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In alphabetical order of Surname

Snita Ahir-Knight

Victoria University of Wellington

Is non-suicidal self-harm in youth a mental disorder?

Non-suicidal self-harm in youth is hard to understand. Commonly when we think of self-harm images of mentally distressed youth cutting themselves come to mind. Owing to the frequent consequences of self-harm it is an important phenomenon that requires further consideration.

The question of whether self-harm is a mental disorder is topical. This is because self-harm has been included in the latest edition of the DSM as a condition that requires further study, suggesting that once further research has been done to determine the criteria, self-harm will be classed as a mental disorder. I argue however that self-harm in youth is not a mental disorder. I identify the characteristic features and motivations involved in self-harm, and by describing how these features and motivations are also seen in other non-pathological behaviours I demonstrate that self-harm is non-pathological too.

My view has importance for the care and treatment of youth and for the question of how we generally explain mental health and mental disorder.

Miri Albahari

University of Western Australia

Universal Consciousness as Ground of all Being

Despite being opposed, dualism and materialism share the deeper assumption that any fundamental constituents of physical reality, whether specified microstructurally or macrocosmically, will exclude from that specification phenomenal qualities we associate with consciousness. This leads to difficulties in reconciling conscious with physical properties. Each is faced with the prospect of an explanatory gap, either by way of reduction or emergence, as per the materialist, or by way of causal interface, as per the dualist. Such difficulties have propelled the dialectic towards panpsychist positions that sink consciousness into the physical fundamentals. Consciousness is now proposed to specify the intrinsic nature of an otherwise extrinsically specified micro-entity, or more recently, the intrinsic nature of the extrinsically specified cosmos. But these positions – micropsychism and cosmopsychism – face new problems. How can elements of the ground, be it multiple micro-subjects or a single cosmic mind, coherently combine or decombine to enable the existence of unified macro-subjects such as ourselves? This paper will explore an avenue that goes beyond these positions. Unlike with cosmopsychism, the universal consciousness doesn't problematically qualify a cosmic subject with a perspective, but is unconditioned and aperspectival. Such a position however faces a new 'Parmenidean' challenge. Can it be overcome?

Mark Alfano, J Adam Carter & Marc Cheong

Delft University of Technology & Australian Catholic University

Technological Seduction and Self-Radicalization

Many scholars agree that the Internet plays a pivotal role in self-radicalization, which can lead to behaviours ranging from lone-wolf terrorism to participation in white nationalist rallies to mundane bigotry and voting for extremist candidates. However, the mechanisms by which the Internet facilitates self-radicalization are disputed; some fault the individuals who end up self-radicalized, while others lay the blame on the technology itself. In this paper, we explore the role played by technological design decisions in online self-radicalization in its myriad guises, encompassing extreme as well as more mundane forms. We begin by defining the concept of technological seduction to online self-radicalization. Next, we distinguish between top-down seduction and bottom-up seduction. We then situate both forms of technological seduction within the theoretical model of dynamical systems theory. We conclude by articulating strategies for combatting online self-radicalization.

Erik Anderson

Drew University

Conditions of Adequacy for an Aesthetics of Silence

Oddly, silence has been neglected by aesthetic theory. Perhaps this is due to an obvious challenge: silence fails the traditional tests of the aesthetically worthy: no unity within diversity; no temporal sequence with a beginning, middle, and end; no optimal combination of unity, diversity, and intensity; no significant formal combinations of lines, colors and shapes; no spontaneous creativity or expression; no purposiveness without a purpose; no proper categories to provide conventions of objectivity. Still, despite what might be taken to be prima facie evidence against it, I want to encourage the view that silence is worthy of aesthetic response and appraisal. In this paper I investigate five conditions of adequacy for an aesthetics of silence.

Robbie Arrell

Wuhan University, China

Re-Setting Finally Valuable Things

Some claim merely extrinsically valuable things can be finally valuable. Shelly Kagan, for example, argues one might value the pen Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation for its own sake, despite its being valuable merely in virtue of its extrinsic/non-intrinsic properties. But whilst it might not seem apt to value Lincoln's pen merely instrumentally, nor would it seem apt to value it for its own sake. Instead, I argue we extrinsically value the pen non-instrumentally (i.e. for the sake of something else—its historical role—though not as a means to it). Moreover, I suggest the set containing things relevantly like Lincoln's pen isn't actually a subset of the superset of things valuable for their own sake at all. Rather, it belongs to the superset of things valuable for the sake of something else. Indeed, only the latter constitutes a proper superset, comprising distinct subsets of things extrinsically valued instrumentally, and things extrinsically valued non-instrumentally. The former, by contrast, is not a proper superset at all, for it comprises only things valuable in virtue of their intrinsic properties. But if all things valuable for their own sake are merely intrinsically valuable, then labelling things "finally" valuable is redundant.

Lauren Ashwell

Bates College

Agency and First-Person Authority

Agency accounts of self-knowledge start from the observation that we can 'make up our own minds' in a way that we can't make up the minds of others. This way of making up our own minds is supposed to yield an essentially first-personal epistemology, and thereby explain how self-knowledge is so special and distinct. Proponents of these

agency accounts of self-knowledge contend that if we were merely observers of our own minds, we would be too passive in our knowledge of our own mind, and lack this kind of special relationship to it. I will argue, however, that there is a particular way of making up our own minds with respect to desiring that requires a different sort of access to our own minds. While some agency accounts recognize that their central explanation of self-knowledge cannot explain all introspection, other ways of knowing are peripheral to our agency and self. I argue that without a 'non-agential' way of knowing our desires, we would have a lesser experience of our own agency.

Sondra Bacharach & Deborah Tollefsen

Victoria University of Wellington

Fearing Fearless Girl

On March 7th, 2017 New Yorkers woke to a new girl in town: brave, little Fearless Girl stood, squarely facing off against the famous Charging Bull statue. Created by Visbal and commissioned by State Street Global Advisors (SSgA), her arrival prompted a lawsuit by Charging Bull's creator Arturo Di Modica, arguing Fearless Girl had transformed Charging Bull's meaning by emasculating him. We argue that Di Modica is wrong: Fearless Girl hasn't changed Charging Bull's meaning – it's much worse than that. Visbal has appropriated Charging Bull and in doing so, vandalized it! To defend our position, we will clarify the boundaries between artworks, appropriation and vandalism.

Dirk Baltzly

University of Tasmania

Female Guardians in Proclus' Republic Commentary

Proclus takes Republic V's recommendation that there should be both male and female Guardians as a serious and desirable political proposal. Unfortunately he says very little about women's political participation in the ordering of the ideal city. But a recurring theme is that political arrangements are just to the extent that they mirror the political order of the cosmos. The administration of justice to souls that is described in the Myth of Er is thus not merely an adornment at the end of the dialogue, but important information about the cosmic paradigm to which the just human polis should assimilate itself. This paper will consider the role of female guardians in Proclus' interpretation of the Republic as a serious suggestion in political theory by looking at the cosmic paradigms for women's administration of justice in the Myth of Er.

Sam Baron

University of Western Australia

Counterpossible Scheming

Mathematics appears to play a genuine explanatory role in science. But how do mathematical explanations work? Recently, a counterfactual approach to mathematical explanation has been suggested. I argue that such a view fails to differentiate the explanatory uses of mathematics within science from the non-explanatory uses. I go on to offer a solution to this problem by combining elements of the counterfactual theory of explanation with elements of the unificationist theory of explanation. The result is a theory according to which a counterfactual is explanatory when it is an instance of a generalised counterfactual scheme.

John Bigelow & Martin Leckey

Monash University and Melbourne University

Categorial Ontology

In this paper, a Platonist 'categorial ontology' will be teased out of the 'categorial languages' of modern logic. No attempt will be made to prove that this ontological theory is true. But since it has evolved out of thousands of years of progress in mathematics, it is worth at least trying to understand what it is saying.

We begin by considering the possibility of taking categorial languages at face value. We will try clarify a substantive sense in which these languages, taken at face value, do entail that 'there are' things that are aptly called 'universals'.

The second step is to loosen up a little, and to consider the possibility of introducing figures of speech. First, it might be possible to 'personify' universals as 'gods'. Secondly, it might be possible to 'reify' universals, and to treat them as if they belonged to the same 'category' as particulars.

The hostility of nominalists to 'universals' is in one respect legitimately grounded, because they rightly suspect that much talk of 'universals' arises out of mere 'figures of speech': language has 'gone on holiday' (Wittgenstein). But realists are right too: there are truths that are aptly expressed by these figures of speech.

Christopher Boerdam

University of Queensland

Žižek's Dialectical Materialism

In his recent work, especially *Less Than Nothing* (2012) and *Absolute Recoil* (2014), Slavoj Žižek has continued to refine his project of reviving a Hegelian metaphysics of dialectical materialism that meets the challenge established by German Idealism of thinking 'subject with substance'. This metaphysics involves linking the concept of the subject as developed by German Idealism with the concept of the Freudian death drive to conceptualise the subject as that point of formal negativity that immanently transcends the symbolic and natural coordinates of its existence. The resulting ontology is neither monist or dualist, but rather conceptualises reality as non-all, or as constitutively incomplete and non-totalisable. This session will explore the epistemological and ethical implications of Žižek's 'gappy' ontology, and how it can allow us to approach some traditional problems of philosophy in new and interesting ways.

Renee Bolinger

Australian National University

Naive Slurring and Non-Derogatory Slurs: Delimiting the Linguistic Community

Some slurring terms (like 'queer') are eventually reclaimed; some fade from use (like 'coolie'). Others are active slurs in other communities, but operate at a remove from that history in this linguistic community (like 'gypsy' in American English). It's not clear that terms in these stages derogate; if they do, they plausibly do so differently from paradigmatic current slurs. Often speakers within a linguistic community use a term that they do not conceptualize as a slur, while other members of that community do conceptualize it as one. Theorists have been quick to categorize such speakers as linguistically incompetent naive slur-users when the terms in question are current, potent slurs, but it's less obvious what we should say for terms in one of the murkier stages just mentioned. This paper explores puzzles raised by these more ambiguous 'contested slurs', and aims to characterize some options for which facts we should take to determine whether a term is a slur in a given language, despite widespread ignorance of this fact, versus failing to count as a slur because of the widespread ignorance.

Pierrick Bourrat

Macquarie University

Challenges for a Price Approach to Evolutionary Transitions in Individuality

The hierarchical version of the Price equation, one of the most popular tool in evolutionary theory to deal with the question of levels of selection, has recently been used to characterize events in evolution known as evolutionary transitions in individuality (ETIs). During such events, individuals at a given level of organisation start to interact and form higher-level entities. The newly formed entities, although they are the product of evolutionary processes occurring at the lower level, become individuals that participate in a new higher-level selection process.

In this paper, I provide a reappraisal of the Pricean analysis of ETIs. I argue that in its classical form, it is inadequate to account for ETIs. Finally, I show that a modified account of the equation can nevertheless provide some insights on the occurrence of evolutionary transitions in individuality.

Tracy Howell

University of Waikato

Truth is our only weapon: Critical Thinking Pedagogy and Post-Truth

The dangers of giving ground to a new, post-truth, order of public discourse are recognised in President Obama's call to arms:

If we are not serious about facts and what's true and what's not, if we can't discriminate between serious arguments and propaganda, then we have problems.

On the face of it, in response to such a call, there is an urgent need to reassert the value of good argument and of critical thinking. Indeed, in the present environment in which governments present alt facts, and mainstream journalism is disparaged by some politicians, critical thinking is being seen by some as a form of activism. In the first part of the paper I address the challenges to good argumentation and reasoning posed by the post-truth order, arguing that we need an approach to critical thinking that not only teaches the skills of good reasoning and critical analysis of others' reasoning, but that also enculturates the values of which responsible inquiry is comprised. In the second part, I consider the need to acknowledge the role of emotion in our responses to the world and of our lived experiences of it, arguing that emotion and the facts of lived experiences can serve as a route to reason

David Braddon-Mitchell & Kristie Miller

The University of Sydney

Persons to a Degree

In this paper we argue that reflection on the patterns of practical concern that agents like us exhibit strongly suggests that the same person relation (SP-relation) comes in continuous degrees than being an all or nothing matter. We call this the SP-degree thesis. Though we argue that the SP-degree thesis is consistent with a range of views about personal-identity, we suggest that combining desire-first approaches to personal-identity with the SP-degree thesis better explains our patterns of practical concern. We then argue that the combination of the SP-degree thesis and the desire-first approach are best modelled by a stage-theoretic view of persistence according to which temporal counterpart relations are non-symmetric relations that come in continuous degrees.)

Heather Browning

Australian National University

The lion or the lungfish: making intersubjective welfare comparisons

Animal welfare science gives us methods for measuring the welfare of individual animals. Frequently, we want to compare these measures between individuals, of the same or different species, but this can be difficult as we cannot know whether individuals experience the same degree of welfare or if this is reflected in the same way in their measurable responses. In this paper I argue that in order to make comparisons, we must make similarity assumptions about the individuals we are comparing, which can be justified through appeal to analogy, shared evolutionary history and parsimony. This will allow us to make comparisons of individuals within a species, but for cross-species comparisons we may need to instead rely on other methods of decision-making.

David Builes

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Metaphysical Consequences of Indefinite Extensibility

While the phenomenon of indefinite extensibility has been widely discussed in the philosophy of mathematics, there has not been a focused discussion of exactly how widespread the first-order metaphysical implications of the phenomenon are. I develop in detail a general argumentative strategy that appeals to the phenomenon of indefinite extensibility to argue against the existence of mathematical objects, propositions, possible worlds, and properties. I then extend the argument strategy to apply to Theism, Necessitism, and a popular theory of essence. In broad strokes, the argument pattern is as follows. If we adopted a realist rather than an anti-realist account of the relevant view, then we should adopt a corresponding “plenitude” claim about a relevant class of entities. However, such a plenitude claim is inconsistent with the claim that the relevant entities are indefinitely extensible. Since the relevant entities are indefinitely extensible, the corresponding realist view is false. I conclude by giving a taxonomy of ways the general argumentative strategy can be resisted, along with reasons why every way of resisting the arguments comes with serious costs.

Daniel Burnston

Tulane University

Causal and Semantic Relations between Cognition and Sensorimotor States

Several popular theses posit causal relationships between cognitive and sensorimotor states. The cognitive penetration thesis holds that the content of perceptual states is influenced, in specific ways, by one’s background beliefs. Modern interpretations of the causal theory of action suggest that actions begin with a process of propositional practical reasoning, which culminates in a discrete intention. The content of the intention must then be “propagated” to the motor representations that actually implement the action.

