

UPJA Virtual Conference for Undergraduate Philosophy
28th-29th November 2020

Day 1: Saturday November 28th, 5:00–9:50pm AEDT (UTC+11)

Keynote Address

- [1] Organisations as Wrongdoers: 5:00pm
Volitionist, Attributivist, and Aretaic Lenses
Associate Professor Stephanie Collins, Australian Catholic University

Student Presentations

- [2] On the Importance of Concept Possession Conditions 6:10pm
Martin Niederl, University of Vienna
- [3] A Kantian Take on Mind Extension 6:50pm
Levi Haeck, Ghent University
- [4] An Argument Against Quantificationism 7:50pm
Antonio Freiles, University of Italian Switzerland
- [5] The Nature of Pleasure in Plato's *Philebus* 8:30pm
Ruby Hornsby, University of Leeds
- [6] Does Transcendental Idealism Foreclose its own Acknowledgement? 9:10pm
Amedeo Robiolio, King's College London

Day 2: Sunday November 29th, 10:00am–12:00pm AEDT (UTC+11)

Student Presentations

- [7] Evaluating Reductionist Approaches to Group Obligations 10:00am
Isaac Hadfield, University of Oxford
- [8] Beyond Willful Ignorance of the non-Human Animal Experience 10:40am
Frank Hernandez, University of Texas at El Paso

Q&A with UPJA Editorial Team

- [9] An opportunity to give feedback and find out more about UPJA 11:20am
Rory Collins, Anita Pillai, Alan Bechaz, and Racher Du

Presenter Abstracts and Bios

- [1] Associate Professor Stephanie Collins, Australian Catholic University, "Organisations as Wrongdoers: Volitionist, Attributivist, and Aretaic Lenses"

Saturday November 28th, 5:00-6:10pm AEST

In this talk, I'll argue that we can fruitfully use three different 'lenses' to think about organisations as wrongdoers. The volitionist lens focuses on the will, choices, or intentions of the organisation. The attributivist lens focuses on the organisation's evaluative attitudes, over which the organisation might never have made a choice. The aretaic lens focuses not on what an organisation chooses or values, but on its character flaws or vices. Each of these lenses has received a lot of philosophical attention as ways of understanding *individuals* as wrongdoers, but the extension to organisations hasn't received much attention (especially for the attributivist and aretaic lenses).

Stephanie is an associate professor at the Dianoia Institute of Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia. She came to ACU in April 2018, before which she was a lecturer in political theory at the University of Manchester. She received her PhD from ANU in 2013. In 2019, she was a visiting research professor at the University of Vienna, working on the ERC-funded project The Normative and Moral Foundations of Group Agency. She is an associate editor at Analysis and at the Journal of Applied Philosophy, an area editor in political philosophy at Ergo, a member of the editorial panel at Thought, and a faculty advisor for UPJA. In addition to numerous publications and book chapters, she has published two monographs: The Core of Care Ethics in 2015 with Palgrave MacMillan, and Group Duties: Their Existence and Their Implications from Individuals with Oxford University Press in 2019. Her research primarily concerns the philosophy of groups, that is, how we should conceptualise groups' ontological status, mental and epistemic capacities, agency, responsibility, and duties.

- [2] Martin Niederl, University of Vienna, "On the Importance of Concept Possession Conditions"

Saturday November 28th, 6:10-6:50pm AEDT

There seems to be quite a substantive agreement in the contemporary literature that concepts are psychological entities (or mental representations). Usually, this would mean that the concept-token is instantiated in the mind while the type of that concept can be an abstract entity (Sutton 2004). Recently, some theorists have come to hold that concepts are fundamentally

psychological entities. That is, a concept is nothing but a psychological entity and there is no need to refer to abstracta (Machery 2009, 2017; Dahlgrün 2006; Isaac forthcoming). Accordingly, the ontology of those theorists will centre around concepts being psychologically instantiated in the minds of people. That is, their being possessed. Hence, their ontology will crucially depend on their Concept Possession Conditions (CPCs). This paper will serve two purposes. First and foremost, it aims at arguing for the importance of CPCs. This will be done by showing that such an ontology entails that concepts exist if and only if they are possessed. Second, the paper will provide a case study of an adherent of the Strong Psychological View who neglects the importance of CPCs and thus runs into serious difficulties. For this, Machery's account (2009, 2017) will be consulted.

