue that psychedelic therapy operates through a process of 'immersive ecstasy' through which it transforms not only the self but reality itself. Betraying the recurring theme of 'connection' as its main mechanism of action, popular approaches to psychedelic therapy remain within an individualist thoughtspace. From this perspective, psychedelic experiences occur inside an individual's brain or mind and therefore do not bear on external reality. This is premised on a dualism which disconnects the self from the world (and from others), and on the notion that, while our perception of it might change, reality remains the same. Far from describing our usual form of experience, however, this disconnection from the world that makes it appear as bereft of possibilities is characteristic of depression. Therefore, an account of subjectivity that is premised on connection seems like a healthier place to start.

Opposed to the idea that experience is somehow internal, philosophical phenomenology asserts that experience expresses our contact with the world in which we are situated through our bodies. This means that body and world are open to, rather than closed off from, each other. This openness allows the body to extend beyond its physical boundaries and to respond to the possibilities for action the world offers. Phenomenological psychiatrist Matthew Ratcliffe argues that our 'sense of reality' is constituted by 'existential feelings', or 'moods', comprising both a bodily feeling and a way of finding oneself in the world which makes some things possible and not others. Thus, even as physical objects appear the same, our sense of reality undergoes shifts (contractions, expansions, disorientations...) according to what interactions with the world we experience as possible. For example, one might relate to the very same physical person from depressed reality from which is missing the possibility of a trusting connection with them, or from a psychedelic reality where interpersonal possibilities are heightened. My argument is that producing an altered perception that viscerally reveals the world can be different, psychedelics change the possibility space we inhabit, and therefore our sense of reality.

On top of showing us the relevance of philosophy in other fields, This allows us to answer several related questions pertaining to psychedelic therapy, like for example why they have long-lasting effects after the dosing session or why they transform reality rather than merely amplify what is 'already there'. Immersive ecstasy is the name for the process through which we gain a perspective on ourselves, not by detaching ourselves from the world, but by a deep engagement with how else reality can be. Psychedelic consciousness-expansion is thus a very much embodied and material phenomenon which has therapeutic effects insofar as, in direct contrast to the shrinkage proper of depression, it enlarges our reality and how we find ourselves in it.

Key words: Phenomenology, Therapy, Psychedelics, Depression, Reality

Liesbeth Schoonheim: Posters, protests, and reclaiming the streets

| Saturday 4th of December, 13h45- 14h15 at Beton

Abstract

Street protests create spaces of appearance (Arendt) that galvanize public support for fighting hitherto hidden forms of precarity and oppression. Put in these terms, street protests raise questions about their duration, as they rely on the physical proximity of people; they also raise concerns about who can and cannot participate in this space of appearance and in what way, as public space is subject to various forms of policing (Butler). In this paper, I investigate these limits of embodied resistance by looking at a different form of street protest, namely the feminist collectives that put up posters in the streets of Brussels denouncing gender- and sex-based violence. Some of these target street harassment by imploring passers-by to “laisse[r] les filles tranquilles”, while others focus on femicide, publishing the name of victims of domestic violence. In different ways, these interventions relate isolated and privatized experiences of violence to patriarchal structures. First, using Arendt’s political phenomenology, I argue that these artefacts are intended as a (semi-)permanent mark on the public space; and they invoke the victims of various forms of gender- and sex-based violence, reclaiming the streets as a site of commemoration and of free movement. Secondly, I show how they also presuppose passers-by that stop, read and respond to them. I suggest this interpellation should be understood as a moment of critique, in the sense in which critical phenomenologists (Guenther, Al-Saji, Salamon) have defined it as the suspension of everyday comportment and the exposure and contestation of historically contingent structures of oppression. Thirdly, I argue (contra Arendt) that protest does not always require the physical proximity of a group of people engaging in purposeful action-in-concert, but can also develop as a series (Sartre, Young), in this case, as the interpellation of passers-by as possible agents of social change, engaging in acts of indignant remembrance and of leaving women and other targeted groups alone. To summarize, these posters negotiate the limits to embodied resistance while granting visibility to those who are excluded or marginalized in public space.

Key words: feminism, critical phenomenology, violence

Jeroen Smid: Can Tib+Tail lose her tail?

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00-12h30 at Kunst

Abstract

The standard definitions of ‘mereological fusion’ are quiet about modal matters: they do not suggest that a fusion has its parts essentially (van Inwagen 2016). Yet, especially in the context of classical mereology, it is commonly held that fusions do have their parts essentially (Baker 2008, p. 17; Jago 2021, p. 1442; Koslicki 2008, p. 24; Simon 1987, p. 115; Uzquiano 2014). In particular, many philosophers think that any modal classical mereology should treat ‘is the fusion of such-and-such objects’ as a rigid designator. In this talk I identify three reasons why many philosophers think any modal classical mereology should treat ‘is the fusion of such-and-such objects’ as a rigid designator. I argue that they are all bad reasons.

The first reason is that classical mereology creates a tight link between identity and composition (Uzquiano 2014). Since identity holds necessarily, being a fusion of such-and-such objects should also necessarily. This argument fails to convince because identity is subject to Leibniz’s Law whereas not everything that is true of a fusion of objects is true of the objects it fuses. Crucially, an unrestricted version of Leibniz’s Law is key to derive the necessity of identity. The analogy between identity and composition thus breaks down at the most crucial point.

The second reason is that classical mereology is similar to set theory (Jago 2021, p. 1442ff). Sets have their members essentially (it seems), so fusions have their parts essentially too. This argument by analogy breaks down because, first, the nature of the two objects is different. For example, sets are commonly thought to be abstract irrespective of the nature of their elements, whereas fusions are thought to be as concrete or abstract as their parts. Second, classical mereology and set theory play different theoretical roles. Mereologists aim to systematise the part–whole relation, hence if we think wholes can change parts, this gives mereologists a reason to treat fusions as mereologically flexible. Set theorists do not aim to systematise a pre-theoretical membership relation; if we think membership is a non-extensional relation, this provides no reason for a set theorist to amend some axioms of, say, Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory.

The final reason offered is that this is the only principled choice when it comes to deciding the modal profile of fusions: ‘it is difficult to think of any other principled alternative choice’ (Uzquiano 2014, p. 46). This is a false dilemma. It might be elegant, in some sense, to hold that all fusions have the same modal profile, but if wholes are fusions, then there is no reason to think that all fusions have the same modal profile because not all wholes have the same modal profile. I finish by proposing a diagnosis for the confusion about the modal status of mereological fusions. Those who insist that the mereological fusion of, say, Tib and Tail cannot lose Tail as a part confuse the singular term ‘Tib+Tail’ with the plural term ‘Tib and Tail’. Only this latter term rigidly designates.

Key words: metaphysics, Parthood, mereology, modality

Titus Stahl: Ideological Hope

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15- 12h45 at Beton

Abstract

In political theory, much attention has been dedicated to the influence of distorted beliefs on people's political agency. In particular, in the critical theory tradition, the idea has become widely accepted that unjust social and political orders can only survive if some citizens have a specific kind of false belief about their legitimacy, namely ideological beliefs that are in some sense defective beyond mere falsity. Similarly, we can also make sense of the idea that people might have unreasonable, ideological desires or preferences.

In my paper, I will argue that not only beliefs and desires can be ideological but also people's hopes. This is important because – as many theorists from Hobbes and Spinoza to Ernst Bloch have noted – political reality is not only influenced by what people believe and desire, but also by what they hope. Sometimes, unjust social structures may therefore be able to avoid scrutiny by distorting and shaping people's hopes.

This argument faces two major problems, however. First, some argue that we can analyze hopes as combinations of beliefs and desires. Then, ideological hope would not form a distinct phenomenon but rather be a result of the ideological distortion of its component parts. Second, some argue that hopes are not to the same degree subject to requirements of rationality as beliefs and (perhaps) desires. As the charge of ideology depends on a negative evaluation, this might undercut the project of an ideology critique of hope.

In my paper, I will show that both problems are the result of a misunderstanding of the nature and rationality of hope. First, while some hopes are ideological insofar they incorporate ideological beliefs and/or desires, hope is more than a mere combination of these elements but centrally involves a certain commitment towards the idea that incorporating one's desires into one's future agency is justified. People can be brought to falsely believe that they are justified to do this based on ideological distortions of the concepts that they use. The same argument also shows that the second problem results from a misunderstanding: While hopes depend to a lower degree on evidence for the beliefs they involve than other attitudes, they are subject to rational evaluation, since we can reasonably ask whether our agency ought to be guided by certain hopes or not. These arguments lead to the conclusion that, in political theory, we ought to scrutinize how certain social arrangements shape the way in which we and others hope.

Key words:

Hope, ideology, political theory

Naomi van Steenbergen: Ought we to be happy with less?

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h30- 13h00 at Textiel

Abstract

In a context of threatened planetary boundaries and unjustifiable inequalities, it would be great if those with the problematic power to endanger others through their consumption were simply happy with less. Happy not to buy that extra pair of shoes. Happy to eat less meat and consume less dairy. Happy to travel less. Happy to share more. Given the impact of consumption and emissions, consuming and emitting less is generally a good thing. And if we are truly happy to consume and emit less, rather than doing so begrudgingly, we are more likely to continue our good practices and inspire others to do the same. Nonetheless, it is far from evident that being happy with less is a moral duty, a responsibility, something we ought to do or can (in a strong sense of the word) expect of ourselves or others. One complication might arise if we consider ought to imply can. Is it even realistic to expect people to change how they feel about doing certain things? And even if it is possible to change the way one feels about one's actions, isn't this a needlessly complicating detour compared to simply focusing on the actions themselves? Moreover, a moral duty to be happy with less might seem excessively demanding. It might be one thing to expect ourselves and others to do with less; the expectation to not only consume and emit less, but on top of that to feel a certain way about it might seem extreme and perhaps also simply the wrong kind of duty. Shouldn't one's feelings be protected from moral demands? Isn't there a special kind of autonomy or freedom connected to our emotions? I will argue that while these complications are to be taken seriously, being happy with less is a virtue that we ought to try to cultivate if it seems at all likely that we might make some progress in doing so.

Key words:

Virtue ethics, Emotions, Moral psychology

Merel Talbi: Regulating Disinformation: An Epistemic-Militant Democratic Justification

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30- 17h00 at Beton

Abstract: With increasing circulation of untrue information in the public sphere, scholars from various disciplines have identified disinformation and fake news as a threat to democracy. While creating laws or regulations to limit or control disinformation may sound appealing to those who fear its disruptive effects, doing so may lead to unjustified limitations of freedom of expression. In considering whether and when this limitation of freedom of expression may be permissible, legal scholars and legislators have focused mostly on threats to democracy in the form of misinformation directly influencing elections or referendums, as for example in French or Taiwanese law (Landman 2018; Chen 2018). This is also in line with attempts to regulate disinformation based on article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, which allows for the limitation of freedom of speech in situations of pressing social need in a democratic society (art. 10 paragraph 2 ECHR). Earlier jurisprudence by the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Salov v. Ukraine* (2015) has shown the court to be hesitant in limiting freedom of expression, also because it was difficult to prove that the defendant intended to influence elections through spreading disinformation.