These views posit “content preserving causal processes” that begin with cognitive states and culminate in sensorimotor ones, where the content of the sensorimotor state comes to closely “match” the content of the cognitive one. I argue that perception and cognition should be distinguished in terms of their representational format – cognitive states have a lexically structured content, whereas perceptual and motor states embody dimensions that represent the structure of their referents. I then draw on data from cognitive linguistics to argue that, while there are causal relationships between cognitive and sensorimotor states, content “matching” is an implausible view of the semantic relationships between them. The actual semantic relationships are too diffuse, probabilistic, and associationist to support cognitive penetration and the causal theory.

Douglas Campbell

University of Canterbury

Cosmic Xerox Machines, Tattoo Removal, and Defining 'Physicalism'

'Physicalism' is commonly defined as saying that 'Any world that is a minimal physical duplicate of our world is a duplicate simpliciter of our world' (Jackson, 1998, p. 12). Here I will argue, partly by reference to the idea of a 'cosmic Xerox machine', that this definition of physicalism is unwontedly complicated, that it is subtly circular, and that it misrepresents the true logical form of the physicalist's commitments.

Devon Cass

Australian National University

The Status Argument for the Priority of Liberty

The lexical priority of the basic liberties is one of the most distinctive features of justice as fairness but has received relatively little defence from either Rawls or Rawlsians. In this paper I evaluate three arguments in its support: the first is based on the two moral powers; the second on the social bases of self-respect; and the third on a Kantian notion of autonomy. I show that none of these arguments satisfies three conditions. The first condition is that the argument must support the distinct claim of lexical priority—and not just high priority. The second condition is that the argument must support the basic liberties as a package, including the fair value of the political liberties. The third condition is that the argument must be political and not metaphysical in that it must not appeal to reasons that are not appropriately public. In the second part of the paper, I propose an alternative argument based on equality of status that better satisfies these conditions.

Marc Cheong

Monash University

Experimental investigations of #authenticity online

The concept of 'authenticity' is highly valued on social media sites (SMSes), despite its ambiguous nature and definition. One interpretation of 'authenticity' by media scholars is a human's congruence with online portrayals of themselves (e.g. posting spontaneous photographs from their lives, or using real biodata online). For marketers and 'influencers', these patterns of behaviour can achieve certain gains: sales for a business, or success of a campaign. For existentialist philosophers, using 'authenticity' as a means to an end is against its very definition.

In this paper, I investigate what SMS users are looking for by their supposed 'authentic' portrayal online. My experimental approach draws upon empirical data from the Instagram social media site. Using machine learning techniques, descriptions and features of posts - including subjects, captions, and contexts - will be categorised and aggregated. I will then interpret these findings, drawing upon work by Taylor, Golomb, and Guignon, whose works on authenticity are based on mid-20th century existentialists. I argue that the existentialist ideals on authenticity are not necessarily present in contemporary SMS use. I will also argue that the popular interpretation of authenticity on SMSes can be self-defeating, when it seeks to turn the 'for-itself' into an 'in-itself'.

Sun Kyung Chung

Monash University

Two accounts of for-me-ness

Recently, there has been growing interest in the notion of for-me-ness in the debate of consciousness and subjectivity. Experience is said to be subjective just in case there is something it is like for a subject to be in that experience. On seeing the blue sky, for example, there is something it is like for me to see the blue sky. Zahavi (2005, 2014, 2016) and Kriegel (2004, 2005, 2009) both argue for the subjective feature of experience what they call for-

me-ness - the way the blueness of the sky is experienced from a first-person perspective - as a psychological reality that constitutes all my conscious experiences. Although their accounts have much in common, there are also significant dissimilarities upon closer examination. The similarities have been noted well but it seems almost never noted that their views differ in an important sense. I show that there is, as Zahavi (2004, 2006, 2014) explicitly argues, a crucial difference between the two accounts of for-me-ness which is grounded on a difference between representational and phenomenological approaches, and that we should not dismiss it as trivial when it comes to accessing how continental phenomenology can make a contribution to the current debate of consciousness and subjectivity.

Nevin Climenhaga

Australian Catholic University

Probabilities are Degrees of Support, not Degrees of Belief

I argue that when we use 'probability' language in epistemic contexts – e.g., when we ask how probable some hypothesis is, given the evidence available to us – we are talking about degrees of support, rather than degrees of belief. The probability of A given B is the (mind-independent) degree to which B supports A, not the degree to which someone with B as their evidence believes A, or the degree to which someone would or should believe A if they had B as their evidence. My central argument is that degrees of support can correctly model good reasoning in cases of old evidence where degrees of belief cannot. In particular, I argue that the degree-of-belief interpretation leads us to assign the intuitively incorrect values to the probabilities that enter into Bayes' Theorem when calculating the posterior probability of a hypothesis conditional on old evidence. After distinguishing this problem from other more widely discussed problems of old evidence in the literature, I consider ways to revise orthodox degree-of-belief Bayesianism in order to account for this kind of case, and argue that such revisions end up unable to account for reasoning about probabilities conditional on evidence that it is impossible not to possess.

Chris Cousens

Latrobe University

Judgement-Relative Contexts

Contexts are notoriously tricky things to analyze. Whilst various theories of meaning use 'context' to denote a particular part of a wider system, these technical approaches do not capture everyday uses of the term. At first glance, ordinary appeals to 'context' might appear to invoke a set of facts linked to an event that must be considered when thinking about it. However, this intuition does not provide a satisfactory basis for an understanding of context as it leads to counter-intuitive and contradictory rules governing the information that constitutes a context. A better way to explain how certain facts become a part of the context is to look not at the event itself, but the judgement that we are making. The normative values underpinning that judgement determine which facts are relevant, and thus part of the context, for that judgement. This means that contexts are relative and shifting, but in stable and predictable ways. It also means that a lot of self-serving demands for an event or utterance to be 'put into context' fall upon deaf ears.

Justin D'Ambrosio

Australian National University

The Intensionality of Perception

In this paper, I show that the representational and relational views of perception are consistent, in that they each express an aspect of the notion of perception embedded within ordinary language. Drawing on previous empirical work, I present three studies, each one of which tests three perceptual verbs, "sees", "perceives", and "senses", for one of the features of intensionality within their noun-phrase complements. The results of these studies show that "perceives", unlike "sees" and "senses", is a paradigmatic intensional transitive verb. Ascriptions involving intensional transitive verbs have two readings: a relational reading and a notional reading. The former reading is suitable for expressing the relationalist's notion of perception, while the notional reading exhibits the three features

characteristic of reports of representational states, and so plausibly expresses a relation between an agent and a representational content. Since the distinction between the two readings of an intensional ascription is a scopal one, representationalism and relationalism can each be expressed with a single lexically univocal piece of perceptual vocabulary--the verb "perceives" itself--and so each can be seen as expressing an aspect of the folk-psychological notion of perception.

Ramon Das

Victoria University of Wellington

Normative Pluralism and Companions in Guilt

Pluralism about an area, *F*, is the view that any consistent theory about *F* is true. Many philosophers believe that a pluralist view of this sort constitutes an effective response to epistemological challenges to realism about mathematics, notably including the Benacerraf challenge [e.g. Balaguer 1998; Field 2005; Linsky and Zalta 1995]. Clarke-Doane [forthcoming], also endorses mathematical pluralism as an effective response to the Benacerraf problem, which he understands as the challenge of showing that our mathematical beliefs are "safe."

However, Clarke-Doane suggests that pluralism may be less attractive as a response to a comparable epistemological challenge to normative realism. His reasons pertain to an apparent difference in what pluralism implies for our deliberative practices in the mathematical vs. the normative case. In the former, he thinks, pluralism "deflates" substantive deliberation, effectively ruling out any interesting question concerning which of the many consistent (hence true) mathematical theories one should endorse. In contrast, Clarke-Doane thinks this is not so in the normative case. Even supposing the truth of normative pluralism, he suggests, there is an interesting residual question concerning which of the many true normative theories one should endorse. He characterizes this suggestion as a radicalization of Moore's "Open Question" argument.

In this paper I examine Clarke-Doane's suggestion that normative pluralism is untenable and argue that it should be rejected. To see this, I believe we need to examine not just our mathematical and normative beliefs, but also our perceptual beliefs. I'll argue, first, that if Clarke-Doane's suggestion holds for our normative beliefs, it also holds for our perceptual beliefs. That is enough, I suggest, to make normative pluralism a viable position. I then return to the mathematical case, and argue that the apparent difference in what pluralism implies for our deliberative practices in the mathematical vs. normative cases can be explained away.

Dominic Dimech

University of Sydney

Hume's 'Residual' Scepticism

Hume is one of the canonical sceptical philosophers. How exactly should we characterise the scepticism that he espouses? He is known for formulating inductive scepticism, but his entire project is based on causal analysis, which seemingly takes the reliability of induction for granted. In recent decades, there has been a shift away from focussing too heavily on particular sceptical arguments in Hume's texts and towards interpreting his general, self-conscious reflections on scepticism in Treatise 1.4.7, and, to a lesser extent, Section 12 of the first Enquiry. I argue that Hume's position in these texts ought to be characterised as 'residual' scepticism: he endorses a moderately sceptical position that is itself the product of his encounter with extreme sceptical doubt. On this reading, Hume uses the insolubility of sceptical problems to motivate attitudes that he considers to be moderately sceptical, including modesty about one's opinions. I suggest that grasping the way in which negative epistemological evaluations motivate Hume's final position opens up new insights for understanding his scepticism and the relationship between scepticism and philosophical theorising more generally.

Tobias Dinh

University of Melbourne

God and the (im)possibility of bad worlds

The modal problem of evil tries to show that the existence of bad possible worlds, i.e. worlds that have more bad than good, critically undermines some aspects of the Anselmian view of God, i.e. that there is a being who exists and is all-good in every possible world. The argument goes that some worlds are so bad that either (i) God can't exist in them (for which he wouldn't be necessarily existent) or (ii) it would be morally impermissible for him to allow them to be actual (for which he wouldn't be necessarily all-good).

As I see it, the root of the problem hinges on the question of whether the existence of the Anselmian God is compatible with the existence of bad worlds. If we answer 'no', then the following dilemma needs to be addressed. (i) Are bad worlds genuine possibilities? If so, then it seems like the Anselmian God can't exist (Guleserian, 1983). (ii) Or are there better reasons to think that the Anselmian God does exist? If so, then it seems like the existence of bad worlds should be metaphysically ruled out (Morris, 1987). In this talk, I will take a look at some of the available answers to these questions and then argue that there are more compelling reasons to believe in the existence of the Anselmian God than there are of bad worlds.

Antony Eagle

University of Adelaide

How Everything Is

Times play two rather different theoretical roles. They serve as one of the coordinates relative to which we locate things and events. But times also serve as indices relative to which propositions have their truth values (at least, according to the A-theorist they do). A number of objections to the A-theory, such as the idea that it requires a second temporal dimension, result from conflation of these two roles. Better to separate times from 'moments', which are things relative to which propositional truth is indexed: ways things are and were and will be. Making this distinction allow us to develop the A-theory in a precise manner, separating it from obscure claims about the passage of time, and allowing a response to some standard objections to the A-theory.

Edward Elliott

University of Leeds

The Betting Interpretation for Zen Monks

'The degree of a belief is a causal property of it, which we can express vaguely as the extent to which we are prepared to act on it' (Ramsey 1926). I take this as a good starting point for an account of what degrees of belief are. In particular, I think we can and should understand degrees of belief by reference to their connection to preferences in situations of uncertainty. But such accounts receive a bad rap: they're frequently dismissed out-of-hand as behaviouristic, or as an implausibly anti-realist interpretivism. Furthermore, cases like Hajek & Eriksson's (2007) Zen monk have suggested to many that any account of degrees of belief that ties them too closely to preferences is hopelessly flawed.

In this paper, I show that there are many cases more realistic than the Zen monk which generate the same issues. But I also argue that all such cases gain no real traction against the usual interpretivist positions; moreover, they fail to rule out plausible and fully realist accounts of degrees of belief that take their role in generating preferences to be of fundamental importance.

Brigid Evans

The University of Melbourne

The Imperative of Integration and Special Education

The development of integration as a requirement of social justice has prompted significant enthusiasm within political philosophy. The application of integration to educational policy already exists but has centred on overcoming racial and/or economic segregation. Integration as a moral ideal is yet to be fully tested with respect to the situation of disabled students, a small heterogeneous group with complex and diverse educational needs.

In this talk I will propose that the primary duty of schools is to secure educational goods for students. Integrating schools is then unjust if it blocks the ability of schools to provide educational goods to the disabled. Here, a contingent justification for not integrating disabled students will arise from current non-ideal conditions. More positively, I will argue that educational costs may be minimised by reforming the way in which teachers are trained. This training becomes necessary for teachers in already integrated schools as, without such training, they are unable to attend to their professional moral duties.

Max Fedoseev

Australian National University

The Individual's Political Responsibility to Address Climate Change

There is an extensive literature on whether and how the causal link between individuals' emissions and harms from climate change gives rise to certain moral obligations, e.g. an obligation to cut or offset one's emissions. Individual actions of this kind, however, are not sufficient to avoid catastrophic climate change. What is needed is a transformation of social structures which constrain individuals to participate in carbon-intensive practices. Such structural change requires active political engagement of the public, e.g. participation in social movements and other activities within civil society. I argue that individuals have a moral obligation to engage in and organise such activities with the aim of transforming climate-wrecking social structures. This 'political responsibility', as I call it, is different in kind from the aforementioned moral obligations in that it cannot be grounded in the causal link between individual emissions and harm from climate change. Rather, I argue, it arises in virtue of one's participation in problematic social structures. One welcome implication of this is that the justification of the most important kind of action required of individuals to address climate change does not rely on the problematic claim that each of them makes sufficiently weighty difference to the harm caused.

Anthony Gambrell

University of Otago

Philosophical Anarchism Is Not Enough

In his *In Defense of Anarchism* (1970), Robert Paul Wolff argues that moral autonomy and authority are incompatible; as the latter, imposing an obligation to obey, requires forfeiture of the former. We are, thus, left with philosophical anarchism (i.e. quietism); or so Wolff concludes.

