The Inaugural Apophansis Philosophy Symposium

King's College London
June 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ 2024

I. Conference Details

What? The Apophansis Philosophy Symposium is a graduate conference to celebrate the publication of the inaugural edition of the journal, *Apophansis*. Speakers for the conference include graduate and PhD students from a variety of British universities working on a diversity of topics in Philosophy. Talks will be followed by Q&As with the speakers.

When? June 1ˢᵗ, 9:30am-5pm, and June 2ⁿᵈ, 9:30am-3:45pm.

Where? K2.31 (Nash Lecture Theatre) and K.40, King's Building, Strand Campus.

Who can attend? All are welcome to attend the conference, regardless of discipline or level of study. Entry is free.

If you have any further questions about the conference, you are welcomed to contact the Apophansis Symposium Committee at: apophansis.exec@gmail.com.

2. Conference Programme

Day 1 – Saturday 1ˢᵗ June

9:30-10:00	Morning welcome *(tea & coffee)*
10:00-11:00	Moralism, Immoralism, and Aesthetic Prescriptivism Dr Joshua Kelsall, *University of Warwick*
11:00-11:15	*Break: 15 minutes*
11:15-12:15	Diachronic Properties Christabel Cane, *University College London*
12:15-1:30	*Break for Lunch: 1 hour 15 minutes*
1:30-2:30	Justification as an Evaluative Concept: A New Argument for Externalism Guy Smith, *King's College London*
2:30-2:45	*Break: 15 minutes*

2:45-3:45	Imaginative Guises Matt Green, *University of St Andrews*
3:45-4:00	*Break: 15 minutes*
4:00-5:00	Can the Cognitivist Make Sense of Regret in Moral Dilemmas? Eve Poirer, *University of Warwick*
5:00	*End of Day 1*

Day 2 – Sunday 2ⁿᵈ June

9:30-10:00	Morning welcome *(tea & coffee)*
10:00-11:00	Pleonexia and Political Decline in Plato's *Republic* Arthur Kleinman, *King's College London*
11:00-11:15	*Break: 15 minutes*
11:15-12:15	Insufficiency of Naturalism for Distal Mental Content Gaurav Kudtarkar, *Durham University*
12:15-1:30	*Break for Lunch: 1 hour 15 minutes*
1:30-2:30	You Can't Teach an Old Dogma New Tricks Eric Wallace, *University of St Andrews*
2:30-2:45	*Break: 15 minutes*
2:45-3:45	Is Affective Forecasting Necessary for Knowing What We Value? Diana Craciun, *University College London*
3:45	*End of Conference*

3. Abstracts

Diachronic Properties
Christabel Cane, *University College London*

Both perdurantism and endurantism have problems associated with properties that are instantiated only temporarily. Classical endurantism (or relationalism) runs into the problem of temporary intrinsics, and I'll show that a revised version of Mark Hinchliff's (1996) objection to perdurantism presents an analogous problem for the perdurantist. Perduring objects (i.e. fusions of temporal parts) don't instantiate their temporary properties directly, but rather derivatively, in virtue of their parts doing so.

However, help is at hand, in the form of Parson's (2000) solution to the problem of temporary intrinsics. As part of his solution, Parsons posits temporally and spatially 'distributional properties', which are properties

that objects instantiate in virtue of extending in these respective dimensions. I'll apply Parsons' notion of temporally distributional properties to perdurantism's problem, showing that they are the key to solving my modified problem. Parsons' account of distributional temporal properties unintentionally supplies the perdurantist with a kind of property that temporally extended objects can instantiate directly, thus solving perdurantism's problem of temporary properties.

Is Affective Forecasting Necessary for Knowing What We Value?
Diana Craciun, *University College London*

Generally, we confidently ascribe valuing states to ourselves. We make statements such as 'I value democracy' or 'I value my best friend' - our sense of who we are depends on doing so. Yet what justifies that confidence? If you were asked 'Do you value philosophy, or are you just doing it for the money?', how do you go about generating such knowledge?