Considerations from the tradition of militant democracy prove a fruitful avenue for further exploring justifications for limiting freedom of expression to protect democracy against disinformation. In light of Rijkema's (2018) political-philosophical justification for militant democracy, it can be said that disinformation interferes with democracy's primary epistemic goal: to allow citizens to revise incorrect prior decision-making, also outside of elections. If we take this to be democracy's prime goal, disinformation functions as an obstacle by making it harder for citizens to identify and use trustworthy information to correct earlier political decisions. This analysis is in line with theories from epistemic democracy, that argue the democratic system is best suited to effectively combine and use the knowledge of a plural and diverse community to come to correct decisions (Landmore 2012). However, many are also critical of this claim. Epistocrats (Brennan 2016) claim that citizens are not epistemically suited to rule themselves due to having insufficient knowledge to do so, while the epistemic injustice literature warns that the knowledge of certain marginalized groups in society is structurally undervalued – to the point of their views not being acknowledged in democratic deliberation (Fricker 2007).

While these criticisms in part discount the claim that democracies are the best system of government for epistemic reasons, both critiques also become more pressing in situations of disinformation. The spread of fake news may make an epistemically unsophisticated populace even more prone to erroneous judgments, while the nefarious propagation of racist, sexist, or otherwise biased information about certain groups in society may increase epistemic injustice. In light of these exacerbating effects, arguments from the tradition of militant democracy may indeed prompt legal scholars to think further on possibilities to regulate disinformation, and to acknowledge its corrosive influence on the epistemic function of democracy.

Key words: Disinformation, Freedom of expression, Legal theory, Militant democracy, Epistemic democracy, Epistemic injustice

Ole Thijs and Vincent Blok: Rehabilitating locality in philosophy of technology: the case of sustainable technology

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00- 12h30 at Boardroom

Abstract

Philosophers of technology such as Stiegler argue that in the current 'globalized' age, where modern technology constitutes a technosphere, there is no room for locality, ethnic groups or ecosystems as determining factors of technology anymore. An example of anti-local technology is vertical farming, which prides itself in its ability to be deployed anywhere in the world, regardless of local weather, soil and wildlife. It is supposed to decrease agricultural land usage by up to 99% via advanced climate control and AI-driven machinery (Plenty 2021). Efficient as they may be, anti-local technologies can also be criticized: although they reduce resource use and waste production, they are not regenerative by design, i.e., not actively ecologically and socially beneficial. In order to become regenerative, technologies must consider their 'place' within the ecosystem (Hayes, Desha, and Baumeister 2020, 8). This raises the question how locality can be rehabilitated in the current globalized technosphere.

In order to answer this question, we 1) explore the debate on locality and non-locality in Stiegler's interpretation of Leroi-Gourhan's theory of milieus; 2) develop a philosophical understanding of 'place' through a reading of Heidegger's notion of Ort; 3) develop this into a concept of locality beyond the non-locality of the technosphere. Our assumption is that whereas the non-locality of the technosphere presents a world of possibilities that are not necessarily beneficent to the earth, the concept of locality can inform regenerative design by 'reconnecting' technology to the earth as its material substrate (Blok 2016). Finally, we demonstrate the potential of the locality of technology in an 'emancipatory' reconstruction of the vertical farming case.

Key words:

philosophy of technology, locality, Anthropocene, ontology

Alex Thinius: Masculinity and the Ontology of Men: From Connell's 'Hegemonic Masculinity' to Enactment Classes

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h00- 16h30 at Ambacht

Abstract

This paper asks how to understand the ontological status of men 'as a group'. Recent work in analytic philosophy discusses genders as positionality-based social classes (Haslanger), categories of conferred social properties of enablement (Ásta), social normatively associated traits, concepts, and status-functions (Mikkola), homeostatic property clusters (Mallon), or first-personal identifications (Bettcher). While each of these accounts are elucidating, I suggest going beyond them by understanding 'men and women as groups' along the lines of Enactment Classes (Thinius 2021). Enactment classes, roughly, are classes that transform by being realized differently in a particular sort of responsive enaction. Within this horizon, in this paper, I spell out how our genders such as men and women, as groups, are dependent parts of the (intersubjective) enaction of masculine hegemony at the level of social practices.

I base my paper on Connell's (1982; 2005; 2016) social theoretical account of masculinity as a hegemonic practice. Connell's account solves a problem with conceptualizing what used to be called 'male sex role' and 'male domination': not even in terms of gendered power do men form a homogeneous class. Connell helps us understand masculinity as that way of structuring social practice that involves several interrelated masculinities and femininities to maintain a field of domination of men as a group over women as a group. Practicing these masculinities, people participate in a hegemonic social dynamic, where that type of masculinity gets to stand in for the whole and enjoys most power – i.e., it becomes hegemonic – that quasi-legitimizes best at a time the overall domination of men as a group.

Largely ignored in academic philosophy, Connell's account has gained enormous recognition in sociology. Sometimes reduced to an individualist 'toxic masculinity'-approach, however, her work has attracted critique, both unjustified and justified. For instance, the 'hegemonic masculinity'-approach seems too close to ideal-type conceptions of masculinity, that cannot adequately analyze the material aspects of the lives of people, and in particular the lives that actual Black men can lead in an anti-Black world (Cf. different critiques by Hearn or Curry). Most crucially regarding my question, the ontology of men and women 'as groups' falls outside the scope of Connell's account: while focusing on masculinities' function for 'men as a group', the ontological status of these men is not discussed explicitly in Connell.

Bridging the gap between gender theories in philosophy and in sociology, I argue in this paper that Connell's account of masculinity can help us understand something important about the ontology of men 'as a group'. My paper (1) reframes and develops Connell's practice-theoretical conception. Beyond Connell's classical sociological conception, I make explicit how racialized and trans* abjection are constitutive parts of the picture and underline how this conception relates to materialist analyses of the exploitation of some socially essential activities as 'reproduction'. (2) Then, I suggest that men 'as a group' can best be conceived as elements

of this dynamic. Enacted between singular intersubjective acts and larger social contexts, Enactment Classes such as men emerge at the level of social practices.

Key words: Social Philosophy, Metaphysics, Philosophy of the Social Sciences, Feminist Philosophy, Masculinity-Critical Studies, Critical Theory, Practice Theory

Emily Thomas: The Specious Present in English Philosophy 1749-1785: Theories and Experiments on Time Perception

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h00- 12h30 at Terra

Abstract

William James famously characterised the specious present as ‘the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible’. He drew on the 1870s-1880s work of Shadworth Hodgson and Robert Kelly, who have been described as the ‘independent inventors’ of the specious present theory. Literature on the pre-history of these late nineteenth century theories clusters around Locke, whose work on temporal experience provided the context for subsequent debates; and Thomas Reid, who rejected the specious present but provided important discussion. I argue this pre-history is incomplete. It is missing an inter-connected group of English philosophers writing on the present between 1749 and 1785: David Hartley, Joseph Priestley, Abraham Tucker, and William Watson. These thinkers do not appear in the specious present literature, or even broader historical surveys of temporal consciousness. Yet this paper will show they each held specious present theories, exploring those theories and placing them within each figure’s system.

This study should be of interest to three groups of scholars. First, historians of eighteenth century English philosophy. Our four figures are all under-studied: Hartley is the only one who boasts a Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy entry, and there is no scholarship at all on Watson. Uncovering their important views on temporal consciousness should help rectify their neglect more generally. Second, historians and philosophers of the specious present. Scholars working on this topic frequently refer to James, and this study helps to contextualise his work. Further, I show there are various routes by which these eighteenth century specious present theories could have made their way into nineteenth century ones. Finally, historians of experimental psychology. As we will see, Watson and his friend the astronomer William Herschel record psychological experiments on temporal consciousness in 1785 - over half a century before well-researched 1850s experiments.

The paper is structured as followed. §2 provides background, surveying the existing pre-history of late nineteenth century specious present theories from Locke onwards. §3 comprises the heart of the paper, chronologically investigating the specious present theories of Hartley, Priestley, Tucker, and Watson, and detailing connections between them. §3.1 sets out Hartley’s 1749 ‘practical present’, and argues this specious present theory follows naturally from his doctrine of vibrations. §3.2 argues that Priestley’s 1768 theory is taken directly from Hartley, and underlies Priestley’s subtly non-Lockean account of how we acquire our idea of duration. §3.3 reads Tucker’s 1768 theory as arising independently of Hartley, located within a larger pattern of reasoning from human temporal experience to God’s nature. §3.4 shows that Watson’s 1785 theory is embedded in a comprehensive metaphysic, on which time is a Lockean abstract idea. §4 ends on a speculative note, considering possible routes by which our mid-eighteenth century theories made their way into later ones. The pre-history of specious present theories is more complex than currently appreciated: Hartley, Priestley, Tucker, and Watson also deserve credit as inventors.

Key words: Specious present, Time, 18th century English philosophy, David Hartley, Joseph Priestley

Hans Tromp: A Causal Cultural Evolution framework using D. L. Clarke's Analytical Model, and Action Cognition-based modeling

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h45- 12h15 at Kunst

Abstract

The availability of artifacts as a referential element is by far the wealthiest source of information over the longest span of time, and can be used to refer to various related aspects of cultural evolution from the stone age (e.g. Stout 2002) to our time. As artifacts do not evolve like biological species do; the human factor needs to be included to account for reproduction, variety and selection in their cultural and natural environments.

This contribution is inspired by the so-called Intentional Causal Evolution (ICE) theory as introduced by Houkes and Vermaas (Houkes and Vermaas 2010); and discussed in (Weber et al. 2013). Their ICE theory, on artifact evolution, however remained restricted to epistemological - ontological analyses within the Dual Nature program of artifacts. This program was a reaction to accounts of technical artifacts, such the Social Constructions of Technological Systems (Bijker, Hughes, and Pinch 2012), and to conceptions of technical artifacts as creations of the mind (Kroes 2012, vii).

However, understanding the evolution process of artifacts requires the inclusion of these two elements: the social cultural aspects and the cognitive action processes of making, as also concluded by Kroes (2012). Therefore we will return to P. Cummins who identified the essential roles of engineering design to distinguish functional artifact evolution from biological evolution. (Cummins 1975, 746–47) and demonstrate the reuse of Clarke's Archaeological Analytical model (Clarke 1968). His model provides the option to identify two subsystems, namely a domain of functional applications in an evolving social cultural environment, and a domain of design and realization. Engineering Design as intentional Action Cognition processes than can be analyzed and modeled as mediation between the two domains. The intentional action cognition model approach will applied by the belief and desire based modeling. (Bratman 1987) (Davidson 1987) (Dretske 1988)

In the proposed framework artifacts will be characterized by the constitutive relations from their Structure, to Behavior, Function, and to the Application-Context. In the reverse direction from Application to Structure the relations have a normative character for the realization actions. With the belief as the predictive component of the intentional actions. Which is embedded in the modeling of knowledge and understanding of the material culture stages, ranging from the mimetic and mythic periods, through material symbolic stage, to the theoretic stage . This last one includes our understanding of quantum mechanics by particle or wave metaphors.

The answer to the question whether the framework will be applicable for functional non-material artifacts, e.g. institutions, as indicated by Simon's in *The Sciences of the Artificial* (Simon 1996) will be examined by a number of examples.