Efforts to debunk Wolff's argument, e.g. by Joseph Raz and Jeffrey H. Reiman, have been unsuccessful, I will show. Simmons's treatment, in "Philosophical Anarchism," (2001) of Wolff's argument, proffering a definition of anarchism via political legitimacy rather than obligation, evades the initial problem.

Despite its persistence, though, I suggest Wolff's argument may be applied in favor of its antithesis, namely, in defense of the state. In fact, Kant, on whose account of autonomy Wolff relies, proffered justification of the state on this very concept.

Yet the crux of an incompatibility thesis, I maintain, is not so much moral autonomy as individuality. Accordingly, I distinguish between these. Further, Wolff's incompatibility thesis should, I argue, be reduced to that of an amoral arational individual versus a putative authority. Otherwise, if the individual is understood qua rational being, a commitment to reason and morality made therein serves as a grounding of a justification of the state.

Nathaniel Gan

University of Sydney

Breaking ontological stalemate

Mark Balaguer (1998) argued that we will never be able to settle the question of whether mathematical objects exist. His argument depends on the following premise: a reason to prefer either realism or anti-realism about mathematics requires that the two positions disagree on something other than mathematical ontology. In this paper I argue that this premise is mistaken. I suggest that, in any ontological debate, it is possible to construct a form of realism and a form of anti-realism such that the two views agree on everything except over the existence of the entities in question. If Balaguer's argument were sound, therefore, it would prove too much—it would imply that many other ontological debates end in stalemate as well. I suggest, instead, that even if two ontological views agreed on everything except ontology, there might still be reasons to prefer one view. For, in adjudicating between two ontological positions, we should consider not only how much each can account for, but also whether the views bear virtues such as intuitiveness and simplicity. With these factors taken into consideration, we might find reasons to break the stalemate between mathematical realism and anti-realism.

Michael Gilchrist

Victoria University of Wellington

The two senses of 'true'

This paper presents an argument as to how we should interpret the traditional notion of truth as correspondence to reality. It begins from the observation that we have two senses of the predicate 'true' in ordinary language: 'true' as applied to propositions and 'true' as applied to objects, properties and relations. We may call the former 'veracity' and the latter 'authenticity'. The argument proceeds by identifying a missing step in Tarski's well known analysis. Filling in this step suggests that the dictum that 'truth supervenes on existence' may be better understood as 'veracity supervenes on authenticity'. Ordinary language appears to regulate, in a quite natural way, that supervenience relation – and testing this interpretation against basic challenges for a theory of truth yields a surprisingly defensible account.

Eliza Goddard & Susan Dodds

University of New South Wales

Minding the gap: ethical questions raised by the “brain on a bench”

Neuroscientists have begun to use adult stem cells to develop neural organoids – 3d bioprinted neural constructs grown in vitro. These provide insights into brain development and disease, improved neural modelling and potential therapies. Some scientists and ethicists have raised questions about the potential for neural organoids to develop the capacity for sentience and consciousness, as these “brain on a bench” models come to more closely resemble a functioning human brain.

Two neuroscientists, Koch and Tonini apply an account of consciousness drawn from Integrated Information theory to raise the imminent spectre of sentience with respect to neural organoids. This is in part because the theory attributes consciousness to (any) system that displays integrated information processing, independent of sensory processing, executive processing or motor behaviour.

We argue that that theory of consciousness is inadequate to the task of understanding the ethical issues raised by neural organoids. We use philosophical theories of mind and consciousness and contrast these with the empirical theories of consciousness proposed by neuroscientists to draw attention to the gap between engineered “brains on a bench” and embodied conscious experience. Awareness of this gap then informs our approach to the ethical and epistemological issues concerning the development and use of neural organoids.

Oliver Gordon

University of Sydney

Voice as Method in the work of Stanley Cavell

Philosophical writing is generally imagined to require an impersonal mode of address. While it is not uncommon for personal narratives or anecdotes to be deployed to motivate or illustrate some philosophical point, it is generally accepted that the substantial arguments put forward in philosophical work ought to be impersonal—deliverable (at least in the ideal case) by anybody to anybody. The American philosopher and critic Stanley Cavell issues a radical challenge to this idea, asserting in a late work that “there is an internal connection between philosophy and autobiography, that each is a dimension of the other”. In this paper I argue that this claim is the culmination of a much longer exploration and defence of a distinctive philosophical method that Cavell has practiced throughout his career. I argue that on some interpreter’s accounts Cavell’s self-professed inheritance of ‘ordinary language philosophy’ has served to obscure the full significance of this ‘internal connection’. Understanding Cavell’s inheritance of the work of J.L. Austin and Ludwig Wittgenstein in terms of each of those thinkers’ attempts to “bring the human voice back into philosophy” has, I suggest, important implications both for Cavell scholarship and for our broader understanding of philosophy’s relation to the personal.

Alan Hájek

Australian National University

Omega

Probability theory is the dominant approach to modeling uncertainty. We begin with a set of possibilities or outcomes, usually designated ‘Omega’ (the Greek capital letter). We then assign probabilities—real numbers between 0 and 1 inclusive—to subsets of Omega. Nearly all of the action in the mathematics and philosophy of probability for over three and a half centuries has concerned the probabilities: their axiomatization, their associated theorems, and their interpretation. I want instead to put omega in the spotlight.

Omega is a set of possibilities, but which possibilities? While the probability calculus constrains our numerical assignments, and its interpretation guides us further regarding them, we are entirely left to our own devices regarding Omega. What makes one Omega better than another? Its members are typically not exhaustive—but which possibilities should be excluded? Its members are typically not maximally fine-grained—but how refined should they be? I will discuss both philosophical and practical problems with the construction of a good Omega.

Matthew Hammerton

Singapore Management University

The Deflationary Challenge to Meaning in Life

Much recent philosophical literature on meaning in life is driven by the thought that meaningfulness is an important evaluative category for assessing lives that is distinct from other evaluative categories we apply to lives such as well-being and moral goodness. The deflationary challenge denies this, usually by attempting to explain all claims about meaning in life in terms of claims about the well-being that a life contains. If this challenge succeeds, then we could abandon the concept of ‘meaning in life’ and yet be no less capable of evaluating lives in all the normatively relevant ways. In this talk I look at several attempts to answer the deflationary challenge and argue that they are all unsatisfactory. I then advance my own answer to the challenge, one that appeals to different attractive ways of combining intrinsic goods in a life to distinguish meaning from well-being.

Brian Hedden

University of Sydney

Hindsight Bias is not a Bias

Hindsight bias is the phenomenon of being more confident that some body of evidence supports a hypothesis when one knows that the hypothesis is true, than when one doesn't. Psychologists tell us both that we often display hindsight bias, and that this is irrational. After all, evidence can be misleading, and the fact that the hypothesis is true doesn't affect whether it was supported by the evidence available *ex ante*. Hindsight bias is of particular concern in tort lawsuits, where jurors may be asked to determine negligence, which requires judging what would have been reasonable to believe based on the evidence available at the time, before the outcome became known. Legal scholars worry that hindsight bias makes jurors ill-suited to accurately determine negligence. I argue that hindsight bias is consistent with, and often required by, ideal rationality. In particular, the fact that some hypothesis is true gives evidence about relations of evidential support. I also connect hindsight bias with current debates about the role of higher-order evidence.

Shaun Hegarty

University of Queensland

The mind-body problem is dead, long live the science of consciousness?

The field of consciousness studies has grown to a stampede in the 21st century. And in this modern day 'go west' call, neuro-scientific imaging is the new railroad propelling both developments in our understanding and confidence therein. It is clear that, at the very least, correlates of consciousness have been established. However, more than mere correlates, some claim to have struck gold in this new frontier. Global Neuronal Workspace Theory has lodged a claim to such riches and the present study will look to evaluate the tenets of the theory and whether indeed we are at the cross-roads of consciousness study where philosophy is left behind and science becomes the only way forward.

Ines Hipolito

University of Wollongong

Perception: Penetrability or Predictability?

It is becoming widely agreed that if predictive processing is plausible, then it is correct to assume that cognitive penetration is taking place. The aim of this paper is to challenge such view. I will offer reasons to prefer a predictive processing account, which, I will argue, is not consistent with cognitive penetrability. The first section will offer a review of the philosophical reasons why some people think that perceptual experience is cognitively penetrable. Specifically, the section offers a scheme of the three possible ways to conceive of penetrability. The paper then turns to the arguments in favour of the idea that predictive processing either (a) entails or (b) is compatible with cognitive penetrability. The last section however will attempt to show that (a) and (b) are false. *Prima facie* the metaphor might allow some resemblance, but on closer reading things get difficult. In the light of predictive processing, it is concluded, cognitive penetration is not a genuine phenomenon, and without the predictive processing, cognitive penetrability it is conceptually problematic, at least as currently understood.

Mark Howard & Katrina Hutchison
Monash University

The Technologically Advanced Clinical Environment and Medical Knowledge

Advances in implantable medical devices has increased the role for industry employed allied professionals (IEAPs) in providing training and support during surgical procedures and follow-up care. The effect of these changes on the organisation of knowledge and the sharing of information remains largely unexplored. Recent work in social epistemology provides a framework for engaging with this issue. In this paper we argue that the insertion of industry technicians into hospitals diminishes epistemically valuable knowledge sharing practices. This is in part a result of increased dependence of healthcare professionals on IEAPs, who control access to knowledge about devices. Knowledge is enclosed for commercial interest, limiting opportunities both for independent learning, and for dialogic education practices where participants work towards a common goal. Such dialogic practices are intrinsic to clinical education. Ultimately, we claim that over-dependence on the knowledge of IEAPs undermines a basic social value regarding knowledge sharing for everyone's benefit.

Jessica Isserow
Australian National University

On the Rationality of Inquiry into Moral Nihilism

It's natural to think that there's value to improving the accuracy of our beliefs. If beliefs are a map by which we steer our efforts to bring the world in line with our preferences, then, *ceteris paribus*, we should want a more accurate map. However, the world could be structured so as to punish learning with respect to certain topics; i.e., by coming into possession of new information, an agent's situation could be made worse than it otherwise would have been. In this paper, we investigate whether the world is structured so as to punish learning with respect to moral nihilism. We ask: If an ordinary human agent had the option to learn whether or not moral nihilism is true, then ought she to take it? We argue that, given intuitively plausible and empirically grounded assumptions about ordinary human preferences, she (probably) should not.

Alastair James
University of Melbourne

Vindicating Intuitions that Exploitation is Impermissible

Some contractual relationships, such as those within sweatshop markets, are consensual but appear to be intuitively morally problematic. A set of clauses that compose the Non-Worseness Claim (NWC) has been proposed to explain why these intuitive judgments are mistaken. The NWC maintains that interaction between A and B cannot be worse than non-interaction if four conditions are satisfied (Zwolinski & Wertheimer, 2016):

- (i) A has a right not to interact with B,
- (ii) consent is present,
- (iii) interaction is mutually beneficial, and
- (iv) interaction does not generate negative externalities.

It has been argued that clauses (i)-(iv) obtain in standard cases of sweatshop exploitation and, therefore, that interaction ought not to be deemed impermissible (Zwolinski, 2008, 2012; Powell & Zwolinski, 2012). Taking consent to be present and informed in standard cases, I set aside clause (ii) and show how clauses (i), (iii) and (iv) can fail to fulfil the NWC. Doing so provides an account of how in standard cases of sweatshop exploitation a consensual contract may nevertheless be impermissible.

Tyler John

Rutgers University

Socialization, Social Disability, and Social Norm Legitimacy

According to the increasingly prominent mindshaping hypothesis in social psychology, human social cognition and coordination is made possible through a practice of socializing children and adults into dominant group norms of rationality. By continuously socializing one another into accepting that certain beliefs, desires, and emotions are reasonable, and that behaving in specific ways if we hold corresponding propositional attitudes is rational, we make each other conform to social expectations more strongly and thereby render one another's behavior more predictable.

I argue that such socialization practices are essentially coercive, restricting others' liberty for the sake of improved coordination in a fashion normatively analogous to state coercion. Like the state, society may therefore enforce a set of laws only if they are legitimate. Social laws must thereby satisfy legitimacy conditions, e.g., by being imposed only on potential beneficiaries of these laws. Two conclusions follow: First, there is a defeasible obligation to socialize socially nondisabled human children into dominant social norms so that they can benefit from improved coordination. Second, there is an obligation not to impose social norms on some socially disabled humans, such as many humans who are autistic or have Down syndrome, since they cannot benefit from improved coordination.

Sean Johnson

Victoria University of Wellington

Better Mental Causation and Double Prevention

Sophie Gibb (2013) presents an intriguing approach to the causal exclusion problem proposing that mental powers act as double preventers for physical effects. A consequence of her view is that to endorse it we must accept the controversial Powers View of causation. In this paper I will show that with some adjustments a version of Gibb's view can work independent of a particular view of causation.

Monique Jonas

University of Auckland

What Michael Smith Can Teach Us About Good Advice

Michael Smith's model of reasons internalism posits that an agent has a reason to ϕ in circumstances c if his or her fully rationally self, assessing the agent's situation, would form a desire that he or she ϕ in c , and advise him or her accordingly. Because Smith is an internalist about reasons, it is crucial to his model that the advice in question issues from an idealized self (rather than another person) and that it is based upon their desire that the agent ϕ . Although Smith says surprisingly little about advice itself, his model appears to be based upon several assumptions about the practice that warrant further consideration. I will explore two such assumptions: that advisors should have desires about how their advisee should act and that advisors should accept their advisee's failings when they formulate advice. I will also consider what role advice from others should play in our practical reasoning, given that, if Smith is correct, our reasons for acting must be internal.

Joel Katzav & Wendy S. Parker

University of Queensland

Issues in the Theoretical Foundations of Climate Science

The theoretical foundations of climate science have received little attention from philosophers thus far, despite a number of outstanding issues. We provide a brief, non-technical overview of several of these issues – related to theorizing about climates, climate change, internal variability and more – and attempt to make preliminary progress in addressing some of them. In doing so, we hope to open a new thread of discussion in the emerging area of philosophy of climate science, focused on theoretical foundations.

Simon Keller

Victoria University of Wellington

Keynote: Putting Mental Health in Its Place

“Positive mental health” is an increasingly prominent value in public policy, medicine, and popular culture. Positive mental health involves more than the absence of recognized mental disorders; it is taken to be a fairly specific desirable state in which a mind can be. The practice of mental health, however, runs far ahead of theory, with researchers in different fields offering very different theories and making very different assumptions about what mental health is and why it is valuable (if it is). I distinguish and assess the main standing claims about the nature of positive mental health, and then use them to provide motivation for my own view. Mental health, I argue, is best understood as a kind of resource: you are mentally healthy if you possess the basic mental attributes that make you most likely to live a good human life. It follows, I argue, that positive mental health is a deeply moral notion, the value of mental health is great but largely instrumental, whether you are mentally healthy depends on what forms of the good life are available in your place and time, there can be good reasons to prefer not to be mentally healthy, and there is a good case for making positive mental health a direct concern of distributive justice.