I will operate with the notion that valuing involves, at a minimum, a set of distinctive emotional dispositions towards the valued object. Given this view of valuing, a plausible explanation stemming from Tooming and Miyazono (2023) is the following: to know whether we value, we need to predict our potential or future emotional reactions. That is, they suggest that affective forecasting is necessary to generate knowledge of valuing states. I argue that, despite its intuitive appeal, affective forecasting is not necessary. I defend this position by showing that, if predicting our future emotional states was necessary, it would i) lead to questionable inferential claims ii) implicitly endorse epistemic closure and thereby licence too much knowledge, and iii) overlook the extent to which evidence about the future depends on present and past evidence, thus rendering affective forecasting unnecessary.

Imaginative Guises
Matt Green, *University of St Andrews*

In this talk, I argue that guises (i.e., modes of presentation) play an important, but under-appreciated, role in the logic and semantics of imagination. In §1, I characterise imagination and reality-oriented mental simulation. In §2, I introduce three commonly held assumptions

> (A1) Imaginings: x imagining that A = x having the imagining attitude to proposition A.
> (A2) Propositions: a proposition = a truth-condition.
> (A3) Truth-Conditions: a truth-condition = a set of possible worlds.

In §3, I introduce three commonly accepted theses (where 'A>B' means that if it were the case that A, then it would be the case that B):

> (T1) Intensionality of Imagination: if B and C are logically equivalent, then x imagines that B (given that A) iff x imagines that C (given that A).
> (T2) Belief Through Imagination: if x imagines that B (given that A), then x believes that A>B.
> (T3) Opacity of Belief: is not the case that: if B and C are logically equivalent, then x believes that A>B iff x believes that A>C.

In particular, I establish that (T1) follows from (A1)–(A3). In §4, I show that (T1)–(T3) are mutually inconsistent. In §5, I argue that (T1) is invalid. Since (T1) follows from (A1)–(A3), at least one of (A1)–(A3) is false. In §6, I argue that (A1) is false, and that it should be replaced by an assumption that takes account of propositional guises.

Moralism, Immoralism, and Aesthetic Prescriptivism
Dr Joshua Kelsall, *University of Warwick*

Moralists and immoralists debate over whether it is possible for immoral artworks to have their aesthetic value enhanced in virtue of their immorality. Roughly, moralists answer in the negative, immoralists, in the affirmative. However, both sides of the debate share a characterisation of what it means for an artwork to have moral value. They hold a position I call aesthetic prescriptivism. According to aesthetic prescriptivism, artworks have moral value when they prescribe their audiences to adopt moral or immoral attitudes towards their contents. Aesthetic prescriptivists also believe audiences are required to adopt the attitudes prescribed by artworks if they are to engage with artworks appropriately. In this paper, I argue that aesthetic prescriptivism is false. Artworks don't prescribe audiences to take attitudes towards their contents, and even if they did, audiences are not required to adopt them. Thus, the basis on which moralists and immoralists have taken artworks to have moral value needs to be rethought.

Pleonexia and Political Decline in Plato's *Republic*
Arthur Kleinman, *King's College London*

How should we interpret the degenerate regimes passage in Books VIII and IX of Plato's *Republic*? And what import, if any, does the passage have for modern political theory? This paper seeks to resolve the former question to prepare the way for an investigation of the latter. First, I reconstruct the psychological theory of the *Republic*, and against that backdrop discuss a novel interpretation of the degenerate regimes passage put forward by Era Gavrielides: that Plato doesn't deem them problematic because of their instability or propensity to degenerate – which in her view aren't even necessary features of the regimes – but rather because of *the way in which* they establish political stability, namely through force instead of persuasion. I then refute this interpretation on the grounds that it understates the centrality of *pleonexia* – the expansionary desire to 'do better' or 'have more' – in Plato's account of political change. Recognising the pleonectic dynamics built into the degenerate regimes, I argue, foregrounds their *diachronically unstable* character and the *logical necessity* impelling their degeneration. Finally, I advance that this instability or propensity to degenerate is precisely what renders them problematic from the standpoint of Platonism, in light of the latter's metaphysics of forms.