Key words:

Cultural Evolution, Intentional Causal Evolution, Philosophy of Action-Cognition, Artifacts

Oyku Ulusoy: Transformative Choices and Two Approaches in Decision Theory

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15- 12h45 at Ambacht

Abstract

In *Transformative Experience* (2014; 2015), Laurie Paul discusses the significance of first-personal experiencing to make important future-regarding decisions rationally. She argues that there is specific phenomenological knowledge, which can only be obtained through first-personal experiencing, and which affects understanding and other cognitive abilities of the experiencer. Depending on the magnitude of this effect, new experiences can drastically alter the experiencer's perception, values and other core characteristics: new experiences can teach things that can be transformative. Paul asserts that individuals cannot imagine what it will be like to have a new experience due to this transformative aspect. As such, they cannot rationally choose to undergo or to abstain from transformative experiences in the standard way: by choosing the act that would bring about the outcome with the highest expected value. Accordingly, the normative decision theory, which puts forward this standard, cannot provide representative models or action guidance for transformative choices.

I posit that Paul's argument can be construed as two disunited issues about (1) the choice-theoretic frameworks' fitness for providing plausible decision models and action-guidance and about (2) human agents' capacity to follow a standard of rationality for their decision-making. Regarding the issues about the choice-theoretical frameworks' fitness, I argue that behaviourist and mentalist approaches to decision theory would tackle the transformative problems differently with regards to their methodological commitments.

For the behaviourist approach, the observed and observable choice behaviour are the sole evidential basis for decision theories. That is, the object of representation is behaviours and behavioural patterns, not mental states or processes. The theory should provide some form of representation for choice behaviour, and ideally should represent maximizing agents with an objective choice function (Dietrich & List, 2016, p.253). However, behaviourists do not claim that real decision-makers imagine and evaluate their decisions by following the axioms. They propose that the choice functions can represent the decision-makers 'as if' they make their choices in accordance with a maximization function (Okasha, 2016). I put forward that the behaviourists could argue that Paul's objections do not apply to their theoretical framework so long as the choice functions do their 'as if' job. Specifically, in the case of inaccessibility of the phenomenological character of new experiences, if decision-maker's choice behaviour appears 'as if' they maximize their expected values, the models can be deemed successful.

For the mentalists, as beliefs and preferences play a significant role in how real agents make their decisions, they should concern decision theories. If the relations and functions of preferences and beliefs do not correspond to real phenomena, the mentalists argue to reject the theory for failing to capture the real features of the world (Dietrich & List, 2016, p.268). Since, in this interpretation, the value functions should correspond to real phenomena,

mentalists should be concerned with the epistemic barriers of transformative experiences, as these might restrict decision-makers' access to their values and preferences. Accordingly, I argue that the mentalists would be compelled to reconfigure their representative models to accommodate epistemic barriers that Paul describes.

Key words:

Transformative experiences, Decision theory, Rational choice theory, Epistemic uncertainty, Mentalism vs. behaviourism in decision theory

Herman Veluwenkamp: Ethics by Design and Conceptual Engineering

| Friday 3rd of December, 12h30- 13h00 at Restauratie

Abstract

New technologies have a profound impact on our daily lives. They give rise to many ethical debates, hard questions and deep disagreements. New technologies are the source of puzzlement and considerable moral uncertainty. In addition to the problems about deciding which ethical principles and theories apply, there is a problem of relevant descriptions. How should we conceptualize the parts of the world that we are dealing with? The worldwide adoption of CRISPR-CAS genetic engineering techniques has given rise to fierce moral and legal debates in Europe about what counts as a 'natural way' of altering the genome. Traditional breeding and even chemical and x-ray based mutagenesis is considered 'natural', whereas CRISPR manipulations are considered by critics as 'artificial'. However, there is also opposition to this sentiment by advocates of CRISPR-CAS. They argue either for different application conditions of 'natural' and 'artificial' or they maintain that we should associate these concepts with different normative upstream commitments.

Design for Values (DfV) has become one of the dominant approaches to help designers put social and moral values at the heart of the design of new technologies (van den Hoven et al., 2015). And although DfV practitioners have shown awareness of the conceptual challenges associated with the introduction of disruptive technologies, such as CRISPR-CAS genetic engineering techniques, an integrative approach for conceptual work is hitherto lacking. To remedy this, I suggest extending DfV with a methodological framework for doing conceptual engineering. Central to DfV is a values hierarchy, a hierarchy structure of values, norms and design requirements. The hierarchy allows designers to translate a specification of values into design requirements. However, as we have noted above, it is not always obvious which conception of the concepts used in the requirements is the most appropriate in the relevant contexts. For this reason, requirement engineering necessitates conceptual engineering. To facilitate structured conceptual engineering in the context of DfV, I present and briefly defend a pragmatic approach to conceptual engineering (Thomasson, 2020). This approach consists of three steps:

1. a reverse-engineering phase, in which we try to find out what the historical and current function of the relevant concept is (Queloz, 2021),
2. a normative phase, to determine which function the concept ought to have, and
3. an engineering phase, to construct a conception that serves this function best.
4. I show how this approach can be integrated into existing DfV frameworks, and finally, apply this framework to a use case.

Key words:

Conceptual Engineering, Design for Values, Disruptive Technologies

Philippe Verreault-Julien: Modal Opacity in Artificial Intelligence Systems

| Friday 3rd of December, 17h00- 17h30 at Restauratie

Abstract

Artificial intelligence systems (AI systems) are often said to be opaque. Considering a given input, we don't always know why the system produces the output it does. Opacity raises many epistemic and ethical issues. If we don't understand why the system arrived at a particular conclusion, are we justified in believing in it? Or, can we trust AI systems to make decisions that have consequences on people's well-being?

In this paper, I argue that one underappreciated source of opacity is modal opacity: It is not transparent what and why AI systems judge to be possible or necessary. These systems often explore a modal space by downright generating possibilities or by drawing conclusions that have modal content. However, unlike with ordinary or scientific reasoning, we don't have a good grasp of the modal features of AI systems. This suggests various interrelated research questions. For instance, what, if anything, constrains modal content within AI systems? Should there be such constraints? How can these systems consider or imagine possibilities that transcend actual data? How could built-in modal constraints improve their trustworthiness?

Illustrating using concrete cases, I distinguish between descriptive and normative modal opacity. Descriptive modal opacity concerns the inputs and outputs that an AI system considers to be possible or necessary given a set of modal constraints. For instance, self-driving cars routinely consider a set of possible causal interventions. Making transparent under what conditions AI systems evaluate some interventions to be possible or not is critical to understanding why they produce the outputs they do. Normative modal opacity concerns the moral or legal constraints AI systems abide by, in particular, what they view as permissible (possible) or obligatory (necessary). To give one example, it appears algorithms on social media platforms consider that it is permissible to expose people to misinformation; but why? I also show how descriptive and normative modal opacity are sometimes entangled, e.g. when we would want a set of causal possibilities to be constrained by moral ones.

The notion of modal opacity has thus descriptive and normative implications. Descriptively, to understand better what opacity in AI is, we need to map out the different ways opacity can arise and manifest itself. Modal opacity is arguably one important source. Normatively, we may want AI systems to abide by explicit and transparent moral or legal modal constraints. There are things these systems shouldn't do because of, e.g., moral requirements. Examining the modal dimensions of opacity holds the promise of contributing to explain why AI systems produce the output they do and why we should, or shouldn't, trust them.

Key words:

artificial intelligence, opacity, modal

Ariën Voogt: Toward a hermeneutics of secularization: in dialogue with Hans Blumenberg

| Saturday 4th of December, 12h15- 12h45 at Terra

Abstract

In philosophy and the public debate we often encounter statements such as: 'The ecocrisis is a secularized eschatology', 'the spirit of capitalism is a secularization of the protestant ethic', 'the modern notion of political sovereignty is a secularization of divine sovereignty'. What does 'secularization' mean here? Instead of an empirical category for measuring religious decline, 'secularization' is here used as a hermeneutic category. To state that 'X is a secularization of Y' is to somehow trace a secular phenomenon back to a religious one. Is this a mere association for rhetorical purposes, or can it be a valid philosophical judgment that reveals truth? If so, does the concept of 'secularization' objectively signify religious features of a secular object, or something else? I will explore whether the category of 'secularization' is a valid hermeneutic tool, and if so, how we should wield it.

In the '60's, the validity of the interpretative use of 'secularization' sparked a fierce debate among German philosophers such as Hans Blumenberg, Karl Löwith and Carl Schmitt. Yet this debate never resolved the question how a valid 'hermeneutics of secularization' is possible. I will first briefly revisit this debate, focusing on Blumenberg's critique of the category of secularization. Blumenberg convincingly discredits the idea that 'secularization' traces historical continuities between secular and religious 'substances'. Blumenberg's account also offers a constructive side and, as I will argue, it points in two different directions. A hermeneutics of secularization can, on the one hand, attend to 'functional' continuities in history regarding secular notions that come to fulfill vestigial religious functions in collective consciousness. On the other hand, hermeneutics of secularization can attend to discursive operations in which religious language and notions are used in a secular context for rhetorical purposes. Both these approaches seem to provide productive philosophical ways of conducting hermeneutics of secularization, as I will show by examples.

Yet I subsequently argue why Blumenberg's own conception of these approaches ultimately fails. Blumenberg's first understanding of secularization as 'functional continuity' makes a problematic distinction between the 'content' of ideas and phenomena and the 'function' that they acquire. Blumenberg's second understanding of 'rhetorical/discursive secularization' makes an equally problematic distinction between 'discursive content' and its 'rhetorical form'. I argue that both these distinctions are untenable. What Blumenberg fails to notice is that the meaning of historical concepts and phenomena comes about by virtue of the 'functional' and 'rhetorical' relations to other ideas and other domains. In the end I argue that hermeneutics of secularization should investigate the discursive ways in which secular notions have historically been brought into connection with the religious domain, in order to reveal the constitutive role these discursive relations between the secular and religious have played in the formation of meaning of secular elements.

Key words: secularization, philosophy of religion, philosophical hermeneutics, political theology

Francisca Wals: Peer-to-Peer Platforms: Their Limits and Responsibilities

| Friday 3rd of December, 11h30- 12h00 at De Glazen Zaal

Abstract

Peer-to-peer platforms such as Uber, TaskRabbit and Airbnb have the potential to generate significant benefits, yet their advent has problematic consequences as well. Platforms typically deny responsibility for these problems, which they legitimize by drawing on an ubiquitous narrative that speaks in the idiom of transaction cost theory. It tells us that platforms are technology companies that have lowered the costs of market transactions between individuals residing beyond their organizational boundaries, whom they purportedly do not control. I argue that this description of peer-to-peer platforms is mistaken. In light of the substantive control they de facto exercise over the activities they mediate, I propose that platforms should be characterized as hybrid organizations, which selectively combine elements of both markets and firms. This conception of peer-to-peer platforms as 'permissive potentates' acknowledges that platforms have both lubricated and appropriated market exchanges, such that they at most quasi-externalize their activities, retaining significant control over important aspects thereof. This conception has serious moral implications, as it broadens the scope for attributing responsibility to platforms for the harms and injustices that their advent has spawned. I argue that in light of the control they exercise, platforms are liable to attributions of moral responsibility for the activities that they have enabled, which bear the 'stamp' of their authorship. Furthermore, in some cases, platforms even exercise such a degree of control over users that these should be considered as members of the platform, vis-à-vis whom the platform has certain role responsibilities. In effect, I maintain that platforms have neither externalized their activities nor their responsibilities—despite their claims to the contrary. Acknowledging this may serve as starting point for finding new ways to address the problematic aspects of the peer-to-peer economy.