Jeanette Kennett & Jessica Wolfendale

Macquarie University

Self-control and moral security

Self-control is integral to successful human agency. But self-control requires external support. This paper explores the connections between social conditions, self-control, agency, and the self. Part one offers a taxonomy of self-control. Part two examines the external conditions that support successful agency and self-control, and argues that moral security is a critical foundation for agency. Moral security refers to the degree to which an agent believes that her welfare and her projects are valued by others and by her society. Part three explores how narratives about racism and poverty undermine moral security, and limit and distort the possibility of synchronic and diachronic self-control. Where moral security is undermined, the connection between self-control and diachronic goods often fails to obtain and agency contracts accordingly.

Serene Khader

CUNY and Brooklyn College

Keynote: Toward A Prescriptive Transnational Feminism

I argue we can make progress in three contemporary debates in cross-cultural feminisms by a) clarifying the normative commitments central to feminism and b) rethinking the role of normative ideals in transnational political practices. Understanding feminism as opposition to sexist oppression unthethers feminism from commitments to controversial forms of individualism and antitraditionalism. Understanding transnational feminist praxis as a practice of nonideal justice-enhancement permits a universalist feminist position that is not monist about the endpoint of gender justice or the strategies that should be taken to achieve it.

Anton Killin

Australian National University

Musical Pluralism and Musical Realism

I advocate conceptual pluralism about music. According to this view, there are multiple, non-equivalent, legitimate music concepts. In this talk, I argue against an influential line of thinking, namely, that conceptual pluralism entails anti-realism. To resist music anti-realism, then, I provide an argument in support of indifference realism about music, by appeal to music archaeological research, and via an analogy with indifference realism about species licensed by paleobiological research.

Suzy Killmister

Monash University

The Normativity of Social Kinds

When moral and political philosophers consider social kinds we typically focus on examples such as race or gender. Identifying these as social kinds is often undertaken as part of a broader debunking project: because race and gender are socially constructed, the thinking goes, the norms embedded in them are not morally binding. In this paper I consider a different social kind – the human. My goal is to show that even though the human is best thought of as a social kind, its constitutive norms (i.e. norms concerning who counts as human, and norms concerning how humans ought to be treated) are morally binding. The challenge will be to avoid having this claim extend to social kinds such as race and gender.

Fred Kroon & Paul Oppenheimer

The University of Auckland

Fictional Natural Kind Predicates

While fictional objects have been the subject of much literature, discussion of fictional properties has been less developed. Sawyer ('The importance of fictional properties', 2015) has recently pointed out that our theories of fictional objects may be problematic if they don't account for fictional properties. We describe and evaluate Zalta's theory that fictional properties should be construed as abstract objects of a higher type. We show that this theory avoids Sawyer's concerns. We note an interesting distinction between natural kind predicates (e.g., 'hobbit') that occur only in fiction and natural kind predicates (e.g., 'human') that occur in fiction but also occur in ordinary talk.

Fred Kroon

University of Auckland

Keynote: 2018 Presidential Address - Existence and Descriptivism

The problem of how to analyse singular claims of non-existence continues to be hotly debated. Russell's way of understanding such claims was widely accepted for much of the 20th century, but there is now a strong consensus that Russell was wrong: wrong in the descriptivism that guided his analysis, wrong to think that existence is not a property of objects. In some ways the second mistake is the more fundamental. Even if one has a version of descriptivism about names that answers familiar anti-descriptivist arguments, plugging that into Russell's theory only helps with the simplest claims of non-existence. It is of little help with the many claims of non-existence that seem to imply that there are things that don't exist. In this paper I review where Russell went wrong, and argue that, with some massaging, a rather more plausible view emerges, one that even allows for a non-Meinongian sense in which some things don't exist.

Vladimir Krstić

The University of Auckland

What Constitutes Deception?

I discuss a case of deception (based on How I Met Your Mother episode) in which the deceiver, Lily, deceives her victims into acquiring a true belief. Lily receives no benefit and her victims suffer no harm; hence, these features do not constitute deception. What remains is causing epistemic harm. In a relevant case of animal deception, a female firefly of the genus *Photuris* mimics the mating signal of the female from genus *Photinus* in order to lure the male *Photinus* in and eat him. Both Lily and the predator female produce misinformation and they do this in order to get what they 'want'. However, the 'right' female (*Photinus*) also produces misinformation: her mating signal raises the probability of the predator female being present as well. Furthermore, just like the right female, Lily causes epistemic harm in order to inform her victims. Nevertheless, unlike this female and just like the predator, Lily conceals the real purpose of her behaviour; she manipulates her victims. Since Lily exhibits features of both females, causing epistemic harm does not constitute deception either. Plausibly, manipulating the victims constitutes deception.

Michael Lazarou

The University of Adelaide

Vague Objects and the Problem of Identity

In his highly influential one-page paper "Can There Be Vague Objects?" (1978), Gareth Evans concisely argued against the existence of vague objects. On his view, accepting the existence of vague objects carries a commitment to the notion of vague identity. By presenting a proof demonstrating how vague identity leads to contradiction, Evans argues against the tenability of vague identity, and by extension, the existence of vague objects.

My talk will provide a response to Evans' powerful conclusion, where I will argue that there can be such things as vague objects. More specifically, I will show how recent developments in the vagueness literature can motivate a cogent defence of the existence of vague objects. I will conclude by arguing that identity is not a problem for the vague-objects theorist; rather, the burden rests on our conception of what a vague object is.

Vincent Le

Deakin University

Falsifying Nick Land's Transcendental Materialism through Terror Management Theory

This paper argues that Terror Management Theory (TMT) falsifies the transcendental materialist philosophy that Nick Land developed from 1988-1992. The first section provides an introduction to Land's little-known critique of philosophy, religion, politics and science for too often anthropomorphising reality in order to mask the inexorability of our future extinction behind transcendental illusions. The second section then outlines TMT's empirical confirmation that mortality salience incites us to develop philosophical, religious, political and scientific worldviews, which grant us transcendence from our finite, material animality. In the final section, however, we shall see that, while both TMT and Land's understanding of death and cultural worldviews are aligned, their aims are very different: whereas TMT theorists pursue a therapeutic approach of adopting more inclusive worldviews that reinforce meaningful fictions without impinging on anyone else's, Land affirms death as the organon for the transcendental materialist critique of dogmatic metaphysics.

Martin Leckey

University of Melbourne

The “arrow of time” from quantum mechanical spontaneous collapse?

In this paper I investigate the origin of the “arrow of time”. I investigate whether this macroscopic time asymmetry can be derived from the microscopic time asymmetry introduced into quantum physics by spontaneous collapse theories such as those of Ghirardi, Rimini and Weber (GRW). Albert argues in *Time and Chance* (2009) that although the GRW theory can take us part of the way there, the GRW theory still requires the “Past Hypothesis”, the supposition that the universe began in a state of extremely low entropy. I present my own spontaneous collapse theory, based on a digital quantum mechanics. I argue that one advantage of this theory is that it is possible to derive the macroscopic arrow of time without the need for any Past Hypothesis.

I also introduce a new objective measure of entropy for a single quantum system, which I call the wave function entropy. I argue that the usual Boltzmann entropy can be derived from this more fundamental objective entropy. They will not always have the same numerical value, but I suggest that the ensemble of systems picked out in the macroscopic entropy can be grounded in the potentialities implicit in the wave function.

Siu-Fan Lee

Hong Kong Baptist University

How to Name an Empty Name

How does a name become a name of something? In particular, how can an empty name become a name when it does not refer to what it purports to?

Broadly speaking, there are three types of naming theories: causal theory (Kripke, Devitt), descriptive theory (Chalmers, Searle) and information theory (Evans, Dickie). There are also three types of theories to explain the semantics of empty names: object theories (Meinongianism, Platonism, Creationism and Deflationism), pretence theories (Walton, Evans) and hybrid approaches. Object theories and causal theories share a close affiliation, thanks to their both being motivated by the idea of direct reference. However, causal theories seem helpless in explaining the naming of empty names. It is because causal theories typically rely on acquaintance and abstract or fictional entities are not likely to be the suitable kinds of objects to be explained causally. Descriptive theory is not good either because descriptions serve only to fix the reference of a name but not to give its meaning even in the case of empty names. Information theory seems promising, yet Evans’s account only takes us to locate the producer (such as the author of a novel) as the causal origin of dominate information about the name. Yet neither the producer nor their mental state is the referent of a name. So, it does not deliver the correct result to the question of what an empty name is a name.

I suggest an approach using the notion of counterfactual reference. Information is organised around certain possible but not actual referents of a name. It is possible to establish causal relations with these counterfactual referents; hence, we are able to pretend that naming has been performed when actually no object is bestowed to such a name. With the help of a convention theory (Lewis), this model also explains how name-use practices and cognitive access to empty names are established.

Chris Lernpass

University of Otago

Debunking and Defeat

Evolutionary debunking arguments (EDAs) of morality aim to show that the facts about the impact of evolution on our moral beliefs threaten the epistemic standing of those beliefs, and therefore we have reason to withhold judgment in moral matters. On one reading of these arguments, EDAs try to generate undercutting defeaters for our moral beliefs. A family of popular responses to EDAs in turn promises to neutralize the epistemic threat to our moral

beliefs supposedly raised by these arguments. These responses rely on the truth of (at least some) of our moral beliefs. Recently, the question has come up in the literature (Moon 2016; Wielenberg 2016) whether these popular responses are best understood in terms of defeater-defeaters (i.e. conditions which reinstate lost justification via counteracting a defeater) or in terms of defeater-deflectors (i.e. conditions which prevent the occurrence of defeat). I'll argue that these popular responses are unsatisfactory either way. Once I've supported this claim, I'll also argue that rejecting the framework of epistemic defeat will not do much to render these responses more attractive. I'll conclude by suggesting why these responses are ill-suited to neutralize the epistemic threat supposedly raised by EDAs.

Peter Lewis

Dartmouth College

Pragmatism and the content of quantum mechanics

Richard Healey has recently developed a pragmatist account of quantum mechanics, which, he claims, dissolves (rather than solves) the longstanding foundational problems of the theory. Pragmatism enjoins us to pay close attention to how a sentence is used in order to find out what it means. Healey contends that attention to use shows that quantum claims are not used descriptively, but rather are used to prescribe degrees of belief in non-quantum claims. Since claims about the quantum state are not to be taken as descriptive, Healey argues that problems e.g. concerning the evolution of the quantum state during a measurement do not arise. However, I argue that Healey's conclusions concerning the content of quantum mechanics cannot be squared with the way that physicists use quantum mechanics to describe physical systems. In particular, attention to actual use results in ascribing descriptive content to claims about physical systems over a much wider range of contexts than countenanced by Healey. The resulting account of the content of quantum mechanics is much closer to Putnam's quantum logical approach than Healey allows, and threatens the pragmatist conclusion that quantum mechanics requires no supplementation as a theory.

Bruce Long

The University of Sydney

A Preliminary Logic of Information Dynamics for Ockham's Razor

I'll briefly give a characterisation of Ockham's Razor constrained by a scientific metaphysics that rejects commitments to, and the use of, a-priori conceptual analysis, the positing of abstract ontological simples as substantive, and commitment to such ideas as scale invariance. I'll then will develop a calculus and semantics for a logic of information dynamics that is partly inspired by the work and draws upon work by Paul Humphreys on emergent properties (specifically - Humphrey's physical property fusion operator) and is partly inspired by the work of Rudolph Carnap and Yehoshua Bar-Hillel's attempt to produce a metric for semantic information. I will lay out the (limited in scope) semantic machinery, axioms, and notation, and briefly compare it to information logics and measures produced by Luciano Floridi, Simon D'Alfonso, Pieter Adriaans, and Gregory Chaitin. I will then deploy this preliminary logic and its semantics as the basis for a formal expression of Ockham's Razor in informational terms, and provide some corresponding measures intended to gauge practical effective adherence to the principle.

Jane Loo

The University of Sydney

A sufficient condition for our survival

We want to survive the extinction of *H. sapiens* even though we may think that it is not possible. Mind uploading is one way in which we might survive. If multiple individuals are uploaded to a virtual environment, and they continue to interact as if they had not been uploaded, we can say that the group that they belonged to, has survived. If we are able to apply this to humanity, where all of "us" are uploaded to a virtual environment, and "we" continue to interact as if we had we not been uploaded, then "we" have survived.

The question then, is if there is a group that deserves to be the referent of “us”. Even if we cannot say in general what kind of group this is, or what its persistence conditions are, perhaps we can show there might exist such a group that might persist in a particular way. If such a group exists, we have a sufficient condition for our survival after the extinction of *H. sapiens*. This motivates the search for more general characterizations of what this kind of group is, and what it takes for it to persist after the extinction of our species.

Shang Lu

The University of Sydney

Demarcation Problem in the Meta-Discourse

The problem of creeping minimalism is often characterised as that expressivism becomes indistinguishable from realism once expressivists start accepting minimalist views of notions like truth, facts and beliefs. Many approaches have been developed to solve this problem, for examples, the ‘explanation’ explanation theory (Drier, 2004), the inferentialism theory (Chrisman, 2008), the truth-maker theory (Asay, 2013), and the representation theory (Simpson, 2017).

A slightly different characterisation of the problem of creeping minimalism is to see it as a demarcation problem: many mainstream meta-theories, especially some versions of error theory and non-cognitivism, lose their discriminative power over so-called ‘realist’ and ‘anti-realist’ discourses when we accept minimalist views about truth and nearby notions.

In this article, I argue that under this characterisation, it would be easier to see that, for those who prepare to fully accept minimalism, some of the above approaches are clearly inappropriate, either because they are not consistent with a global minimalist semantics, or because they do not provide enough discriminative power for the target meta-theory. Further, a lesson from those failures is that the intuitively ‘deep’ difference between realist and anti-realist discourses, if there is any, must consist in something that is not intimate to their subject matters.