Martin is currently reading a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, as well as a Bachelor of Education in English, Philosophy, and Psychology at the University of Vienna. He is mainly interested in the debates surrounding moral responsibility, collective responsibility, and collective agency. Additionally, Martin is intrigued by conceptual engineering. This enthusiasm is primarily focused on topics surrounding the ontology of concepts.

[3] Levi Haeck, Ghent University, "A Kantian Take on Mind Extension"

Saturday November 28th, 6:50-7:30pm AEDT

I assess Andy Clark and David Chalmers' groundbreaking exposition of the extended mind thesis (EMT), as originally put forward in 1998, from the viewpoint of Immanuel Kant's Transcendental Idealism (TI). Both stances are committed to investigate how extension might be constitutive of the mind, yet they do so on completely different terms. In Part 1, I set out how Kant relativises the Cartesian distinction between mind and world by showing how the very internality of the mind is necessarily constituted in relation to extension, giving rise to the suggestion that the mind is an activity. In Part 2, I use this Kantian dynamic to assess Clark and Chalmers' claim that at certain times and under certain conditions the mind is extended into the world. Although they compellingly show that the functions of the mind are sometimes *taken over* by the world, a close reading of their text reveals that such does not really challenge the Cartesian opposition between mind and extension. This allows for the conclusion that Kant's eighteenth-century approach to EMT stands much further from Cartesianism — but also from computationalism — than its twentieth-century competitor, thus precluding an alternative and perhaps more radical pathway to conceptualising mind extension.

Levi has recently commenced a PhD at Ghent University, and specialises in Kant's transcendental logic and how this discloses a subtle yet fundamental relation between logic and metaphysics.

[4] Antonio Freiles, University of Italian Switzerland, "An Argument Against Quantificationism"

Saturday November 28th, 7:50-8:30pm AEDT

Existential statements understood in terms of quantificational terms attribute a second-order property to a first-order property. I call this "Quantificationism". This talk offers an argument against Quantificationism to the effect that it involves vicious circularity. The talk has two parts. In the first one, I present the notion of vicious circularity and explain why it is such a substantial flaw for definitions. In the second, I sketch the Quantificationist theory of existence and show its vicious circularity.

I come from a little town in the South of Italy close to Rome. I have recently graduated from the "Institute of Philosophical Studies" in Lugano (CH), and I have decided to stay in Lugano and start a postgraduate program at the University of Italian Switzerland (USI). My main interests are, alongside metaphysics and logic, mathematics and semantics. Besides studying the university, I am active in politics, and I am currently the local coordinator of Students For Liberty (SFL), a libertarian organisation vividly present world-wide.

[5] Ruby Hornsby, University of Leeds, "The Nature of Pleasure in Plato's *Philebus*"

Saturday November 28th, 8:30-9:10pm AEDT

The central question in *Philebus* is concerned with whether the life of pleasure or the life of reason is most akin to the good human life. Naturally, engagement in such discussion requires an adequate analysis of the natures of pleasure, rationality, and the good. It is the purpose of this thesis to outline and defend a (non-exhaustive) two-fold account of pleasure as presented in the dialogue. Specifically, the paper will argue for the claim that Plato advocates an account of pleasure as a process of change that occurs in sentient beings either when the harmonious natural condition is genuinely or apparently restored (impure pleasure), or when certain potentials are actualised by the rational human (pure pleasure).

Ruby is now pursuing her Master's degree in philosophy at the University of Leeds, England. Her research interests predominantly lie in ancient philosophy, with recent work focused on Platonic conceptions of pleasure, friendship, and the extent to which they are welcome in the good human life. Ruby is also an avid skier, hiker and has recently started experimenting with film photography – her new puppy Hibs gets a lot of exposure!