Key words: Peer-to-peer platforms, Uber, Airbnb, Responsibility, Transaction cost theory, Governance mechanisms, Organizational boundaries

Thomas Wells and Tadhg Ó Laoghaire: Trade Justice and the Least-Developed Countries

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30- 17h00 at De Glazen Zaal

Abstract

In this paper, we argue that least-developed countries (LDCs) should be treated as a distinct group from other developing countries within theories of international justice generally, and theories of trade justice more specifically.

While authors within the trade justice literature occasionally make passing reference to LDCs' entitlement to special favourable treatment from other states, little is said about what form this treatment should take, and how such entitlements relate to the obligations and entitlements of their trade partners, both developed and developing. This oversight is untenable, in that it overlooks the special needs that LDCs have compared to other developing countries with respect to the economic opportunities offered by access to international markets. Moreover, by grouping states into the binary categories of developed and developing, or rich and poor, trade justice theorists have ended up obscuring and passing over a fundamental conflict between least-developed and developing countries' interests, the weighing of which should be central to any complete normative evaluation of the trade regime.

Once these shortcomings in the literature are identified, different kinds of trade-based policies than the usual dichotomy between protectionism and free-trade become normatively plausible and significant. As an example we develop one proposal for trade diversion that states might owe to LDCs even though enacting it would come at the expense of many other developing countries. We argue that developed countries, as well as some of the wealthier and larger developing countries, have a duty to remedy the extreme immiseration of LDCs by actively diverting trade flows, and hence economic development opportunities, towards them. We suggest that they ought to do so by committing to ensuring that a certain minimum percentage of their imports (not including natural resources) come from LDCs. We note that countries' adoption of an LDC quota would foreseeably harm some developing countries, some of which are very badly-off themselves. While there is something morally troubling about such a consequence, we argue that, in the absence of better alternatives, this does not undermine the basic case for diverting trade towards LDCs. We then raise and refute several objections that affected developing countries may have to the LDC quota.

All told, this paper presents both a novel conceptualisation of the problems of trade justice, and a promising proposal for how states ought to act upon their duties to LDCs.

Key words:

ethics of trade, global justice, poverty, economic development

Julius Westerhoff, Lieuwe Zijlstra and Sanne van Emmerik: Personal Identity: Numerical or Qualitative?

| Friday 3rd of December, 16h30- 17h00 at Boardroom

Abstract

Following the philosophical argument that the mind is central to personal identity change, experimental philosophy has studied if any part of the mind is more essential to this change than others. Most prominently, Strohminger and Nichols (2014) conducted an empirical study that found that people tend to see morality as more essential to personal identity change than other mental characteristics. People seem more likely, for example, to consider someone a different person if they start behaving sadistically and evil than when they suffer from memory loss or change their dietary preferences. However, critics have pointed out that Strohminger and Nichols (2014) may not be measuring numerical identity, the subject of philosophical personal identity research, but rather similarity or qualitative identity. For example, twins may have the same qualitative identity because of their similarity, but not the same numerical identity because twins are ultimately two different persons.

Our paper intends to find empirical evidence to back up this criticism of Strohminger and Nichols (2014) and determine if their research has measured qualitative or numerical identity change. This is important because people may judge a change of these different forms of identity based on different mental (or bodily) characteristics. Philosophically speaking, this distinction is also important because a judgment of qualitative identity might be considered a psychological question. In contrast, a judgment of numerical identity pertains to the philosophical question of personal identity.

We have conducted two studies to disentangle qualitative and numerical identity. Both our studies are based on the first study from Strohminger and Nichols (2014), wherein a brain transplant changes one mental faculty of a subject (Jim). Participants were asked to what extent the recipient of the transplant is still Jim. In study one, we follow this question by asking to what extent the recipient is the same person as Jim, despite different appearances. In study two, we follow this question by asking if, despite any different appearances, the recipient is Jim or not.

Both our studies have provided results that we are eager to present. Furthermore, both our studies have delivered results that foster discussion regarding the measurement and nature of personal identity change. Our first study gives reason to doubt Strohminger and Nichols' (2014) original results, while our second study gives more validity to our concern that these results are about qualitative rather than numerical identity. All in all, our presentation will discuss the philosophical issues underlying personal identity, the place of our results within this philosophical canon, and the value of empirical research for philosophical personal identity debates.

Key words: Personal Identity, Experimental Philosophy, Self, Morality, Numerical Identity, Qualitative Identity

Wouter Wiersma: Critical Theory and the Emancipatory Interest: examining Honneth's grounding of Critical Theory

| Saturday 4th of December, 11h45- 12h15 at Beton

Abstract

Theories in the tradition of the Frankfurt School Critical Theory assume that individuals have an interest in overcoming oppression that can be traced back to social reality and that critical theory can emancipate individuals guided by that emancipatory interest. The emancipatory interest must therefore (a) be in some sense internal to society, (b) provide motivation for action, (c) provide knowledge about the state of society and (d) give a standard for the future development of society. By appealing to this method, critical theory sets itself apart from alternative approaches to social critique, because it can show that normative demands are more than an empty moral ought.

In my paper, I will critically evaluate whether Axel Honneth's theory – being one of the most prominent current theories in that tradition – can account for the existence of such an emancipatory interest. Honneth attempts to fulfill this task by providing an account of suffering in which an emancipatory interest can allegedly be grounded. I will show that Honneth's attempt to ground critical theory in suffering is unsuccessful. Honneth does not manage to give a successful account of how critical theory can be grounded in a pre-theoretical activity because he cannot show that an emancipatory interest arises from it.

In order to argue for this, I first show that relying on an account of suffering cannot show us that individuals have an interest in achieving freedom. Second, I show that this forces Honneth to dogmatically presuppose the value of freedom, so that a distinction can be made between forms of suffering that point towards a violation of freedom and forms that do not. This, I argue, is a move that Honneth cannot make, because he has to extract this value of freedom from the activity of suffering, and not presuppose it. In a final step, I show that because Honneth cannot extract the value of freedom from experiences of suffering, his project ceases to be a form of critical theory according to the requirements articulated above.

Having shown that Honneth account fails, I outline an alternative approach that can account for an emancipatory interest that individuals have. I suggest that in order to account for an emancipatory interest that individuals have, we need to move beyond the idea of freedom consisting in successful recognition. I draw on Hegel's practical philosophy and argue that by focusing on the fundamental sociality of human beings, it can be shown that individuals have a fundamental interest in being concluded in ethical communities. I argue that, by showing that people can only develop individual interest and form an identity as part of an ethical community, individuals have an interest in maintaining that ethical community. In this way, critical theory can maintain the existence of an emancipatory interest and keep its advantage over alternative forms of social critique.

Key words: Critical Theory, Emancipatory Interest, Axel Honneth

Yaron Wolf: Passage and the Extensional View of Temporal Experience

| Saturday 4th of December 11h15- 11h45 at Terra

Abstract

Debates on the structure of temporal experience are typically conducted apart from discussions of the metaphysics of time. This talk explores a bridge between the two, suggesting a close connection between the extensional view of temporal experience and the property of passage or flow. On the extensional view, temporal experience has temporal structure: the experience of time itself progresses or unfolds over temporal intervals. The position, typically contrasted with retentional models and cinematic accounts of temporal experience, has recently become a prominent option in the philosophy of temporal experience, following recent publications by Barry Dainton, Ian Phillips, Matthew Soteriou, Christoph Hoerl, and others. In the first part of the talk, I present the outlines of the view, and advance what I take to be a powerful reason to adopt it, a phenomenological insight captured by what I label as the experiential process thesis: we have a pre-reflective sense that our experience of change itself unfolds through time. The thesis, I argue, is introspectively robust and possesses advantages over recent arguments in favour of the extensional view (Soteriou, Hoerl) relying on a relational account of perception.

In the second part of the talk, I highlight a challenge facing extant versions of the view, showing that Dainton's, Phillips', Soteriou's, and Hoerl's versions of the extensional account do not successfully accommodate the experiential process thesis. I suggest that accounts based on the explanatory priority of individual moments or phases (e.g., Dainton's view) and accounts based on the priority of entire intervals (e.g., Phillips, Soteriou's, and Hoerl's accounts) do not make room for the idea of experience gradually progressing, or covering intervals of time. I develop an alternative proposal, the dynamic extensional view, which can potentially address the challenge. On the suggestion, the gradual unfolding of experience is explained in virtue of constitutive dependence of experience on the property of temporal passage and a process of retention in primary memory.

In the third part of the talk, I explore the connection between the notion of temporal passage and the extensional view. Difficulties facing reductive accounts of the experience of temporal passage within an eternalist (or B-theoretic) metaphysical framework, I suggest, might alert us to a hitherto unacknowledged reliance of the extensional view on a dynamic (or A-theoretic) metaphysics of time.

Key words: Philosophy of Time, Temporal Experience, Temporal Passage, Metaphysics of Time

Symposium: ‘Decoding Descartes’

Cartesian Networks: New Paradigms in the History of Philosophy

Decoding Descartes and Cartesian Networks are two research projects currently being carried out at Erasmus School of Philosophy, Rotterdam. They are complimentary in that they pursue the same goal through different means. Both projects, indeed, shine a light on the legacy of the philosopher and scientist René Descartes (1596–1650). Yet while Decoding Descartes has a clear philosophical outlook, Cartesian Networks adopts a more sociological approach. The aim of this symposium is to present the first results of these two projects. Below, you will find a short description of the two projects and the abstracts of the four papers that will be presented during the symposium.

Decoding Descartes

Still immensely studied today, René Descartes is an iconic figure who paradoxically appears to have gone out of fashion. Decoding Descartes aims to show why this contradiction is only apparent: Descartes is indisputably the father of modern philosophy and a pivotal figure in the rise of modern science, even though much of his own scientific views were considered outdated 50 years after his death. This project will redefine Descartes’ role in modern philosophical thought and contribute to our understanding of modernity by highlighting the emergence of the idea of a clash between science and common sense. Descartes considered natural truths to be encoded in the human mind and scientific investigation to offer the code with which to read human experience. Decoding Descartes will present his contribution to the development of the modern worldview in terms of a proposal to substitute the pre-modern practice of reading causal agents into nature with a new epistemology that sharply distinguishes between natural processes (the world of science) and experience itself (the world of common sense). The project is innovative for the way in which it integrates a comprehensive study of Descartes’ works and correspondence with a new approach to some of today’s most pressing issues in neuroscience, artificial intelligence and philosophy.

Cartesian Networks

Throughout his life, Descartes experienced a tension between isolation and openness to the world. By his own admission, he left France for the Dutch Republic in search of peace and solitude. On the other hand, his groundbreaking views earned him a reputation as an innovator, giving rise to a network of supporters that was essential in promoting his philosophy and science in the Dutch Republic and beyond. In recent years, historians have paid increasing attention to the role of social networks in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. At the same time, in the last two decades or so, network scientists such as Albert-László Barabási, Reka Albert, Duncan Watts, and Steven Strogatz have shown that a unique set of rules govern phenomena as diverse as the course of an epidemic, the success of a crowdfunding campaign, and the dissemination of new ideas. Taking advantage of these parallel developments, Cartesian Networks shows how techniques and methods developed by network scientists can yield new insights into the structure and dynamics of the networks that channeled the diffusion of Cartesian philosophy and science throughout 17th-century Europe.