David Lumsden & Joseph Ulatowski

University of Waikato

Casting Light Upon the Great Endarkenment

While the Enlightenment promoted thinking for oneself independent of religious authority, the ‘Endarkenment’, a term of art introduced by Millgram (2015), concerns how we now need to defer to the authority of the specialist, for their understanding is opaque to those outside the specialist’s area. The basic idea of hyperspecialization takes different forms in different subject areas discussed in the volume, and we heed Millgram’s views on morality and on necessity. There is no unitary account of hyperspecialization that is consistent with his approach and methodology, for he decries semantic analysis and, instead, recommends a functional analysis; how do our concepts play a role in making reasoning tractable? We consider the basic thrust of Millgram’s position to be valuable, even though the case is exaggerated. We believe Millgram’s emphasis on serial hyperspecialization as a distinctive characteristic of humans, in which a person can move from one specialty to another, is not universal and also urge greater emphasis on parallel hyperspecialization, which describes how one person will need to deploy various forms of specialist knowledge and understanding at different times.

Brent Madison

UAE University

What Makes An Intellectual Virtue a Virtue?

In this paper I shall briefly examine two different kinds of answer given to the question of what makes a virtue a virtue, and a vice a vice: that given by virtue reliabilists, and that given by virtue responsibilists, respectively. I shall argue that despite their differences, both kinds of theory are inadequate for the same reason, namely, that they make it a highly contingent matter which character traits are intellectual virtues and vices. Instead, I shall argue that, given the kind of beings we are, it is necessary that certain traits are virtues or vices. By focusing on the key paradigmatic intellectual vice of dogmatism, my second aim in this paper is to argue how it could be that dogmatism is necessarily a vice. The hope is that the proposal given will be able to generalize to the rest of the intellectual vices, and in turn, account for the nature and value of the intellectual virtues generally.

Raamy Majeed

University of Auckland

Does Modularity Undermine the Pro-Emotion Consensus?

There is a growing consensus that emotions contribute positively to human practical rationality. While arguments that defend this position often appeal to the modularity of emotion-generation mechanisms, these arguments are also susceptible to the criticism, e.g. by Jones (2006), that emotional modularity supports pessimism about the prospects of emotions contributing positively to practical rationality here and now. This paper aims to respond to this criticism by demonstrating how models of emotion processing can accommodate the sorts of cognitive influence required to make the pro-emotion position plausible whilst exhibiting key elements of modularity.

Cei Maslen

Victoria University of Wellington

Causes that have no effects

It seems that causes sometimes cancel each other out and have no effect. Yet most current analyses of causation only recognize these as "potential causes" rather than "real causes". In this paper I discuss this problem and also relate it to the problem of preemption and overdetermination.

John Matthewson

Massey University

Degrees of proper function

Natural selection comes in degrees. Some biological traits are selected more forcefully than others, some traits are on the increase while others decline, and some groups can only undergo an attenuated kind of selective process. This has downstream consequences for notions that are standardly treated as categorical but depend on natural selection. For example, the *biological proper function* of a structure can be defined as what caused that (type of) structure to be selected in the past. If natural selection comes in degrees, and proper functions arise through natural selection, then it appears we require either an account of how this graded process generates a binary output, or an account of proper functions that allows them to also come in degrees. I argue that the first of these options faces some very tough problems, and explore the potential upshots of a graded view of functions on this basis, including what it might mean for related concepts such as dysfunction and disease.

Christopher McCarroll

Macquarie University

Navigating intertemporal choices

Mental time travel (MTT) is the capacity to mentally project ourselves into the personal past and future. We typically 're-experience' and 'pre-experience' these past and future events. We can predict, plan, and prepare for the future based, in part, on our knowledge of the past. Often, however, we fail to give sufficient weight to future outcomes. We tend to discount the future, seeking immediate gratification at the expense of long-term reward. It has been proposed that MTT is crucial to overcoming this tendency to discount future rewards. MTT enables us to pre-experience the emotional impact of a future reward, providing motivational force which supports future-oriented decision-making. Yet the imagery of MTT involves distinct visual perspectives. Often the imagery of MTT involves an observer perspective, where we see ourselves in the visualised scene. Because observer perspectives are typically thought to be emotionally dry this creates a puzzle. If much of the imagery of MTT involves an observer perspective and hence less emotion, then such imagery will lack the motivational force necessary for supporting future-oriented decision-making. To solve the puzzle I provide evidence that observer perspectives can afford emotional engagement with visualised events. Observer perspectives can hence help us navigate intertemporal choices.

Jane McDonnell

Monash University

Arguing for Panpsychism

This paper addresses two problems which have proved intractable for materialism and which panpsychism promises to resolve: (i) the problem of the unity of the individual; and (ii) the problem of consciousness. Panpsychism promises to resolve the first problem by invoking the indivisible unity of subjects of experience. It offers hope for the problem of consciousness because it takes mind to be a fundamental feature of reality. The paper focuses on how these problems are treated in the work of Leibniz and Tononi — two philosopher-scientists who have embraced panpsychism whilst having strong materialistic leanings. Where appropriate, Russellian panpsychism is used as a counterpoint.

James McGuirk

University of Queensland/Nord University

Social Reality and the Institution of Values

While John Searle's canonical account of the genesis of institutional reality (Searle, 1995) is anchored in a commitment to collective intentionality and evolutionary processes, his principal focus was on social reality as such, and the way institutions constrain action from within. More recent theorists have, by contrast, developed the account of the evolutionary processes that constrain social reality from without, by drawing attention to the various ways in which pro-social dispositions emerge (Tomasello, Wilson, Sterelny, Vlerick, etc.). The majority of these approaches can be termed quasi-naturalist in that while insisting on evolution as the context of explanation, they tend to be suggestive of an irreducibly social element in that evolution which produces forms of reality that are not reducible to a simple unfolding of evolutionary processes. While I am sympathetic to many of these approaches, they involve forms of reverse engineering that create explanatory gaps that evolution-based theories alone cannot fill. In this paper, I argue that the value realism of Roman Ingarden (Ingarden, 1983) is a plausible candidate for addressing this problem, through his insistence that institutions are materializations of values. This claim is compatible with evolution-based accounts by making institutional reality objectively constrained without recourse to naturalism.

Neil Mehta

Yale-NUS College

Naïve realism without fundamental kinds

Naïve realism is a theory of perception with great explanatory ambitions. And it has been influentially argued that, in order to realize these explanatory ambitions, the naïve realist should operate with the notion of a fundamental kind. I disagree. More modestly, it has been influentially argued that in order to realize these explanatory ambitions, the naïve realist should operate with a metaphysically robust notion of a kind. I agree, but I think that the justification for this claim has not been properly developed. In this paper I air both of these sentiments. I go on to explain why the naïve realist needs a metaphysically robust notion of a kind in the first place, and I propose two minimal conceptions of a kind that would better suit the naïve realist's requirements.

Howard Mok

Hong Kong Baptist University

Doubts on Internal Consistencies of Fictionalism about Fictional Characters

Fictionlists about fictional characters think that they can account for discourses purporting to refer to fictional characters without committing to the existence of them, as these discourses are better treated as some sorts of 'fictions'. In this essay, I will cast some doubts on the adequacy of fictionalism about fictional characters. I suggest that there are strong reasons to believe that fictional characters, if there are any, are more likely to be abstract artifacts than concrete particulars. On the other hand, it seems reasonable that fictions are also abstract artifacts. If it is so, there are problems with certain fictionalist paraphrase strategies. For example, some fictionalists paraphrase sentences containing fictional terms by prefixing them with some according-to-fiction-F operators. These fictionalist paraphrasing strategies, if successful, would commit fictionalism to the existence of fictions, since it would be difficult to make sense of these sentential operators if there were no fictions. However, thus far there is no explicit account from fictionalists on how their theories can comfortably have ontological commitment to fictions without that to fictional characters. I suggest that either fictionalism will collapse to some form of realism, or to pretense theory, which, in my opinion, less viable.

Andrew Moore

University of Otago

Well-being Supervenes on Being

This paper does three main things. It makes preliminary argument for the plausibility of the thought that difference of one's well-being supervenes on difference of one's being. It explores several ways of making this promising general thought more precise, with a focus on identifying the most plausible of these more precise supervenience theses. And it seeks to determine the status of this supervenience thesis itself: one reasonable take is that it is a conceptual truth; another is that it belongs in the normative epistemology of well-being, because consistency with it is desirable, at least pro tanto, in any claim about what it takes for there to be difference of one's well-being.

Nick Munn

The University of Waikato

Democracy without voting

Both epistocrats andlottocrats claim that democracy itself is problematic. They set themselves the task of providing a plausible alternative system. However, many of the problems they identify arise not from democracy as such, but from certain instantiations of it. When and how people vote; how many people choose not to vote; and how much the people who do vote know, are all subjects of criticism in this literature. In this paper I outline a democratic lottery system, which retains features such as majority rule and secrecy regarding the expressed preferences of

citizens, but eliminates voting. I argue that this approach can achieve many of the benefits ascribed to lottocratic systems without importing their flaws.

Daniel Munoz

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Better to Do Wrong

It's wrong to be an ineffective altruist -- to waste a noble sacrifice -- but it's better than permissibly doing nothing. For example: say you can choose to rush into a burning building, seriously injuring yourself, and once inside it's just as easy to rescue two children as it is to save just one. Saving no one is allowed, due to the sacrifice involved; saving one is wrong, since you will let the other kid die for no reason; and yet it's better to save one life than none: if those were your only options, you'd be a hero for saving the child. But how could a wrong act be better? Steve Darwall, Joe Horton, Jeff McMahan, and Tim Scanlon all argue that wrong acts must be worse. But this view assumes deontic commensurability -- the existence of a single scale underlying judgments of better and worse options, right and wrong actions. I argue that incommensurability among reasons allows wrong actions to be no worse than permitted ones; and incommensurability between reasons and prerogatives, which (I argue) is necessary for supererogation, can make it better to do wrong.

Jennifer Munt

Monash University

Who's your evidential peer and what does he do?

The Uniqueness thesis holds that the content of the body of evidence one possesses determines exactly what it is rational for one to believe. One implication of this view is that - for any given proposition - if two agents share the same evidence, they are rationally obligated to share the exact same belief about that proposition. However, very few proponents of Uniqueness have elucidated what it actually means for two agents to be said to share the same evidence, or how demanding evidential sameness must be.

In this talk, I will sketch two different ways of understanding what evidential sameness entails. The first is a more demanding view: it holds that evidential sameness requires that agents possess identical bodies of evidence. The second is less demanding: on this view, evidential sameness requires only that agents be evidential peers who share relevantly similar, but not identical, bodies of evidence.

Kathryn Muyskens

Nanyang Technological University

A Human Right to What Kind of Healthcare?

The human right to health is typically thought to include the right to have fair access to adequate healthcare. However, before we can have useful discussions about the details of meeting this right, we ought to first clarify what healthcare is. This paper attempts to define what the nature of healthcare is, while seeking to avoid both parochialism and excessive permissiveness in the answer. We need to acknowledge that there is more than one valid and relevant sense in which a person can be healthy or ill, and more than one acceptable way to be cured. At the same time, a right to healthcare that is not also explicitly the right to effective healthcare rapidly loses meaning. I draw inspiration from a parallel discussion in the philosophy of science: the demarcation problem. Ultimately, I argue that medicine has a dual nature as both an applied science and a social institution, and is characterized by the presence of four necessary elements: patient, practitioner, theoretical framework and treatment. To refine my account, I distinguish between four categories: medicine, non-medicine, bad medicine and pseudo-medicine. Finally, I discuss the criteria for determining medical efficacy and acceptable medicines in a way that avoids ethnocentric bias.

Paul O'Halloran

University of Melbourne

Do all zombie arguments misfire inferentially?

David Chalmers proposed the philosophical zombie argument to show reductive materialism is false. Anti-zombies (Frankish, 2007), (Brown, 2010), have been devised as challenges to the Chalmer's argument. It is contended that all the arguments misfire inferentially. Misfiring occurs because a target reasoner does not accept the argument's conclusion on the basis of her acceptance that the premises are true and that they support the conclusion (McKeon, 2017). The focus here is on a generalised form of the zombie conceivability argument. Chalmers' ideal conceivability provides a guide to how these arguments misfire. Zombie/anti-zombie examples are established for different models for consciousness including reductive materialism, dualism, idealism, triplism and pluralism. No model remains standing when all the arguments are considered in totality. Moreover, co-existence of the zombie/anti-zombie examples leads to a slew of contradictions. A special case needs to be made for any particular zombie to survive but in making this move, the argument itself changes. The best means of avoiding these problematic results is to conclude that the argument in each case inferentially misfires.

Daniel Pash

University of Sydney

Indefinite Precision: A Puzzle at the Heart of Metaphor

There is a puzzle at the heart of our responses to metaphor. We often argue with conviction for our agreement or disagreement with a given metaphoric utterance (e.g. 'Tom is a pig'), while at the same time it seems as though there is no clear limit to the list of potential (and potentially valid) interpretations we might give of it. Thus, on the one hand, a metaphor seems somehow indefinite, in that it appears to sanction multiple 'correct' interpretations. And yet, this fact need not diminish the conviction with which we are prepared to argue for our ultimate agreement or disagreement with that same metaphor. In this sense, a metaphor seems no less precise than a comparable literal utterance. In this paper I discuss the extent to which two prominent responses to this puzzle have focused on one particular example ('Juliet is the sun') as being paradigmatic of metaphor in general. Ultimately, I want to suggest that when we come to appreciate more fully the particular context within which that metaphor emerges, we will see that its invocation and subsequent treatment within such responses should be viewed as problematic at best.

Jonathan Pengelly

Victoria University of Wellington

Constraints and Machine Freedom

I am interested in understanding machine freedom and contrasting it with conceptions of human freedom.

MacCallum defined freedom as a triadic relation, arguing that different conceptions of freedom disagree only in what they understand to be the ranges of three variables - agents, preventing conditions, and actions or conditions of character or circumstance. I work within MacCallum's definition for this paper, focusing specifically on preventing conditions.

I present examples of preventing conditions for both humans and machines, discussing necessary trade-offs and introducing the concept of hinge constraints. I aim to use the comparison between human and machine to gain a fresh perspective from which to explore how we interpret freedom.