Insufficiency of Naturalism for Distal Mental Content
Gaurav Kudtarkar, *Durham University*

In my paper, I critically evaluate the major naturalistic proposals offered as solutions to the distality problem for mental content. The distality problem pertains to answering how mental representations can be about distal targets, by virtue of having content, to the exclusion of more proximal candidates. In other words, why are mental representations mostly about distal states rather than proximal ones? Naturalistic solutions to the distality problem come in a package of three elements: naturalistic relations, teleological functions and target fixation formulae or mechanisms. These elements are taken to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient for distal content.

I focus on target fixation formulae (TFF), which do much of the heavy-lifting for determining distal targets, and argue that none of the popular extant proposals are necessary for representation. Consequently, even if the relations and functions elements are necessary, the whole naturalistic package is not sufficient for distal mental content. The prominent TFF proposals I evaluate are Karen Neander's distality principle, Peter

Schulte's constancy mechanism-based solution, Ruth Millikan's use-of-relations condition and Nicholas Shea's use + unmediated explanation condition.

Can the Cognitivist Make Sense of Regret in Moral Dilemmas?
Eve Poirier, *University of Warwick*

Bernard Williams argued that cognitivist accounts of moral dilemmas encountered difficulty in explaining feelings like regret, guilt, or a desire to make reparations, which agents may experience in a moral dilemma even if they do 'the right thing'. What, then, does a moral theory need to look like in order to do justice to these features of our lived experience, particularly the feeling of regret? I will reconstruct Williams's argument before considering Phillipa Foot's attempt to defend a version of cognitivism from his objections. I argue that while Foot does make an improvement on the naïve cognitivist view, her account of dilemmas still does not do justice to the fact that dilemmas often involve feeling regret, which she asserts is 'irrational'. To finish, I suggest that the issues with Foot's account may stem from the flattening of all measures of moral evaluation into a binary metric of 'right or wrong'. I leave it open whether it is possible for a cognitivist theory to avoid this pitfall, although I give reasons to suspect (along with Williams) that it is not.

Justification as an Evaluative Concept: A New Argument for Externalism
Guy Smith, *King's College London*

In this talk, I will discuss my argument for externalism about justification. I will first expound and defend this argument. In my paper, I have argued (1) that justification is an evaluative concept and (2) that therefore externalism about justification is entailed by the concept of justification itself. I will then go beyond the paper itself and further defend this understanding of justification. Lastly, I will briefly suggest what my argument implies about the methodology of epistemology.

You Can't Teach an Old Dogma New Tricks
Eric Wallace, *University of St Andrews*

Ramsification - a method associated with the work of Ramsey, Lewis, and Carnap - is a method for explicitly defining the theoretical terms used in a theory with that theory. If Ramsification provides explicit definitions for theoretical terms, then this plausibly helps us to settle the debate about whether there are analytic claims with a positive answer. I argue that Ramsification is not up to the job of providing explicit definitions of theoretical terms, and hence does not provide us with a method of defending the existence of analytic claims. To show this I present a dilemma: Do the theoretical terms in a theory that is nearly realised refer or not? On the 'no' horn, we are forced to give an inadequate interpretation of the content of scientific theories and disputes between scientists who advocate for different theories. On the 'yes' horn we find that some definitions are extensionally inadequate, and hence false. Analytic claims must be true, so the 'definitions' that Ramsification furnishes us with are not analytic and hence Ramsification does not lend support to the thesis that some claims are analytic. Either way, we find that Ramsification does not help us to define the terms of our best theories.