Papers

Paper 1: Descartes today

By questioning the historical accuracy of the notion of 'Cartesian dualism', by rediscovering Descartes' theory of the passions and by acknowledging Descartes as 'a philosopher of the body', recent scholarship has started to curb the twentieth-century caricature image of the philosopher René Descartes in both the analytical and continental traditions. At the same time, misusing the image of 'Descartes' as a straw man is still as popular in neuroscience as misusing his assumed 'rationalism' is in philosophical attacks on the supposedly binary tendencies in Western philosophy. The project *Decoding Descartes* tries to explain the misconceptions surrounding Descartes by presenting his arguments in their proper context, viz. as philosophical alternatives for the scholastic theories of physics and metaphysics they were meant to replace. Reading Descartes in this way offers unsuspected methodological vistas that are still of interest for science and philosophy today. Indeed, if anything, Descartes' seventeenth-century stance may be read as a plea for problem-solving types of understanding unfettered by any metaphysical preconceptions, as a triumph over essentialist tendencies in human cognition and as a forceful appeal to see the historicity of individual human beings as the basis for understanding their experience. In all of these aspects, we have still much to learn from Descartes.

Paper 2: The Correspondence of Descartes: A new historico-critical edition and complete English Translation

400 years after its original inception, Descartes' correspondence is still a treasure trove containing gems of great importance to European intellectual history. As Daniel Garber (2000) observed in his article 'A different Descartes', the correspondence may well count as an unknown publication in itself. Indeed, when one goes beyond a first, superficial understanding of one Descartes' main works, one realizes that the basis for many of his doctrines cannot be found in the primary works themselves. For example, to capture Descartes' thoughts on the supreme good and happiness, one must read his letters to Princess Elisabeth or to Queen Christina, and to understand what he thinks is the relation of God to his creation, his early letters to Marin Mersenne. Descartes' correspondence is crucial to the understanding of Descartes. However, the standard edition of his correspondence is over a century old; its second edition, more than forty years old, improved upon the first edition, but became extremely difficult to use. And there is no complete English translation of the correspondence, just a one-volume selection of partial translations from the French and Latin. A new historico-critical edition and complete English translation of Descartes' correspondence is needed. About 800 letters survive in one form or another: as autograph manuscript (some 270), as contemporary copy, as contemporary printed text, or as quotations and abstracts in seventeenth-century sources. The letters, written in Latin, French and a few in Dutch, are in many cases not dated; the addressee is often unknown; references to contemporary events and persons are sometimes clear, yet many questions remain to be answered: about chronology, the quality and reliability of the text, about historical circumstances, and about the scientific and philosophical context. At the same time, these letters are not only essential for Descartes' philosophy, but also for understanding his contemporaries, and the development of early-modern philosophy and science. Once properly edited and adequately annotated, the letters will allow us to follow the evolution of Descartes' ideas as well as the genesis of his treatises, and make it possible to situate the latter in a wider intellectual and historical context.

Paper 3: Descartes and the Senses

Often used as a trope for narrating the supposed animosity between rationalism and empiricism, Descartes's philosophy has been widely portrayed as neglecting sense experience and focusing solely on deductive reasoning. One of the principal reasons for this entrenched interpretation of Descartes'

thought is that Descartes' correspondence has not received due attention, and scholars have, to a large extent, concentrated on the *Meditations*. However, when Descartes' works, including his correspondence, are taken as a whole, a different philosopher emerges. It becomes clear that Descartes was not only meditating on the mind, but he was chiefly concerned with overcoming the essentialist preconceptions of nature and developing a mechanical understanding of the world. As opposed to the general misconceptions, Descartes conducted numerous experiments and studied natural processes quantitatively. In this paper, I will argue that the senses occupy a central place in the Cartesian project by clarifying the role that Descartes assigns to them. Descartes endeavoured to explain what appears to us without relying on a metaphysical scheme about the inner quality of things. In this sense, he emancipated natural philosophy from the yoke of metaphysical disputes about the real qualities. I will claim that Descartes' revolutionary modernity resided in the fact that he did not intermingle what pertains to the mind with the body; in this manner, he could develop a purely quantitative explanation of nature. As is the case with later philosophers, Descartes encountered a disconcerting problem about the trustworthiness of our senses and plausibility of our hopes of attaining any certainty. In his answer to these problems, he pioneered a new approach that would influence the history of philosophy. By inquiring how we perceive the world and how things appear to us, Descartes started a new train of thought that freed itself from speculating on how things are 'in themselves'. His own metaphysics may be regarded as a framework that outlines how 'sense experience' is possible and within what bounds it is reliable. Descartes' main concern was scientific, and he paid special attention to how we perceive the world. His metaphysical considerations can only be appreciated if taken in this context as a framework that establishes the reliability of the senses.

Paper 4: The networked origins of Cartesian philosophy and science

Most studies of René Descartes' legacy have focused on the novelty of his ideas, but little has been done to uncover the condition that allowed those ideas to spread. 17th-century Europe was already a "small world"—it presented a high degree of connectedness with a few brokers bridging otherwise disparate regions. A communication network known as the "Republic of Letters" enabled scholars to trade ideas – including Descartes' – by means of correspondence. This paper offers an analysis – both qualitative and quantitative – of a corpus of letters written during Descartes's lifetime and mentioning his name. The aim is to unveil the factors that drove the diffusion of Descartes' ideas. The results are twofold: First, close-reading of the letters reveals that these were not used to create awareness about Descartes and his works, but rather to discuss his ideas. Second, the network analysis of the letters shows that ideas do not spread like viruses and that weak ties (i.e., links between different social groups) are not as effective in promoting innovations as they are in circulating information.

Speakers: *Paolo Rossini, Han van Ruler, Erik-Jan Bos and Doğukan Ozturkoglu*

Symposium: ‘Moral Progress’

How Do We Know It Is Moral Progress: On the Criteria of Moral Progress

Societies change over time. Chattel slavery and foot-binding have been abolished, democracy has become increasingly widespread, gay rights have become established in some countries, and the animal rights movement gains momentum. Do these changes count as moral progress? Is there even such a thing? If so, how should we understand it? These questions have received increasing attention from philosophers, psychologists, biologists, and political scientists in recent decades. Some, however, still recoil at the very idea of moral progress. In several cases, this is due to the metaphysical baggage that comes with its purportedly teleological implications. The 20th century in many ways lay waste to the idea of social change as a long journey into moral perfection. Others are anxious about the concept's normative and political ramifications: whenever people start talking about moral progress, they can easily slide into comparing countries, cultures, and peoples in terms of which are more, and which are less morally developed. If these judgements of moral development are used to justify manipulation, political pressure, or perhaps even coercive intervention, then this can rightly be regarded as morally problematic. A last source of scepticism about moral progress is epistemic: to judge whether an instance of change should count as a moral improvement or not, we must rely on a set of criteria in light of which we can make such judgments. Such criteria, however, seem hard to come by, and their justification remains perennially contested. This symposium brings together researchers who focus on the latter, third set of problems, namely the question what the criteria for assessing a development as moral progress are and which potential obstacles, we face in determining whether an episode of change constitutes moral progress. Central sub-concerns in this debate are firstly, the issue of how we can figure out what it means for things to improve morally over time. Second, there are the problems that have to do with balancing or comparing different moral standards for moral progress. Finally, there are the problems which arise because we need to determine what it is that undergoes moral change over time

Individual presentations

1. Morality's Progress

Morality has progress in many societies in the past with the extension of liberty, the empowerment of marginalized groups and a reduction of poverty, war, and class privilege. There is, however, still much room for improvement in terms of respect for other animals and nature. In this talk, I present a naturalistic theory of moral value, in which I grant primary moral value to sentient beings because of their abilities to suffer, desire and take pleasure in their experiences. I further show how this theory explains the criteria we have for measuring moral progress, and how our practice of moral evaluation is a function of transactions between individuals, communities, and nature in particular contexts.

2. What Does a Better World Require?

Certain ideas are common to many moral progress discussions. According to one idea, which we might call the Promotion thesis, it is true that (P): x at t1 has made moral progress only if moral values have been promoted at t1 as compared with t0. A second idea, which we can refer to as the Quantity thesis, tells us that (Q), x at t1 has made moral progress only if x at t1 contains more moral value than x at t0. If we have, for instance, worlds in mind, we can formulate a related idea, which we can refer to as the Better world thesis: (B) A world at t1 has made moral progress only if, the world has become a better world than it was at t0. In my talk, I argue that the Promotion and Quantity theses are false. Moral progress can be made although no values have been promoted, which falsifies (P). And making moral

progress does not require the augmentation of moral value, which falsifies (Q). In light of this, if the notion of 'better' in the Better World thesis is understood in terms of (P) and (Q), we have to give up on B as well. That is, if a better world requires a world in which values have been promoted and increased, then (B) is not true.

3. Do We Really Need to Know the Criteria of Moral Progress?

The title question of this symposium 'How do we know it is moral progress?' seems more than justified already because of the popularity of this concept in the current philosophical discussion (which does not exclude fundamental criticism and doubts about this concept). Moreover, when authors such as Allen Buchanan and Russel Powell even argue that moral theories are incomplete without a conception of moral progress, it even seems inevitable. At the same time, answering it is by no means evident, as it seems to be tied to the identification of certain criteria, which indeed are as difficult to find as they are to justify. But do we really need to answer this question? Or is it not more important – and this is the intuition I would like to pursue in my presentation – to first determine more clearly what this concept is needed for at all and where it is used? Following from this, three things should become clear: firstly, that moral theories do indeed depend on an idea of moral progress, secondly, that this is primarily imperative in character, and thirdly, and most importantly, that the concept of moral progress always remains tied to the participant perspective. Only on the assumption of this perspective, so my thesis, can further criteria for the determination of moral progress possibly be determined

Speakers: *Hanno Sauer, Charlie Blunden, Paul Rehren and Cecilie Eriksen*

Symposium: ‘Business Corporations’

The Political Theory of Business Corporations

Political scientists, sociologists, organization theorists, international relation scholars and others have empirically studied business corporations as political actors, i.e. as actors wielding power in contemporary societies. In the last decade, political philosophers have devoted greater attention to business corporations, and joined the debate by asking normative questions about them. Business corporations are taken as quintessentially private (hence non-political) actors, when one works from a liberal private/public dichotomy. Building on such a dichotomy, business corporations have their private goals (usually profit-making), are disciplined by the supposedly neutral market forces of competition, are owned by private investors (shareholders) whose control rights ultimately serve all corporate constituents, and are regulated by national governments to secure any public interests that market forces do not automatically take into account.

This framing, with these presuppositions, is not just congruent with liberal political theory, it is also dominant in economics and much of law. It is embedded in economic models and validated in the legal orthodoxy of many countries. However, it has also been increasingly called into question, if only because public interests in so many sectors of the economy seem to escape adequate regulation; consider, for example, debates about energy companies and the climate crisis, big tech companies and privacy, or banks and financial crises. But what kind of political framing should replace the liberal public/private dichotomy is still very much contested, as are the normative criteria, topics and theories that bear on the subject. This symposium will expand upon the recent wave of work in political theory on the business corporation by pursuing avenues that have not yet received much attention from political philosophers.