Susan Pennings

Australian National University

Capabilities, health care and justice

Many philosophers have argued that a key advantage of the application of the Capability Approach to distributive justice is that it can straightforwardly account for the needs of people who are ill or who have disabilities. Martha Nussbaum's version of the Capability Approach does this by distinguishing between 'functionings', which are activities or states of human beings (such as being well-nourished) and 'capabilities', which are a person's real opportunities to achieve functionings. Nussbaum holds that freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance and that this freedom to achieve well-being should be understood in terms of capabilities. In this talk, I argue that despite this history of applying the Capability Approach to questions of distributive justice and health, Nussbaum's theory cannot be an adequate theory of our moral obligations in this domain. In particular, Nussbaum's Capability Approach cannot account for the extent of our ethical obligations to provide health care for the terminally ill or those in chronic pain.

Carissa Phillips-Garrett

Loyola Marymount University

A Defense of Honor as a Virtue

I defend honor as a virtue understood as the ongoing commitment to act in accordance with what one believes is right, even when doing so may result in the disapproval or shame of others. This characterization of honor may seem strange since mentioning "honor" may conjure up pictures of duels and honor killings, acts of violence that are seemingly justified by participants in terms of avoiding the disapprobation of others. I will argue here that we should distinguish two different types of honor: external honor and internal honor. Far from being virtuous, I contend that external honor, which attaches the maintenance of honor to relative status and reputation, is vicious since the agent is motivated by good reputation and status, not by goodness. In contrast, I argue that internal honor is virtuous. On my account, honor is sustained by an ongoing commitment to a coherent and compelling identity rooted in seeing ethical values as central to the conception of one's self, rather than outwardly-mediated honor. Honor is thus bound up in commitment to the good life generally, not in getting the recognition one deserves.

Charles Pigden & Elizabeth Olsen

University of Otago

The Normativity of Logic

Logic is often alleged to be normative: it is somehow supposed to be possible to 'read off' norms of reasoning or norms of belief from the principles of logic. Indeed the alleged normativity of logic is sometimes used as a weapon in logical controversy. We argue against Adrian Heathcote's thesis that there are analytic bridge principles linking claims about what follows from what to claims about what we ought to believe. In so far as Logic does 'give rise' to plausible norms of belief, the norms in question are synthetic since they have to take into account the realities of the human condition. Indeed, in so far as facts about what follows from what give rise to plausible norms, they are best construed as norms of debate or norms for a collective enquiry rather than norms governing the epistemic conduct of an individual reasoner.

Charles Pigden

University of Otago

The Case of Comrade Tuvel

Rebecca Tuvel a freshly minted PhD, recently published a paper in *Hypatia*, the foremost journal of feminist philosophy, entitled 'A Defense of Transracialism'. Her argument runs roughly as follows:

- 1) We ought be nice to transgender people (eg by not treating them with scorn or contempt and recognising them as members of the gender to which they have transferred).
- 2) If we ought to be nice to transgender people, we ought to be nice to transracial people such as Rachel Dolezal (eg by not treating them with scorn or contempt and recognising them as members of the race to which they have transferred).
- 3) Therefore we ought to be nice to transracial people such as Rachel Dolezal.

The article led to an open letter signed by many feminist philosophers and other academics, denouncing the paper as unscholarly and incompetent as well as harmful (to the transgendered) and offensive (to people of colour). The open letter went on to demand a retraction and apology on the part of *Hypatia*. I shall argue that the charges are in tension, perhaps inconsistent (as well as false). If the paper is incompetent it is probably not harmful and if it is harmful it is probably not incompetent. I also vent my spleen by comparing the scholarly virtues of Rebecca Tuvel (on transracialism) with the unscholarly vices of Quassim Cassam (on conspiracy theories).

Arnaud Pocheville

The University of Sydney

Signals that represent the world

Signals are attractive to philosophers in that they offer an entry point to notions such as meaning, representation, and intentionality. There is an intuitive sense in which an alarm call shouted by a vervet monkey most of the time when a leopard is present represents the presence of a leopard, and an intuitive sense also in which the same call made in absence of any leopard is misleading or false. Cashing out this intuition, however, proves elusive. Does a signal represent a state of the world in virtue of its mere association with it? If so, how can the signal ever be false, that is, represent a state to which it is never associated? Similarly, is the imperative content of a signal how it causes further action? If so, how can it be misleading or unsuccessful, since it causes the action it is (from a causal point of view) supposed to cause? I provide here a characterization of the contents of signals in signalling networks, and explain how to articulate representative and imperative aspects into a single notion of success. This characterization provides a (simple) semantics for signals.

Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky & William Tuckwell

University of Melbourne

Can social groups be the bearers of obligation?

It's clear that groups that meet the conditions for being a collective agent can be the bearers of obligations. It is less clear, though some take it to be the case, that obligations can fall on highly unorganised groups, such as 'the global collective'. In between these two extremes lie many other groups with varying degrees of (un)organisation. Some of these in between groups are implicated in oppression. For example, people of colour are subordinated by white people and women are subordinated by men.

Drawing on work on issues of structural injustice by various authors (e.g. Iris Marion-Young, Sally Haslanger, and Bill Wringer), we aim to offer the best possible account that makes sense of obligation attributions to uncoordinated social groups that are implicated in the creation and maintenance of oppressive social relations. We take the uncoordinated group 'men' as a test case and argue that 'men' bear obligations to combat the structural oppression of 'women' because, by their actions, 'men' contribute to the processes that give rise to, and constitute, structural oppression.

Thomas Prout

Victoria University of Wellington

Gin, Petrol and Strong Reason Internalism

The most plausible version of Mackian moral error theory depends on acceptance of reason internalism. Most broadly, this is the view that reasons for action depend on some relevant feature of the agent, such as their interests or desires. The most significant substantive version of reason internalism comes from Bernard Williams' 1979 paper. I argue that Williams' account is insufficient to motivate moral error theory and a strong form of reason internalism should be distinguished and defended. Williams presents the intuition that an agent has a reason not to drink petrol despite believing it to be gin. This amounts to the claim that we have reasons to act based on the truth of propositions we do not believe. I contend that in order to motivate their position, and avoid rationalism, the error theorist must deny Williams' intuition. Furthermore, only the strong form of reason internalism fully accounts for the explanatory dimension of reasons for action.

Aleksandar Radaković

The University of Auckland, Department of Philosophy

Collective Rights and International Relations

Modern democratic (especially liberal) theory has been traditionally concerned with the freedom of individuals in a socio-political setting, i.e. the question of what restrictions are morally justifiable interference to the freedom of individuals to act as they wish. The idea of democracy was originally driven by a desire to liberate individuals from political oppression not by an attempt to accommodate multiple cultural groups under the newly formed public sovereignty. It was not anticipated that smaller cultural groups would be significantly disadvantaged in a majoritarian-based system of democratic governance; i.e. that their protection via the mechanism of individual rights would not adequately address the issue of their disappearance through latent cultural assimilation. Recognising that collective (cultural) membership is important for the well-being of individuals, a number of philosophers focused their attention onto whether some (underprivileged) cultural groups should be treated preferentially; i.e. whether they should be protected via the mechanism of collective rights. Can the theory of collective rights of cultural groups be applied to international relations between nation-states, keeping in mind their importance for the provision of various goods of moral importance and their disproportional socio-economic capabilities to pursue their legitimate democratic interests?

Adriane Rini

Massey University

Oxford Analytica: An Ordinary Language/Logic Debate in 1932-34?

In the pages of *Mind* in 1932-1934, there was an exchange between HWB Joseph and L Susan Stebbing about the usefulness of Russell's symbolic logic in addressing philosophical problems. The purpose of this talk is to look at this exchange and to compare it to the exchange in 1950 between PF Strawson and BAW Russell, and thus hope to shed some light on the relationship between Oxford 'ordinary language philosophy' and Cambridge logic in the early-to-mid 20th century.

David Ripley

Monash University

What explains the paradoxes?

If two paradoxes have the same explanation, then they should receive the same solution. This is Graham Priest's "Principle of Uniform Solution", and it's common ground in many discussions of paradox. But just which paradoxes have the same explanation?

Following Russell, Priest has proposed the Inclosure Schema as an explanation for a range of paradoxes. Based on this work, a number of theorists have claimed that paradoxes of vagueness have the same explanation as the liar paradox, and so should receive the same solution. On this basis, they have argued against solutions to one of these paradoxes that do not also solve the other.

I will argue that this is mistaken: the Inclosure Schema does not succeed in explaining the liar paradox, and so is not an appropriate tool for deciding whether the liar paradox should receive the same solution as paradoxes of vagueness. I will go on to propose an alternate explanation of these paradoxes, based on Katalin Bimbo's work in proof theory. If this explanation is right, liar paradoxes and paradoxes of vagueness do not have the same explanation, and so the Principle of Uniform Solution does not apply.

Matheson Russell

University of Auckland

Testimony and deferral in public deliberation

According to deliberative democrats, participants in public deliberations contribute reasons and/or critically assess the reasons of others. However, in real public discourse participants often contribute information, opinions, and arguments they have received from trusted others rather than generating their own. Moreover, participants often don't rely on their own efforts to critically evaluate the contributions of others but instead defer to critical evaluations made by others who they perceive to be better placed to judge. On the face of it, the fact that people rely upon testimony and defer to the judgments of others seems to violate the normative ideal of deliberative democracy. But accepting the testimony of others and deferring to the judgment of others can be a perfectly responsible thing to do from an epistemic point of view. What's more, the practice of deferral appears to play an important role in raising the epistemic quality of deliberations. Once we notice the pervasive role that practices of deferral play in public discourse, the standard image of public deliberation no longer looks adequate. In this paper, I sketch out a revised image of public deliberation and highlight the relevance of disputes over credibility.

Alex Sandgren & Koji Tanaka

The Australian National University

Two kinds of logical impossibility

In this paper we argue that a distinction ought to be drawn between two ways in which a given world might be logically impossible. First, a world w might be impossible because the laws that hold at w are different from those that hold at some other world (say the actual world). Second, a world w might be impossible because the laws of logic that hold in some world (say the actual world) are violated at w . Extant approaches to logical impossibility (such as those of Priest (2001, 2005), Restall (1997), Zalta (1997)) tend to emphasize one of these kinds of impossibility at the expense of the other. We develop a novel way of modeling logical possibility that makes room for both kinds of logical impossibility. Doing so has interesting implications for the epistemology of logic, the metaphysics of possible and impossible worlds, and the relationship between logical possibility and other kinds of possibility (for example, metaphysical possibility).

Vanessa Schouten

Massey University

The Moral Muddle of #MeToo

Since #MeToo went viral in late 2017, thousands of people have shared stories of their experiences of sexual assault and harassment. The movement has resulted in allegations against a number of high profile men, some leading to indictments (Harvey Weinstein and Larry Nasser, for example). But not all of the stories shared under the umbrella of the #MeToo movement are clear cut cases of harassment or assault. Two stories in particular have generated significant controversy: a story describing a sexual encounter between 'Grace' and the comedian Aziz Ansari

published on babe.net in January of this year, and ‘Cat Person’ by Kristen Roupenian, a fictional short story published in the New Yorker in late 2017. In both cases, the writers were accused of misrepresenting encounters that were simply bad or awkward as sexual assault. I argue for two claims: firstly that the backlash generated these stories demonstrate that our discussion of sexual morality is impoverished if we rely solely on the language of consent to describe possible wrongdoing; secondly that attempts to stretch the concept of consent to avoid this problem (such as enthusiastic consent) instead conflate distinct considerations.

Michael Schrader

University of Western Australia

Excuses, Justifications, and Forgiveness in Moral Experience.

Espen Gamlund argues that “the literature on forgiveness lacks an adequately nuanced account of the relationship between forgiveness, justifications, and excuses.” He claims the ‘standard view’ in the literature, which insists that “there is only something to forgive in cases of unexcused and unjustified wrongdoing,” is inadequate, and presents a case for an ‘alternate view’ whereby we may properly recognise that there is still “something to forgive in certain types of cases ... where a person has a justification or an excuse for her action.” Gamlund’s argument relies on cases discussed by Bernard Williams in his essay “Moral Luck”. I argue that the lessons of Williams’ paper are underappreciated by Gamlund, and that Gamlund’s alternate view is not as far from the standard view as he thinks it is, nor does it provide sufficient nuance for an adequate account of the relationship between forgiveness, justifications, and excuses. More careful attention to Williams’ arguments shows that neat conceptual distinctions between excuses, justifications, and forgiveness—such as those that characterise the standard view—do not make adequate sense of moral experience.

Jay Shaw

Victoria University of Wellington (Redt.)

The Nyāya on Truth

The aim of this paper is to discuss Nyāya conception of truth, which is a property of a cognition. Unlike the Western concept of correspondence, which is relational in nature, the Nyāya philosophers do not claim that a proposition is true if it corresponds to a fact. This is due to the fact that Nyāya does not postulate a tertiary entity called “proposition”. Similarly, Nyāya does not postulate ideas or images which resemble things in the world, although they postulate relational entities which are due to the relation between the things in the world and cognition. Truth is defined in terms of these properties of a cognition.

Since truth is a property of a qualificative cognition, this paper focusses on the distinction between qualificative (svavikalpaka) and non-qualificative (nirvikalpaka) cognitions. The Nyāya concept of qualificative cognition can be expressed by the form ‘aRb’.

The Nyāya philosophers have also discussed whether the word ‘true’ refers to a class-essence (jāti) which is common to all true cognitions. According to Gaṅgeśa, truth (pramātva) cannot be considered as a class-essence (jāti). This is due to the fact that there will be a defect called ‘sāṅkaryā’ between truth (pramātva) and the class-essence perceptual apprehendedness (sākṣātva).

Peter Slezak

University of New South Wales

Progress in philosophy? The case for taking history seriously.

In his recent book, Stoljar (2017) asks ‘Why does it seem a truism that philosophy makes no progress? Why the culture of misery?’ Indeed, Horwich (2012) says ‘Our subject is notorious ... for its embarrassing failure, after two thousand years to settle any of its central questions.’

Chalmers (2015) admits ‘There has not been large collective convergence to the truth on the big questions of philosophy,’ but even collective convergence is not the same as progress. Despite the wide consensus in some significant areas of philosophy, there remains room to doubt convergence to the truth. Indeed, Dietrich (2011) has argued that there is no progress in philosophy at all.

Stoljar argues for a ‘reasonable optimism’ about progress, defending the large and surprising claim that ‘there is progress on all or reasonably many of the big questions.’ However, I argue that Stoljar’s caveats and admitted avoidance of historical evidence permits overlooking persistent controversies in key areas of philosophy of mind that are essentially unchanged since the 17th Century. Stoljar suggests that his claims are commonplace in philosophy departments and, indeed, the evidence I adduce constitutes an indictment of the widely shared view among professional analytic philosophers.