[6] Amedeo Robiolio, King's College London, "Does Transcendental Idealism Foreclose its own Acknowledgement?"

Saturday November 28th, 9:10-9:50pm AEDT

For Kant, "Philosophy consists precisely in knowing its bounds" (A727/B755). Yet it can be suggested that, in doing so, it finds the possibility of the determination of its own bounds to be impossible, i.e., to lie outside of its own bounds (Moore 2011). Kant would then be feeding a destructive scepticism about metaphysics. Instead, the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be seen precisely as attempting a refutation of scepticism (Guyer 2003). My aim is to defend Kant. I do so by maintaining that the Moorean interpretation of Transcendental Idealism as self defeating relies on incorrectly representing the distinctions between: (i) limit and bound and (ii) thought and cognition. When the interpretation of these distinctions is corrected, Moore's objection reduces to only showing what the *Critique* already assumed, i.e., the fallibility of dialectic. I conclude that the sceptical method supported by the *Critique* really leads away from the sceptical position, thereby opening the possibility for a restricted metaphysics, i.e., the acknowledgement of Transcendental Idealism.

I am a recent philosophy graduate of King's College London, and have just started postgraduate work at that same university. My central interest is in logic and the metaphysics of logic, for which I spent a semester at the Munich Centre for Mathematical Philosophy. I have written and given talks on the notion of limit, and on Wittgenstein's philosophy of logic, focussing on his treatment of paradoxes and hierarchies. My current areas of research include interpretations and applications of Leibnizian modal logic and metaphysics, the problem of logical adoption and exceptionalism, early analytic metaepistemology and the semantic-syntactic distinction in the philosophy of science. I consider Kant an inspiration in all of these areas, which motivates the essay I am presenting.

- [7] Isaac Hadfield, University of Oxford, "Evaluating Reductionist Approaches to Group Obligations"

Sunday November 29th, 10-10:40am AEDT

The last decade has seen a growing debate as to whether groups without highly organised structures can bear obligations. Philosophers arguing against allowing obligations for these less structured groups are left with a challenge in explaining away the obligations which we attribute to groups all the time in everyday discourse. Without group obligations, for example, how do we make sense of moral statements like 'The people have an obligation to elect the best candidate for prime minister'? An important strategy for those arguing against such group obligations is to account for this challenge by making the 'reductionist' claim that group obligations are unnecessary, since the posited group obligation can be suitably explained in terms of individual obligations. In this talk I flesh out how reductionists suggest we should go about doing this, and offer some critical responses.

Isaac recently completed a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at the University of Oxford. He hopes to begin a Master's degree in Philosophy in 2021 and in the meantime is pursuing his interests in ethics, social ontology, and the philosophy of language.

- [8] Frank Hernandez, University of Texas at El Paso, "Beyond Wilful Ignorance of the non-Human Animal Experience"

Sunday November 29th, 10:40-11:20am AEDT

Hermeneutical injustice is a kind of epistemic injustice that occurs when an area of one's social experiences is obscured from the collective understanding due to unequal power relations. Recent discussion on hermeneutical injustice has focused on the wilful ignorance of this obscuring owing to a perceived benefit by those who profit from these inequalities and actively engage in ignoring them. In this paper, I advance revisions of this analysis, which have worked to include the injustices committed against non-human animals as a sub-kind of hermeneutical injustice, i.e., 'other-oriented hermeneutical injustice', by arguing that not only are bodies of active ignorance constructed to obscure non-human animal experiences in their initial presentation, rather these are put in place to conceal any potential positive outcome of adding them to our collective understanding. By exhibiting what I refer to as a 'higher-order wilful ignorance', I reveal a limitation of certain kinds of 'coercive visibility initiatives' that aim to expose human audiences to non-human animal

experiences with the intention of broadening their presence in the collective hermeneutical resource, but fail to do so because of this second layer of wilful ignorance.

Frank is an undergraduate philosophy and multimedia journalism student at the University of Texas at El Paso. He is interested in epistemic injustice, epistemic justification, and contemporary issues in the philosophy of language.