The first paper investigates the nexus of accounting and ownership, two issues that are normally treated in isolation : how can reforms in accounting for social purposes and ownership be addressed in tandem? While political philosophers have focused on questions of ownership (as with debates on workplace democracy and cooperatives), accounting is rarely discussed, and the two are almost never considered together. The second paper goes beyond the usual focus on corporate law, to look at competition law. Is market competition really a neutral force or is it itself politically constructed? While there is some political philosophical work on the ‘virtues and vices’ of competition, a detailed examination of the actual legal constitution of the supposedly neutral ‘playing field’ through competition law is lacking. The third paper addresses the multinational corporation, and mobilizes the question of imperialism to understand the particularly powerful international form in which many businesses operate. While global justice debates often turn on problems of international trade, the multinational form itself has not yet been theorized by political philosophers.

Together, then, the symposium’s papers chart important new territory in the ‘political theory of the business corporation, and will thereby help us to come to grips politically with one of the most powerful actors in our global societies, allowing insight into its current problems and possible futures.

Papers

Paper 1: “What can legitimize the power of business corporations – democracy or social purpose?”

There are two main strands of reform proposals for today’s business corporations. The first one proposes to alter the ways in which the corporation is being controlled. This is to be achieved by changing internal structures to alleviate power imbalances between different factions in the corporation. The second one considers the corporate purpose or objective and focuses on corporate

structural position in today's global economy and society. Its goal is to make corporations act in compliance with some principles of justice or moral values, rather than to pursue financial profit alone. In today's corporations, these two aspects, corporate governance and social purpose, relate to two fundamental structures – ownership and accounting. Ownership structures determine the distribution of control rights and the right to residual profits, two main contributors to intra-corporate power. Conventionally, these are mainly assigned to shareholders, although some regulatory constituencies also assign control rights to other stakeholders. The accounting practices set the framework for the behavior of various actors in the corporation insofar as they measure and operationalize some selected values that serve as a basis for decision making and evaluation of the corporation. In the standard form, solely the financial value is accounted for, and the purpose of the corporation is given to be the maximization of that value. These two fields of corporate reform are usually considered in separation, each focusing on their particular area in a bid to improve the legitimacy of corporate activity. Corporate ownership reforms aim to improve legitimacy by distributing power within the corporation more equally, while accounting reforms aim to improve legitimacy by bringing corporate activity more in line with social goals. In this paper, we bring these discussions together and analyze the relation between the two modes of reforming the business corporation. We argue that, as they seem to pursue a similar goal, they should be aware of interdependencies, both where they complement each other but also where one might block the success of reform through the other. What are the limits of accounting reforms when they leave the configuration of the group of people that determines corporate goals untouched? Can a change in ownership structure succeed in lending corporate activity more legitimacy if the goals and the metrics for assessing these activities remain largely unaffected? Our paper will yield important insights into these questions, thereby stressing that advocates of corporate reform cannot only focus on one area, but have to be mindful of the multiplicity of determinants of corporate activity.

Paper 2: “Corporate Power and the Political Construction of Competition”

The literature on the political theory of the business corporation is premised on the assumption that corporations possess immense power, including economic, cultural and political power. This diagnosis often rests on a mid-20th century model of giant, hierarchical and integrated corporation, which is driven by shareholder value maximization. An important component of the accumulation of corporate power is the rise of a neoliberal interpretation of competition law, which allows a greater tolerance of monopoly/large size corporation under the banner of efficiency. What follows from this line of thought is that corporate power can arise through the suppression of competition. However, if suppression of competition is a source of corporate power, it does not follow that the promotion of more competition will necessarily curtail corporate power. Recent scholarship in anti-trust law has pointed out that corporate power can also arise through the strategic promotion of competition. Examples include outsourcing to small corporations and competition between individual contractors in platforms in the gig economy. When competition law concentrates on fostering horizontal competition between individuals while tolerating vertical coordination, this amounts to letting vulnerable parties compete for the interests of strong coordinated parties. Given the emergence of such phenomena, the political theory of the corporation needs to examine not only how corporate governance gives shareholders leverage over other constituents (such as boards, workers, and other stakeholders), but also the effects of the construction of competition and the distribution of coordination rights in the market. In other words, the corporation could gain power through competition law's promotion of competition, and hence the extent to which and the ways competition ought to be promoted must consider its effects on the power of the corporations. Additionally, competition law implies that the boundaries of the firm are not determined solely by the efficiency of the firm, that is, whether structuring production through the firm is more efficient than in the market, but also by a quasi-political decision, i.e. how competition law distributes horizontal and vertical coordination rights. This paper aims to bring into view the relevance of competition law to the power and boundaries of the corporation, and thus to

the political theory of the corporation. By doing so, this paper brings to the fore that the justification of how competition ought to be structured and who should be given the right to coordination are central to the question of whether competition could contribute to the common good, as well as whether the corporation, through its market competitive behaviors, is contributing to the common good.

Paper 3: “Multinational Imperialism: A Kantian View”

In what sense, if any, is the multinational corporation (MNC) an imperialist institution? This paper presents and defends a broadly Kantian answer. I argue that MNCs are, by their very form, holders of dominative power, and the global system of production they administer and sustain prevents the societies under that power from achieving what, in Kant’s view, is the purpose of political order: social relations of reciprocal freedom. This is the case even when MNCs bring about higher standards of living, or are authorized under voluntary contracting. They are nevertheless engaged in private governance. Their ownership and command of capital itself unilaterally imposes a structure of legal and economic ordering that reflects essentially private and alien judgments and determinations, not those of the persons whose lives are shaped in and by that structure. Just as in the high imperialism of an earlier era, dominated populations suffer the lack of control, powerlessness, and disorientation that comes with being treated as material to be shaped and directed for the benefit of distant others. This is consistent with their receiving marginally higher wages, and a broader range of consumer options. Neither vindicates the wrongs at issue. By extending analytic applications of Kant’s *Rechtslehre* into the sphere of globalized production, this paper bridges the critique of multinationals with recent work on privatization, international justice, and territorial sovereignty. It also responds to current arguments in management studies and business ethics that a reformed, prosocial corporation can mitigate or reverse the harms associated with neoliberalism. Those arguments fail to address or even acknowledge the problem of unilateral subjection, and therefore misapprehend the MNC as a political actor. The Kantian account, however, departs from standard Marxist views of corporate globalization as a neo-imperial phase of capitalist development, tracing an alternative route to a similar conclusio

Speakers: *Rutger Claassen, Tully Rector, Chi Kwok, Barbara Bziuk and Philipp Stehr*

Symposium: 'Corporate Ethics'

Corporate Ethics Inside and Outside the Firm

This symposium is intended for business ethicists in the Netherlands to share recent research.

Papers

Paper 1: Free Markets and Public Interests in the Pharmaceutical Industry: A Comparative Analysis of Catholic and Reformational Critiques of Neoliberal Free Market perspective of Hayek

The rise of liberal market economies, propagated by Neoliberal free market thought from amongst others Friedrich von Hayek, has created a vacant responsibility for public interests in the market order of society. This development has been critiqued by Catholic Social Teaching (CST), forcefully arguing that governments and businesses should be directed to the common good. In this debate, no attention has yet been given to the Reformational tradition and its principle of sphere sovereignty, which provides guidelines on the responsibilities of governments and companies for the public interest of society. This article analyzes the differences and similarities between CST and the Reformational philosophy in their critiques of the Neoliberal free market perspective of Hayek. We apply the three perspectives to the case of orphan drugs in the pharmaceutical industry and show that the perspectives of CST and the Reformational philosophy offer valuable insights in correction to the Neoliberal free market perspective of Hayek into how the responsibilities of governments and companies might be arrived at in order to serve public health interests.

Paper 2: When can implies ought

In our article we want to argue that the new insights with regard to behavioral economics offer companies the possibility to influence the eating behaviour or broader the lifestyle of consumers and employees. The question is whether companies can or should use this technique to contribute to solving the major problem of obesity and overweight. Is it a moral duty of companies to use their knowledge of nudging to realize major social interests: "can implies ought".

Paper 3: Selfless Loyalty as the Central Ethic of Business: A re-examination of Friedman 1970

Friedman's short New York Magazine essay overwhelmingly excites furious condemnation from business ethicists. It is indeed easy to agree that the essay has severe problems, from its naïve (economist's) conception of business as 'profit maximisation' to its logical incoherence (Mulligan 1986; Grant 1991). And it is fair to say that Friedman does not succeed in proving his thesis that "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits". Yet the reputation of Friedman's essay among business ethicists (as represented in conference presentations, academic publications and textbooks) is not that it is a bad argument but a wicked one. In particular, a great many business ethicists seem to believe that it is a straightforward defence of selfishness. But this comes from conflating two different groups of people (shareholders and corporate executives) and two distinct ethical roles that people can have (loyalty and altruism). I read Friedman as claiming that private individuals who are employed as corporate executives owe a special duty of loyalty to their employers (whom he defines, controversially, as the shareholders) which takes priority over any moral duty they might feel to use their position to advance the general social welfare. Far from being selfish, such loyalty requires great self-abnegation. On the model of a trustee, one must set aside one's own material interests and even one's moral preferences and act only in the interests of shareholders. Loyalty is a problematic ethic but it comes with different faults than Friedman's position is generally accused of. It can be understood as a 3rd position outside the dichotomy of individual selfishness and pro-social altruism, and one that tracks recent paradigm shifts in moral psychology (Haidt and Graham 2007). It has implications for

contemporary debates, for example in challenging the logic of performance based remuneration. Moreover, pedagogically it offers a less abstract, more relevant way to discuss ethics with business students, many of whom, in my experience, make exactly Friedman's assumption about the ethic of business and cannot wait to pledge their loyalty to a corporate hierarchy.

Speakers: *Thomas Wells, Johan Wempe, Johan Graafland, Rebecca Ruehle, Jelle Van Baardewijk and Mathilde Oosterhuis-Blok*

Symposium: ‘Extreme Thinking’

The Epistemology and Ethics of Extreme Thinking

Political and religious extremism, radicalization, fanaticism, and the conspiracy milieu have received much scholarly attention, not only in the sciences but also in philosophy. Increasingly, various types of extreme thinking are scrutinized from epistemological and ethical perspectives. This symposium brings together recent and emerging research at the intersection of applied epistemology and ethics of extreme thinking: the thinking of conspiracy theorists, political extremists, fundamentalists, fanatics, and denialists. The goal of this symposium is twofold: first, to showcase this exciting new research, and second, to bring together theoretical and practical philosophers in and around the Netherlands who research extremism. We will explore the nature of fanatical attitudes, the ethics of conspiracy theory belief, the epistemological relationship between conspiracy theory and fundamentalist beliefs, as well as questions surrounding the rationality and responsibility of persons with extreme beliefs. Each presentation features early career researchers pitching new ideas or exploring new arguments in a flashtalk format.