Antonia Smyth

The University of Melbourne

Epistemic Injustice in cases of Compulsory Psychiatric Treatment

In this talk, I explore how epistemic injustice functions in the psychiatric context, particularly in reference to compulsory treatment. People in mental healthcare often report that they are regularly dismissed when describing their own experience of mental illness, and this can lead to adverse consequences. It can, for example, result in patients being prescribed medication that is at best unhelpful or at worst extremely debilitating. In the case of a compulsory treatment order, a person's not being believed can be especially egregious, as there will generally be no recourse to refuse treatment, even where the person has capacity to consent.

Fricker’s work on epistemic injustice provides a useful framework for examining cases of consent violation where decision-making capacity is present. Due to identity prejudice on the part of hearers, the testimony of compulsory patients may be granted a deflated level of credibility. To counteract the intrinsic harm of epistemic injustice, Fricker proposes the cultivation of the virtue of epistemic justice. However, this may be insufficient to address the injustice done to mentally ill people whose liberty and autonomy is violated by potentially unwarranted compulsory treatment. I therefore examine further measures, such as legislative change and remedial training for healthcare professionals.

Toby Solomon

Australian National University

Decision: Impossible

Decision theory is often presented as a metaphysically light theory: one which presupposes little or nothing about the metaphysics of the world—seeking merely to tell us what it is rational to do on the basis of our beliefs, whatever those beliefs are. The first blow to this perception came with the introduction of causal decision theory as a response to the inadequacy of evidential decision theory in cases such as Newcomb's problem—requiring the use of a notion of causation which is not metaphysically neutral. In this paper I will suggest that the metaphysical commitments of causal decision theory go deeper than this—specifically that a satisfactory causal decision theory requires us to take a substantive position on important questions about determinism. This argument will come as a trilemma: we must either (1) accept that causal decision theory is incomplete and cannot answer questions where the truth or falsity of determinism is relevant to the outcomes, or (2) endorse a certain kind of compatibilism about determinism and deliberative freedom (i.e. the freedom required to engage in decision-making), or (3) assume that determinism is false in our decision-making (with subsequent consequences for some of our decisions).

Matt Spike

Australian National University

The conventional evolution of common ground

Lewis argued that the establishment of communicative conventions requires sophisticated, hierarchical common knowledge: in response, Skyrms has shown how quite simple adaptive processes can suffice. Others, however (e.g. Sperber, Wilson, Scott-Phillips), dispute the suitability of the 'code model' of communication for human communication, and turn full circle: they argue for the foundational role of sophisticated, hierarchical, inferential cognition, all underwritten by common ground or mutual manifestness. On this view, common ground must exist prior to conventional communication, which only goes online once the necessary inferential architecture has been acquired. The existence of a stable common ground in this case implies that i) all relevant world-states and responses are known by all parties, ii) the most mutually-beneficial response to each world-state is known by all parties, and iii) a transparent, non-conventionalised signal is available for each world state. I will present modelling work which shows that relaxing any one of these assumptions favours a co-evolutionary account of the emergence of both common ground and conventional communication.

Shawn Standefer

University of Melbourne

The Universal Generalization Problem and Informational Screening

In "The Universal Generalization Problem", Cellucci examines several responses to the question of what entitles one to pass from particular premises to general conclusions. In particular, he objects to Gentzen's response that, while extensionally correct, it gets two things wrong: informally, Gentzen appears to appeal unnecessarily to abstract objects, and formally, it focuses on restricting the available premises leading to the general conclusion. Cellucci offers a different proposal in terms of substitution of terms.

In this talk, I will offer an alternative proposal to Cellucci's. The proposal begins by observing that the introduction of a universal quantifier provides one sort of generality, and there are others, such as that provided by necessity introduction. My alternative is based on the idea that generality is achieved by screening off information in an argument. I will provide some examples of how this is supposed to work and argue that it can accommodate Cellucci's proposal while also applying more broadly.

Kim Sterelny

Australian National University

Origins of Inequality

Almost all living humans live in social world that are profoundly unequal in wealth and influence. By the standard of deep human history, that is a recent change. For most of our history humans lived in egalitarian, acephalous communities. This paper focusses on two questions. First: how and why did the social world of egalitarian foragers transition to the unequal worlds of early farming societies and other unequal farming communities. What caused the failure of the mechanisms that guarded equality in egalitarian worlds? Second: why did cooperation, collective action and, in general, the social contract persist through that transition? One of the robust results of both theoretical models and behavioural economics is that cooperation falls apart when free-riding is not controlled. Elites were free-riders, and yet the non-elite continue to contribute, not everywhere but often, to collective action. Theory and experiment seem to be in conflict with much of the last ten thousand years of human history. I'll suggest answers to these questions based on individual optimising decisions, rather than ones that depend on various versions of cultural group selection.

Daniel Stoljar

Australian National University

Does rationality require you to believe you are conscious?

Several philosophers have suggested that there is a deep connection between consciousness and rationality—but what exactly is the connection and how should it be explained? This paper focuses on the idea that it is a requirement of rationality that if you are in a conscious state, you will believe that you are, at least in certain circumstances. An introspective belief, from this point of view, is a belief of this type formed in this particular way; and introspective knowledge is an introspective belief that constitutes knowledge. After setting out the motivations for this idea, I focus on various questions about the suggested requirement: what its precise form should be, and whether it can be derived from other requirements of rationality.

Michael Strevens

New York University

Indirect Causal Generalizations and the Uses of Entanglement

If scientists are to think intelligently and fruitfully about causation, then they need a vocabulary that directly represents causal relations. I argue that they also need what I call “indirect causal generalizations”. Whereas a direct causal relation connecting properties F and G asserts that F-ness causes G-ness, an indirect relation says, very roughly, “Something about F-ness causes G-ness”, where the “something about F-ness” is a property that reliably (if not exceptionlessly) comes along with F-ness but may be metaphysically and indeed causally quite independent of F. In an indirect generalization, then, F is a reliable sign of the presence of the cause of G, but it is not (necessarily) itself the cause.

I deem the connection between F and the underlying cause a relation of “entanglement”, and I go on to give criteria for entanglement, from which follow truth conditions for indirect causal generalizations.

Most of the causal generalizations of the high-level sciences (e.g., obesity causes diabetes) are indirect: they represent chains of entanglement and causality. The antecedent properties of causal generalizations are, I argue, explanatorily relevant to their consequents, despite the lack of a causal connection. I explore some interesting implications for the philosophy of scientific explanation.

Christopher Suhler

Nanyang Technological University

Individual Disagreement and Collective Inquiry

A common way of motivating the problem of disagreement between apparent epistemic peers is by pointing to such disagreement’s existence in domains like science, philosophy, politics, and religion. In this paper, I examine how the collective nature of inquiry in these domains bears on what is rational for individuals to believe in the face of disagreement. I argue that, contrary to what is commonly assumed in the epistemology of disagreement literature, collective epistemic considerations are capable of rendering individual steadfast belief rational in the face of disagreement. More specifically, I argue that in contexts of collective inquiry such as those found in science and philosophy, steadfastness is rational due to the collective epistemic benefits associated with different individuals believing in and pursuing different potential answers to important questions. I then suggest that the absence of this collective context in idealized cases of disagreement helps to explain why conciliationism seems so plausible in idealized cases yet so problematic when applied to important areas of real-world disagreement.

Anton Sukhoverkhov

Kuban State Agrarian University

Non-genetic inheritance systems and biological and social evolution

Because of persistent gene-centered view in most studies of evolution, there is still a need to provide empirical evidence and theoretical arguments for the significance in evolution of non-genetic inheritance systems. The gene-centered approach also led to organism-centered view and to 'bottom-up' models of biological/social evolution and individual development (e.g. behavioral, cognitive, linguistic). This one-sided approach in science could be completed by models of evolution explaining it also as development of biological and social systems (e.g. paradigms of symbiogenesis, 'superorganisms', 'eco-cultural niches', etc.) Such project could help to explain processes of evolution and inheritance both on the level of individuals and on system level wherein transgenerational and intersubjective ecological, behavioral, cognitive, and cultural 'traits' are taken into account. In that model of evolution, 'top-down' processes and external (eco-logical and social) factors of individual and social development are considered. Effective theoretical and methodological equipment for that project are Developmental Systems Theory (P. E. Griffiths), classification of E. Jablonka, M. J. Lamb of four inheritance systems (genetic, epigenetic, behavioral, and symbolic) and theory of ecological inheritance (F. J. Odling-Smee). This approach can also be applied for solution of the problem of language origin and understanding of cumulative nature of biological and social evolution.

John Sutton

Macquarie University

Autobiographical memory, scaffolded minds, and Neolithic cognitive norms

Cognitive archaeologists deploy increasingly precise evidence about changes in material culture, social organisation, technical skill, and symbolic activity to identify historical and cultural shifts in the nature of cognition. Although autobiographical memory is a natural domain for such enquiry, some views of its nature, functions, and evolution leave little room for substantial cognitive change on the timescales in question. I develop a hypothesis about the emergence of narrative personal memories around the larger stable settlements of the Neolithic Middle East like Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe, c.7000-6000 BCE. I bring archaeological evidence into contact with two recent bodies of work on memory: about the social and communicative role of episodic recall, and about the scaffolded or situated nature of remembering. Basic human capacities for remembering, imagining, and mental time travel, in place well before the Neolithic, are deployed or knitted together in specific, culturally-inflected ways. Children learn the skills of and norms for autobiographical remembering in slow, multi-staged, variable processes of enculturation, involving diverse cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and narrative resources. The hypothesis that the Neolithic saw significant if uneven changes in these norms and practices can at least help sharpen the requirements for assessing archaeological claims about cognitive change.

Christine Swanton

University of Auckland

An Epistemology for Virtue Ethics

In the era of "fake news" epistemology should be seen as an important topic in applied ethics. To this end I deploy the riches of virtue epistemology in the service of an epistemology for target centred virtue ethics. Both ethical and evidentialist desiderata of justification are met in the theory. One has a standing epistemic duty to aim at the targets of epistemic virtues that are relevant in the context and reaching the targets provides justification for ethical "intuitions."

I argue against traditional agent centred virtue ethical epistemology of the kind criticized by inter alia Tim Dare, claiming that target centred virtue ethics is not prone to objections such as his.

Justin Sytsma

Victoria University of Wellington

The Extent of Causal Superseding

A growing body of research indicates that norms matter for ordinary causal attributions. Across a range of cases, we find that when two agents jointly bring about an outcome, with one violating a norm while the other does not, causal ratings are higher for the agent who violates the norm. Building off such findings, Kominsky et al. (2015) note a related phenomenon that they term “causal superseding”: in situations in which two agents jointly bring about an outcome, whether or not one agent violates a norm also affects causal ratings for the other agent. Kominsky et al. offer an explanation of this phenomenon—the counterfactual sufficiency account—and describe the results of four experiments testing their account. In this paper, we explore the phenomenon of causal superseding further. We present a sequence of new studies investigating the proposed effect for a range of cases. We find that across 14 comparisons where Kominsky et al. predict that we will see causal superseding, the size of the effect varies dramatically, including running in the opposite direction in four of the cases. Finally, we offer a deflationary explanation of causal superseding, arguing that what we are seeing is simply a context effect.

Kai Tanter & William Tuckwell

Monash University/University of Melbourne

Scorekeeping Trolls

Keith DeRose (1992, 1995, 2002, 2004, 2009) defends contextualism; the view that the truth-conditions of knowledge ascriptions vary with the context of the ascriber. Mark Richard (2004) has criticised contextualism for not being able to vindicate our intuitions about disagreement. In order to account for these intuitions DeRose (2004) has proposed a single scoreboard semantics that he labels the Gap view. According to this view, ‘S knows that p ’ is true iff the personal epistemic standards of every conversational participant are met, false iff the personal standards of every conversational participant are not met, and truth valueless iff some standards are met but others are not.

An implication of this view is that the presence of participants in a conversation with standards that diverge from those of other participants often results in knowledge ascriptions lacking a truth value. We use the metaphor of “trolling” to characterise this phenomenon. We argue that this result, when combined with numerous plausible knowledge norms – the knowledge norms of assertion, action and belief – results in unacceptably counter-intuitive implications and that this constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum* against the Gap view.

Amie Thomasson

Dartmouth College

Keynote: Reconceiving Metaphysics

Taking metaphysical debates at face value—as deep disputes about what exists or about the modal features of the world—runs into formidable and familiar epistemological problems, along with the threat of a rivalry with science, and of a despairing skepticism. Elsewhere, I have developed an alternative ‘easy’ approach to addressing existence questions and modal questions in metaphysics. But such deflationary views are often accused of being unable to make sense of what disputants are up to, or to account for the apparent depth, difficulty and importance of classic metaphysical debates. Here I will lay out an alternative positive conception of metaphysics. I argue that there is room for the deflationist to make more interesting and robust sense of what disputants (at least in many classic debates) have been up to, and of what we can legitimately be up to when we do metaphysics, without giving up epistemological and methodological clarity. For many disputes (taken in what Carnap would have considered an ‘external’ sense) can be seen as implicitly engaged in a form of conceptual negotiation—where that in turn does not rely on ‘discoveries’ of ‘metaphysical facts’. Thinking of ‘deep’ metaphysics as tacitly engaged in conceptual negotiation still enables us to demystify the epistemology of metaphysics, while avoiding both rivalry with science and skeptical despair. Yet it also preserves a sense of the difficulty, depth, and importance of work that we can do, when we do metaphysics.

Janna Thompson

La Trobe University

Welfare of Children and Communal Relationships

The harm done to indigenous children as the result of the child removal policies of Australian and Canadian governments has been well documented. But some removed children were well treated in institutions and foster homes and enjoyed opportunities that they would have lacked if they had been raised in indigenous communities. Some were later glad that they had been removed. Suppose that good treatment and good outcomes had been the rule rather than the exception. What then would be wrong with the removal of children from indigenous parents and communities? Liberal philosophers have not provided adequate answers to this question. In this paper I aim to explain why natural parents have responsibilities and rights in respect to their children and why members of an indigenous community are wronged by a policy aimed at undermining its existence even when their rights as individuals are not violated.

David Thorstad

Harvard University

Omission bias revisited

Deontological theories of moral justification frequently posit a moral difference between doing and allowing harm. Over the past several decades, psychologists and philosophers have criticized this moral distinction, labeling it an omission bias. A prominent early criticism led by Horowitz (1998) claimed that moral intuitions confound the distinction between doing and allowing harm with an underlying distinction between losses and gains. In this paper, I review evidence against Horowitz's skeptical claim, then tackle remaining allegations of omission bias. I argue that such claims reveal at most a small bias which does not threaten most philosophical theorizing.

Adam Townsend

The University of Adelaide

Representational Similarity and Structure in Neural Network Models

Neural network models are simplified biologically-inspired models of aspects of cognition. Despite their success in many problem domains and increasing use in artificial intelligence applications there is still no widely accepted and comprehensive explanation of how these systems represent and process information. Additionally, in order to explain how people with distinct neural substrates can have thoughts with the same (or similar) representational content we need a reliable method to assess representational similarity across network models. This presentation provides an overview of how the operation of neural networks can be explained in terms of internal representations and discusses various approaches to determining representational content including structural resemblance, clustering and mutual information. I provide experimental data from the analysis of a wide range of simulated networks to clarify the plausibility of these approaches. By reviewing and extending a method for assessing the representational similarity of diverse neural network models I show that the results generally support structural resemblance based approaches although this finding is not consistent across all problem domains and the results require careful interpretation.

Joseph Ulatowski

University of Waikato

Have Truth Theorists Misunderstood the Pragmatist's Conception of Truth?

Pragmatism should not be understood as a school of thought unified around a distinctive doctrine. Nevertheless, truth theorists have attributed to all pragmatists an instrumental view of truth. If the truth theorist's interpretation is correct, then a claim's usefulness is both a necessary and sufficient condition for its being true. The findings

reported here suggest that non-philosophers generally agree with the claim that beliefs are useful in virtue of being true, but broadly reject the claim that beliefs are true in virtue of being useful. Thus, if pragmatism about truth is supposed to reflect a pre-theoretic folk notion, then it seems in light of the essential asymmetry derived from the experimental data that the truth theorist's version of the pragmatic conception of truth is deeply misguided.

Martin Vacek

Slovak Academy of Sciences

Fictional Characters as Alien Individuals

The paper identifies fictional characters with alien individuals, that is individuals that neither exist in the actual world, nor are constructible from actually existing individuals. To do so, I pose two assumptions: a) fictional characters are impossible individuals and b) fictional characters should be treated in the same way as alien individuals. First, I motivate the claim that fictional characters come with a sort of impossibility. Second, I introduce a way of dealing with alien individuals. Third, I extend the proposal by impossible worlds and, finally, suggest a unified way of dealing with both fictional characters and alien individuals.

Glen Veitch

University of Newcastle, Australia

Fake News as an Existential Crisis for Process Metaphysics

The phenomenon of 'fake news' has swept through global discourse and into the common vernacular with a speed and attraction seldom seen. However, any judgement of a proposition's truth or falsity rests entirely on one's metaphysical assumptions. Metaphysical frameworks carry fundamental assertions concerning reality with which we can formulate theories of truth. This paper examines the sweeping phenomenon of 'fake news' under the lens of process metaphysics, as championed by Alfred North Whitehead. In establishing that a process model of reality is exhaustively experiential and perspectival, I argue for a relativistic correspondence theory of truth and conclude that 'fake news' poses — by definition — an existential threat to humanity.

Emily Vicendese

University of Melbourne

What about the men? Implications of Jenkins' twin concepts

In *Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman**, Katharine Jenkins (2016) takes issue with Sally Haslanger's ameliorative analysis of gender concepts (2000). Jenkins argues that not all trans women fall into the extension of Haslanger's definition of WOMAN, and that this constitutes a theoretical oversight that unwittingly perpetuates the oppression of transgender people. Consequently, Jenkins conducts an ameliorative analysis of Haslanger, proposing the adoption of "twin concepts", namely, gender as class and gender as identity, both of which she thinks necessary for capturing all who should count as women for feminist purposes.

However, unlike Haslanger, Jenkins does not provide a thorough ameliorative analysis of the concept of MAN. I will explore what I see as the options available to Jenkins in defining a concept of MAN that is amenable to her stated normative and theoretical commitments. I suggest that the results of this exploration put pressure on Jenkins' "twin concepts" proposal, and consider the idea that given Jenkins' normative commitments, her best option is to abandon gender as class in favour of gender as identity.

Denise Vigani

Seton Hall University

Beyond Silencing: From Salience to Action

Over several articles, John McDowell sketches an analogy between virtue and perception, whereby the virtuous person sees situations in a distinctive way. Central to the view is his notion of silencing, a psychological phenomenon in which certain considerations fail to operate as reasons in a virtuous person's practical reasoning. Yet even those sympathetic to McDowell's view think that some considerations, such as one's life, health, or loved ones, are too significant to be altogether silenced. His view seems to require a degree of stoic detachment or insensitivity that looks implausible for humans, if not downright undesirable. In this paper, I argue that it is a mistake to think that silenced considerations can play no role at all in a virtuous person's reasoning. The phenomenon of silencing, I contend, is properly understood as having a much narrower scope than has been supposed. There are opportunities for the virtuous to take silenced considerations into account, although such considerations will never provide reason to act contrary to virtue. This yields a considerably more plausible view of the psychology of the virtuous who, far from being stoic superheroes, are defended as being very human indeed.

Mary Walker

Monash University

Neurotechnologies and the possibility of relational authenticity

One focus of ethical debate about neurotechnologies – both drugs and implanted devices – has been whether and when these technologies might damage or promote a user's authenticity. Several recent papers have argued that framing issues about neurotechnologies in these terms is mistaken, as the concept of authenticity invokes implausible notions of selfhood. Some further argue that the relevant ethical concerns are better understood as concerns about autonomy.

I am largely in agreement with these arguments. However, theories of autonomy generally include some authenticity conditions among the requirements for autonomous action, so the view that ethical concerns about neurotechnologies relate to autonomy rather than authenticity requires further clarification.

Such a clarification might proceed in two ways: it might recast the concept of authenticity and take ethical concerns with neurotechnologies to relate to it; or it might consider authenticity entirely irrelevant (either to the concerns, to autonomy in general, or both) and explain what other aspects of autonomous action underpin the ethical concerns. In this paper, I examine possibilities for the former option, taking a relational perspective, and evaluate whether such a view could capture the concerns in the ethics literature on neurotechnologies.

Chloe Wall & Kourken Michaelian

University of Otago

Collective Confabulation

In recent years, popular fora have seen lively discussion of the "Mandela Effect". The Mandela Effect—so called in reference to the paradigm case of a widely shared memory of Nelson Mandela dying in prison in the 1980s—occurs when individuals who have never met each other in person develop highly similar memories of events that never occurred. Popular explanations of this phenomenon are fanciful, and the scientific literature so far contains no discussion of the effect or the mechanisms giving rise to it. The purposes of this talk are, first, to make a case for the existence of the Mandela Effect as a novel memory error worthy of scientific attention and, second, to sketch a general account of a mechanism that might give rise to it. We argue that, given either the causal account of mnemonic confabulation defended by Robins (2016) and Bernecker (2017) or the reliability account defended by Michaelian (2016), the effect amounts to confabulation on the collective level. It does not, however, reduce to individual confabulation. Instead, the effect comes about as a result of an individual-level memory error combined with certain malfunctioning features of group-level interaction.

Lachlan Walmsley

Australian National University

Everything wrong with multi-model idealisation

Scientific models are powerful tools for reasoning through assumptions, building theories, and making inferences about the real world. But models are made only with the help of simplifications and distortions known as idealisations. In this paper, I endorse a revised version of Michael Weisberg's account of idealisation. On that view, there are three kinds of idealisation: Galilean idealisation, minimalist idealisation, and multi-model idealisation (MMI). Here, I argue that Weisberg's notion of MMI is not a kind of idealisation at all, but robustness analysis: a procedure for reducing uncertainty. In light of these objections, we may consider rejecting Weisberg's view entirely for an alternative, such as Angela Potochnik's account. In the last part of the paper, I argue that a Weisbergian view should not be rejected just yet as its still gets explanatory purchase on important instances of modelling in climate science.

Adrian Walsh

University of New England

"Desperate Exchange, Injustice and Competitive Market Agency"

One significant source of moral and political criticism of markets involves what are colloquially referred to as 'desperate exchanges'; that is, exchanges in which agents accept undesirable contractual arrangements because of their straitened or desperate circumstances. In these desperate exchanges, vulnerable agents typically sacrifice their long-term interests for some short-term gain. Many critics (i) regard taking advantage of those who are in desperate circumstances to be morally reprehensible and (ii) claim that justice requires that governments or other relevant agencies protect the vulnerable from such exploitation.

Herein I shall assume that such criticisms are correct: desperate exchanges are one significant way in which market arrangements can give rise to injustice - and one obligation of a just society is to protect those who are vulnerable in this way. In this paper, however, I shall explore a different line of inquiry that concerns the relationship of desperate exchanges to the competitive market practices generally characteristic of non-monopolistic markets. I shall investigate what, if anything, might distinguish desperate market exchange from ordinary competitive and, in this way, provide further insight into both the nature of the injustice of desperate exchange and the constraints the demands of justice place upon market agency.

Timothy Williamson

Oxford

Keynote: Semantics and Heuristics

Psychologists have long been used to the idea that unreflective human judgments often rely on fallible heuristics, which are reliable under normal conditions but result in predictable errors in various other circumstances. It is not clear how far this phenomenon is taken into account by the current methodology in the semantics of natural language, where theorists are typically very willing to complicate putative truth-conditions in order to avoid ascribing systematic error to speakers, especially when the latter would not recognise the alleged error on having it pointed out.

One example is the high status of tolerance principles in many discussions of vagueness: although they generate sorites paradoxes, acceptance of them has often been claimed to be constitutive of understanding vague terms. Yet even if tolerance principles are false, most of their instances will be true, so they would make good heuristics.

Another example concerns conditionals. Arguably, our primary way of assessing a conditional is by assessing its consequent under the supposition of its consequent: more specifically, whatever attitude we take to some propositions conditional on a supposition, we take unconditionally to the conditionals with that supposition as their

antecedent and those further propositions as their consequents (this is closely related to the Ramsey test). Yet following that procedure all-out can be shown to lead us into contradiction, not least when considering conditionals with inconsistent antecedents. The suppositional procedure may be just a fallible heuristic. This has serious repercussions for supposed examples of counterpossibles (conditionals with impossible antecedents) that are not vacuously true, which have been used to motivate invoking impossible worlds.

More generally, the possibility of such fallible heuristics is damaging for a naïve falsificationist methodology in semantics. What can take its place? A model-building methodology holds out some promise.

Timothy Luke Williamson

Australian National University

Deeply Unstable Decision Theorists: Causalism's Epistemic Challenge

Causal Decision Theory (CDT) sometimes tells you to do something you know you will regret (Gibbard & Harper 1978); this is the challenge from decision instability. I restate the challenge from decision instability and argue that causalists must say something in response. I then turn to one prominent response: require agents not just to maximise expected utility, but to maximise expected utility among the options that meet some further stability constraint (Weirich 1988, Sobel 1994, Egan 2007, Gustafsson 2011). I present and motivate a Modest Menu Independence requirement on decision theories: if you know that you ought not do option A, then subtracting A from your option set should not change what you ought to do (provided that subtracting A from your option set leaves your beliefs and desires concerning outcomes of other acts unaffected). Yet every plausible attempt to modify CDT so as to avoid the challenge of decision instability must violate Modest Menu Independence. This leaves the causalist with a choice between two unpalatable options: give up on the idea that acts should be evaluated on the basis of their causal efficacy, or accept that decision instability is unavoidable. Choosing either option is grist to the non-causalist's mill.

Daniel Wilson

The University of Auckland

Lopes' Cluster Definition of the Arts

Dominic McIver Lopes argues that the prospects for an informative theory of the arts are dim. In response I argue that Lopes' proposed framework for theories of the arts, if successful, provides the resources for both an informative theory of the arts and a definition of the arts. The transgression of the constitutive rules and conventions of an art form is an important artistic technique. Utilising Lopes' framework, I argue that if the media profile of an art appreciative kind is fully specified then the standard rules and conventions of that art form will also be included. One logical consequence of this is an informative cluster theory of the arts. Moreover, a cluster definition of the arts may be derived from the cluster theory of the arts by selecting only the subset of the standard conventions in the media profile that specify sufficient conditions for each of the arts.

Thomas Yates

University of Auckland

Culpable Ignorance and Acceptance

In this paper, I present an objection from the distinction between belief and acceptance to the widely-held principle (CIP) that culpability for ignorant wrongdoing necessarily derives from culpability for ignorance. Acceptance is taken to be the voluntary mental attitude of "going with" the truth of a proposition for practical purposes, where such an attitude does not entail belief. Several variants of CIP are distinguished according to different accounts of "wrongdoing from ignorance." Against these variants, I argue that the belief/acceptance distinction entails that CIP is false. An agent can sometimes act culpably from culpable ignorance, even though culpability for the act is not derived from culpability for the ignorance but from culpability for an acceptance in ignorance. Further, an agent can act culpably from blameless ignorance by culpably accepting some proposition. The implications of the defeat of CIP

are at least twofold: the case for doxastic responsibility is weakened, and Gideon Rosen's "New Skeptical Challenge" to the justification of responsibility judgments is answered.

Lian Zhou

University of Melbourne

Character and token: a case study of 'I'

The type/token distinction and the character/content distinction are both familiar to philosophers. But the relation between them is still an interesting question. Stephen Neale, in a note of his essay 'Silent Reference', mentions that 'The second is the belief that the type-token distinction provides an important part of a proper implementation of Kaplan's theory and a proper explanation of his character-content distinction: word-types have characters, word-tokens have content. But this belief is just false. (...) For those who still like type-token talk, Kaplan's semantics concerns properties [characters, contents, and more] of expression-types and is silent on properties of expression-tokens.' (Stephen Neale, 2016, p. 335) It seems Kaplanian semantics ascribes character to expression (which is type) and ascribes content to expression with respect to context (which is also type). But the utterance of expression, which is token, is not expected to have any interaction with any side of the character/content distinction in this semantic project. In this paper, I try to argue against this view by studying a special case, i.e., the interaction between character of the first person term 'I' and its token. After introducing a pair of concepts 'long-lived token' and 'short-lived token', I argue that a shift from short-lived token of 'I' to its long-lived token causes a relevant change in its character. I believe this causation shows us the character of 'I' is sensitive to its token.