Presentations

1. Extreme Beliefs—Extreme Feelings?

Two phenomena that are commonly associated with extremism and related political movements, such as fundamentalism, fanaticism, and radicalism, are extreme beliefs and extreme feelings. In this talk, I explore the question of how these two phenomena – extreme thinking and extreme feeling – relate to each other. Thereby, I focus on two kinds of affective phenomena characteristic of hostile antagonistic political movements, namely passionate, wholehearted devotion to a cause (e.g., Olson 2007; Toscano 2017) and hostile antagonism towards those people who (allegedly) threaten the cause in question (e.g., Berger 2018; Katsafanas 2019). First, I discuss the question of what, if anything, it is that makes these feelings “extreme” (intensity, duration, depth, claim to absoluteness, unresponsiveness to reason, willingness to sacrifice, degree of generalization, etc.). I argue that in the case of the loving, wholehearted devotion to a cause, on the cognitive level it is the claim to absoluteness and the demand that others feel, believe, and/or act the same way oneself does; on the affective level, it is the wholeheartedness of one’s devotion; on the motivational level, it is the willingness to sacrifice; and on the personal and social level, it is the collective identity defining character of the feeling that, in a certain sense, makes it “extreme”. In the case of hostile antagonism, by contrast, the generalization, collectivization, and essentialization of evil-making features of the enemy are central (Szanto 2020). Second, I turn to the question of how these two types of feelings – loving devotion and hostile antagonism – relate to extreme beliefs. Thereby, I specifically pay attention to the role of (un-)certainty. Hostile antagonistic movements, and fundamentalism in particular, are associated with a high degree of epistemic certainty that might explain why extreme beliefs give rise to extreme feelings. However, in the context of hostile antagonistic movements, and fanaticism in particular, passionate devotion and hostile antagonism are also interpreted as a reaction to a lack of epistemic certainty (Katsafanas 2019). This ambiguity is not only relevant to our understanding of the relationship between extreme beliefs and extreme feelings but also invites a reflection on the differences between extremism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism

2. The Ethics of Conspiracy Theory Belief

Generalists about conspiracy theories hold that it's rational to deny a conspiracy theory prior to evaluating the evidence bearing on the conspiracy theory (Clarke 2002, Levy 2007). Particularists hold that one's attitude towards a conspiracy theory should be function of the available evidence (Basham 2003, Dentith 2014, 2018). One argument for Particularism is that if we followed generalist norms, we would either too easily enable conspirators to flourish, promote the problematic idea that all conspiracy theorists are irrational, or else inappropriately pollute conspiracy theory research with negative epistemological bias (Basham 2018, Pigden 2012). This is an ethical argument against Generalism. I explore two critical ideas. First, that Particularism, by not appreciating the ramifications of the distinction between global and local conspiracy theorizing, also faces a moral challenge. Particularism would rationally require victims and survivors of terrorism or genocide to explore the evidence bearing on denialist conspiracy theories surrounding their survival. This, I argue, is morally harmful. For this reason, we shouldn't take all conspiracy theory belief seriously. Second, I explore the ramifications of moral encroachment for conspiracy theory belief: the idea that whether the moral features of one's attitude towards a conspiracy theory can affect the epistemic status of that attitude. If morality encroaches on the epistemic, the content of some conspiracy theories can directly affect the rational status of one's attitude to it as well.

3. How Epistemically Similar are Fundamentalism and Conspiricism?

How epistemically similar or different are fundamentalism and conspiricism? Many fundamentalists hold conspiracy beliefs. It has, for example, been observed that Muslim fundamentalists believe in an anti-Muslim conspiracy by the USA and its allies, and in a Jewish conspiracy against Islam, that Hindu fundamentalists fear a Muslim conspiracy, or that Christian fundamentalist fear a 'liberal' conspiracy against them. Moreover, research on conspiracy theories and fundamentalist beliefs show certain parallels: as defensive reactions against modernity and secularization; as Manichaeic; as responses to increased uncertainty; and as cognitively vicious or arising out of false beliefs. In addition to the observations that many fundamentalists hold conspiracy theories, it has been hypothesized that certain psychological traits (e.g. need for closure, dogmatic intolerance, belief significance, etc.) underly both fundamentalist and conspiracy beliefs. Given the parallels between fundamentalist and conspiracy belief, I address the question whether and to what extent these phenomena are epistemically similar or resemble each other. Do they, for example, arise from the same mindset? Or can they be explained in terms of the same epistemic vices (if at all), perhaps in combination with certain epistemic virtues? Are there similarities with regardsto epistemic trust, the evaluation of evidence, and their relation to (alleged) epistemic authorities? Having given an overview about the epistemic parallels of these phenomena, I conclude by reflecting on what this means for further study of fundamentalism and conspiracy theories.

4. Two Accounts of Extreme Beliefs

A dominant view in extremism studies is that holding extremist belief is irrational and a result of a person's pathological tendencies (Lankford 2013). Recently, however, this paradigm has been criticized (Cassam 2021; Sageman 2014). This has given rise to two new approaches. The first approach claims that, rather than declaring extremists crazy, we should take extremists and their beliefs seriously (Cassam 2018, 2021; De Graaf 2021; Harambam 2020). People with extreme beliefs, e.g., belief in conspiracy theories or neo-Nazi belief, can often provide reasons for their belief. Taking extremists seriously then minimally requires engaging with their first-personal reason explanations. Let's call this approach the person approach. The second approach, which I will call the circumstance approach, focuses not so much on the first-personal outlook of the extremist, but on the social dimension of how individuals form and maintain their beliefs (Baurmann 2007, Nguyen 2020). This approach seeks to explain how regular people can come to (rationally/virtuously) hold extreme beliefs in certain contexts, such as extremist groups or echo chambers. Both approaches give us new insights into extremist belief: the mindset of extremists, including first-personal reason explanations, on the one hand, and the social context in which such a mindset might (rationally/virtuously) develop and endure, on the other. From

this perspective, both approaches not only seem compatible but seem to complement each other. However, one can also claim the opposite: in the circumstance approach, the specific outlook of the individual is neither explanandum nor explanans; rather, what is explained is how any individual in the wrong circumstances would, if rational, have extreme beliefs. Personal outlook takes no part in it. Hence, although the rationality of the individual is assumed on both approaches, only on the former approach are extremists treated as (prima facie) responsible for their beliefs. On the circumstance approach, circumstances mitigate the extremists' responsibility for their beliefs. In this paper, I will clarify the relation between the two approaches by outlining the different conceptions of rationality at play and by analyzing why and to what extent responsibility is mitigated on the circumstance approach.

Speakers: *Chris Ranalli, Nora Kindermann, Ruth Rebecca Tietjen, Naomi Kloosterboer and Rik Peels*

** This symposium is organized by the project Extreme Beliefs – The Epistemology and Ethics of Fundamentalism <https://extremebeliefs.com>

Symposium: ‘Mental Health Ethics’

Philosophy of psychiatry is a relatively new and growing field of research investigating a wide array of issues surrounding the foundations of psychiatry as a science, the definition of mental disorder, the explanations of psychopathology, and the ethics of clinical practice. The field is highly interdisciplinary, integrating methods from the humanities, social sciences and health sciences. This panel focuses on pressing ethical issues in the field of psychiatry. Contested practices include compulsory care, competence assessment, diagnostic labeling and holding mental health service users responsible. The presenters take contrasting approaches to the issue of how to balance two competing ethical commitments regarding individuals with mental health issues. On the one hand, it is important to respect and foster individuals’ agency and involvement in diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. On the other hand, caregivers and health professionals have a responsibility to take account of any deficits in competence, particularly where individuals’ impaired understanding results in harm or impedes improvements to agency. Reconciling these competing commitments calls for a rethinking of the relation between mental health professionals and service users. The papers in this panel provide contextualized analyses of what this rethinking might involve

Anke Snoek and colleagues (presenter: **Daphne Brandenburg**) focus on the function of shame and guilt in addiction and in particular their tendency to enable overcoming dysfunctional patterns of behavior. Challenging the dominant view that therapy should be tailored towards people’s susceptibility to guilt feelings, they propose to move away from negative and retributive self-blame to positive and scaffolding reproach.

Joel Anderson and **Sander Werkhoven** assess ethical issues surrounding proposals to replace standardized psychiatric classifications and labels by data-driven mental health diagnostics based on artificial intelligence and machine learning. They discuss ways in which these ethical concerns can be addressed and outline the prospects for data driven psychiatric diagnostics.

Lucie White focuses on respect for autonomy and involuntary treatment in anorexia nervosa. While persons with anorexia nervosa can be competent to refuse treatment according to the standard (and primarily cognitive) criteria of competence, it is sometimes argued that their “pathological” desire to refrain from eating is not an exercise of autonomy in order to justify 2 involuntary interventions. Challenging this approach, Lucie White contends that involuntary interventions are better justified in cases of anorexia by directly appealing to the principle of beneficence and professionals’ duty to promote the wellbeing of their patients.

Matthé Scholten’s talk brings together the debates about competence to consent and psychiatric labeling. Responding to the criticism raised by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that competence assessments are applied discriminatorily to persons with a psychiatric diagnosis, he argues that allocating functional competence assessments according to psychopathology does not amount to statistical discrimination

After attending this panel, participants will

- be familiar with key ethical issues in mental healthcare
- understand why psychiatric labels can be problematic
- see why respect for autonomy is important in mental healthcare
- be familiar with the criteria for competence
- understand why the notion of competence is contested

Symposium: 'Situated Agency'

The Normative Features of Situated Agency

A revolution is afoot in the cognitive sciences. Cognitivist representational approaches, which reigned supreme for several decades, are increasingly being challenged by situated theories of cognition. However, some questions appear to resist a purely situated approach. One of these questions pertains to how agents relate to norms. Are norms in the head, or part of the outside world? Must norms be represented for norm-guided behavior to be possible? What does it mean to 'internalize' a norm if not to acquire a representation of it? In this symposium, we aim to focus on understanding human normativity from perspectives of situated cognition.

In the different talks and discussions during the symposium, we will address two overarching questions. Firstly, how can situated accounts make sense of the idea that human agents are constrained by norms, without presupposing the existence of mental representations of these norms? Miguel Segundo-Ortin will argue that a fruitful answer is to be found in a version of the ecological account of perceptual learning, emphasizing the idea that social interaction normatively shapes our perception-action cycles. Josephine Pascoe develops an account of normative self-regulation which also emphasizes the importance of social interaction. She will discuss how society imposes normative constraints on agents by shaping our self-narratives. Annemarie Kalis & Harmen Ghijsen develop a regulative dispositionalist theory of attitudes, arguing that attitudes such as beliefs are not internal representational states, but dispositional profiles. Importantly, these dispositional profiles are normatively shaped by our folk psychological practices.

The second question at the heart of the symposium is the question how human agents can relate to the wide range of implicit norms that govern their behaviour. As said, Josephine Pascoe will focus on the role played by self-narratives, arguing that even though they impose implicit normative constraints, such narratives are nevertheless amenable to change. In order to show this she will explore ways in which agents bargain with others in order to make changes in their narratives and gain new possibilities for action. Annemarie Kalis & Harmen Ghijsen argue that most existing accounts of implicit bias have mistakenly concluded that explicit avowals (such as the expression: 'Yes I genuinely believe that the genders are equal!') are mere (and often incorrect) reports of agents' own mental states. Instead, they support the view that avowals should be seen as normative commitments, combining this idea with the understanding of folk psychology as a regulative practice. With this account they aim to show how avowals can function as tools for combating implicit bias. Finally, Miguel Segundo-Ortin's talk about the ecological account of perceptual learning will argue that a 'social education of intention' shapes not so much explicit rules and propositional attitudes, but precisely the wide range of implicitly normative habits that agents use to regulate their own actions.

Papers

Paper 1: Understanding implicit bias: A case for regulative dispositionalism

This paper aims to contribute to a dispositionalist understanding of implicit bias. Currently, dispositionalism is the main contender against the default representationalist understanding of implicit bias. According to that default view, subjects have two (or more) conflicting representations with respect to the topic at hand, one of which, the explicit attitude, is causally responsible for the subject's explicit avowal, and another of which, the implicit attitude, is causally responsible for producing the relatively automatic behaviour measured by psychological tests of implicit bias.

The dispositionalist alternative rejects the idea that attitudes are constituted by specific representational states, and argues instead that they should be understood as higher-level dispositional features of the person as a whole (Machery 2016; Schwitzgebel 2001, 2002, 2010, 2013; Tumulty 2014). On such a view, the discordance characteristic of implicit bias should not be seen as a conflict between two different (types of) representational states, but as cases in which different strands of a person's behaviour point into the direction of different attitude ascriptions. However, so far few representationalists have become convinced by dispositionalist arguments. The main reason for this seems to be that representationalism is in a better position to offer psychological explanations. We argue that if dispositionalism wants to be a genuine contender, it should make much clearer what it has to contribute to the understanding of implicit bias.

The proposal made in this paper is that dispositionalism, if combined with a mindshaping approach to folk psychology (De Bruin, 2017; McGeer, 2007, 2015, 2020; Vierkant & Paraskevaides, 2012; Zawidzki, 2008, 2013) can show how the normative aspects of belief practices partly determine what it means to have a belief. We will argue that such a regulative dispositionalism, has the resources to account for two prominent normative features of implicit bias. Firstly, it can explain why implicit bias is an 'uncomfortable resting point' for agents: why we expect each other and ourselves to have at least somewhat 'coherent beliefs'. Secondly, regulative dispositionalism can offer an interesting account of the role played by first person avowals of belief. Both representationalist theories and classic forms of dispositionalism about attitudes take such avowals to be mere self-reports of one's own attitudes (which are in practice often false). Instead, we argue that in line with Moran (2001), they should be seen as normative commitments. This shows how in certain situations, first person expressions ('Yes, I genuinely believe that the genders are equal!') can play an important role in change, by opening oneself up to normative regulation by others and by oneself.

To conclude, the alternative view offered by regulative dispositionalism pivots around the question whether or not the question what it means to have a belief, can be answered without taking the normative features of believing into account (where representationalism argues yes, and dispositionalism argues no). By addressing this question, regulative dispositionalism can offer an understanding of important normative features of implicit bias which have no place in the representationalist framework.

Speakers: *Annemarie Kalis (UU) & Harmen Ghijzen (RU)*

Paper 2: Bargains for new narratives: A suggestion for bottom-up social change

As commonly acknowledged in philosophical discussions on harmful social and cultural norms, the endeavor of changing such norms for the better is complicated by the fact that we are often unaware of the rules that govern our behavior. Views from the situated cognition framework (e.g., Brancazio, 2019; Haslanger, 2019; Maiese & Hanna, 2019; McGeer, 2019) have come a long way in understanding how, through socialization, agents internalize rules and roles that escape perception. What seems to lack in these analyses is, however, an investigation of how we, as individuals, could enact social change from the bottom-up.

I believe that a first step in the right direction is to look at self-narratives. It is by now uncontroversial that self-narratives are normative and have social and cultural aspects, and that, as such, they are one way in which society imposes roles on agents. Importantly, as McConnell and Snoek (2018) and Hutto (Forthcoming) highlight, we are merely co-authors of our own narratives. As a consequence, changes in our narratives importantly depend on the acceptance of them by the hand of our co-authors, that

is, other agents in our social sphere. Regarding harmful roles, this suggests that becoming aware of them is not enough to get rid of them: when co-authors reject changes that we propose, they keep in place a (harmful) narrative that we ourselves identify with. Knowing that women get often interrupted by men because of sexist dynamics will not prevent men from interrupting me, which, more importantly, will probably convince me that it is normal for me to be interrupted by men.

In this talk, I will explore the ways in which agents bargain with others in order to make changes in their narratives so that they can gain new possibilities for action. Through this analysis, I hope to further understand one way in which agents can effectively enact social change from the bottom-up.

Speaker: *Josephine Pascoe (UU)*

Paper 3: Social normativity from an embodied and situated perspective

That our individual agency is constrained by social norms is hard to deny. How we dress, what we eat, and so on, is in part determined by the norms that rule in the communities we partake. The problem, however, is to explain how this is possible. Orthodox cognitive scientists have suggested that for this to be possible, agents must possess mental representations of the norms and that these representations mediate their relationship with the environment, constraining what they do in ways that make it possible that the norms are satisfied. In this paper, I will offer a new light on this explanatory problem, looking at embodied and situated theories of cognition instead. In particular, I will look at the ecological theory of perception. This theory hypothesizes that our perceptual take on the world is not of neutral objects but of opportunities for action (affordances). At first sight, this strategy may seem paradoxical because this theory has been accused, even by the Gibsonian themselves, of being unable to account for social normativity (Heras-Escribano, 2019; Heft, 2018; Baggs, 2021). My claim is that in order to overcome this objection we have to focus on the ecological account of perceptual learning and, more specifically, on the role that social interaction plays in it. In contrast to the individualistic approach to perceptual learning traditionally adopted by ecological psychologists (see, e.g., E. J. Gibson & Pick, 2000), I will defend that it is by interacting with others that our perception-action cycles can come to be normatively shaped (see Segundo-Ortin & Satne, in press). To flesh out this claim, I will focus on what I call the “social education of intention.” I hypothesize that it is only by taking seriously the impact that social interaction has on perceptual learning (and the education of intention, more specifically) that ecological psychology will be able to capture the socio-cultural dimensions of human action and experience adequately. Extending the ecological conception of perceptual learning in this way, I hold, will provide embodied and situated cognitive scientists with resources to build a non-representational explanation for how agents act in normatively-shaped ways

Speaker: *Miguel Segundo-Ortin (UU)*

Symposium: ‘Climate Change’

Climate Change, Lifestyles, and Individual Duties

This symposium focuses on a number of related questions in political philosophy on the topic of individual duties to act on climate change, and whether such duties impose unjustified demands on the lifestyles we can lead, and the corresponding quality of life. This is obviously a set of very urgent questions, given that the latest research on climate change (cfr. the 2021 IPCC reports) leave no doubt that climate mitigation and adaptation are needed in order to protect human life on Earth. The symposium focusses on three questions that are all related, and in part build on each other. The first paper addresses the question whether we have individual duties to act to avoid a morally significant harm of our individual acts seems innocuous. If it appears that as individuals we make no morally significant difference, why should we perform or not perform certain actions? The second and third paper focus on the question of how these actions would impact our lifestyles. They employ conceptual resources from contemporary theorizing in political philosophy to analyse how climate actions affect our lifestyles, our freedoms, or wellbeing, and whether these changes can still fit a liberal framework or can otherwise be justified

Papers

Paper 1: To be, or not to be green, that is the question

There are many instances where a large number of people all performing individually innocuous acts, gives rise to some morally significant harm or benefit. The problem is, because each act doesn't appear to make a morally significant difference, then each agent can argue: 'Whatever I do, it doesn't make a difference'. From which they conclude: 'Therefore I have no reason to do, or not do, X'. Intuitively, this feels wrong. It feels as if we ought to have some moral reason why many people oughtn't bring about certain harms and why many people ought to contribute to certain benefits. Examples abound, but climate change is a particular pertinent case in point: it feels as if we ought to reduce, reuse, recycle, cycle, stay local, go vegan, join the climate-march, give to climate charities, and so on. Yet, so long as each individual act appears to make no morally significant difference, then we are left without an explanation as to why we, as individuals, ought to perform, or not perform, these particular actions. I argue that the key to unlocking this problem lies, not with emphasising what difference each individual makes – or may possibly make – but, rather, by viewing oneself as one person amongst many. Subsequently, a reason for individual action can be derived from a person's beliefs about what others have a reason to do. That is, if an agent believes that many people oughtn't act in a certain way because many actions of this kind bring about harm. Then, unless this agent can say why they might be an exception, it stands to reason that this agent oughtn't act in this manner also. This result follows as a straightforward consequence of the principle of impartiality. For instance, if a person believes that many people ought to recycle owing to the potential good this can bring about, then unless one can specify why they are an exception to this, then this person should recycle all the same. The paper then turns to well-known counterexamples in the literature. In the end, the conclusion is a qualified one: I conclude that some of these counterexamples are persuasive because they seem to present ulterior moral reasons which do not stem from whether an individual makes a difference or not; but rather from reasons such as the significant costs that action would impose upon the individual. Still, what this implies is that, although the principle of impartiality may not provide a pro toto reason for action in all cases of collective action, it provides a pro tanto reason nonetheless. And so, significant ulterior reasons notwithstanding, appeals to impartiality may still explain why individuals have a reason for

action in certain cases of collective action, especially when it comes to matters of whether we ought to go green or not

Paper 2: How much is enough? Avenues towards Green Liberalism

Global natural resources are depleting. A transition away from current economic systems is extremely urgent, but such transitions face a conflict between environmental policies and a core liberal value: non-interference in lifestyles. This – as we argue – is due to lacunae in contemporary liberal thought: preferences are a given, and the impact environmental constraints have on freedom is neglected. This article undertakes a first step to fill these lacunae by proposing a moral framework for assessing new socio-economic systems that accounts for these blind spots in liberal thought; this allows accounting for the constraining effect current societal structures have on preferences, and comparing institutional changes in terms of resources that enhance freedom to pursue valuable lifepaths. For this purpose, neglected aspects of the capability framework will be developed by employing the literature on overall freedom and freedom-rankings in political philosophy. More specifically, we show how the capability approach allows to account for both resource-use, as well as the impact on people's freedom and well-being in the assessment of new institutional structures. As we argue, this provides a first step to give guidance to socio-economic transitions while staying true to liberal values in times of climate change

Paper 3: Climate duties, freedom and well-being

This paper starts from the premise that we all have individual climate duties, which include duties not to emit more than our fair share of net emissions, and then analyses the question what the implications are for our lifestyles, freedoms and quality of life. There is great resistance among part of the population in high-emitting countries to restrict our (net) emissions, since it is argued that this will constrain our freedoms and negatively impact our quality of life. I argue that while it is true that meeting our climate duties will restrict some of our freedoms, these restrictions are justified. The truth of the claim regarding the negative impact on our well-being depends on how one conceptualises that notion. Under a preference-satisfaction notion – which is what dominates much mainstream political discourse – there might be some reductions in wellbeing, yet improvements in other aspects of wellbeing. Under a capability-based notion of wellbeing, the extent to which wellbeing will be either reduced or enhanced depends on the question to what extent those capabilities can be created without using carbon-intense resources. However, under both accounts, the extent that there is such a negative impact on wellbeing is also justified. The paper ends by discussing concerns of political and psychological feasibility related to those questions, and lays out implications for climate ethicists entering the public domain, as well as climate activists and policy makers

Speakers: *Benjamin Mullins, Constanze Binder and Ingrid Robeyns*