

UPJA Virtual Conference for Undergraduate Philosophy
19th-20th June 2021

Day 1: Saturday June 19th, 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM AEST (UTC+10)

Keynote Address

- [1] Virtues, vices and place attachment
Dr. Carolyn Mason, University of Canterbury

Student Presentations

- [2] Taking Hanfeizi's Daoism seriously
Ng Qian Qian, National University of Singapore/Australian
National University
- [3] Wondering at the Familiar: Irigaray's reading of Descartes's Passions of the
Soul as allowing for the possibility of Wonder towards the Familiar
Talia Fell, University of Queensland
- [4] Minimal Reasons for Actions of Trust
Christian Carbonell Palasí, University of Valencia
- [5] TBC

Day 2: Sunday June 20th, 10:00 AM – 11:45 AM AEST (UTC+10)

Student Presentations

- [6] The Explanatory Strength of Evolutionary Morality - A Response to Street and
Joyce
Matthew Evans, Australian National University
- [7] Reconciling No-Self and Narratives in Buddhist Thought
Tanya Sharma, Yale-NUS College

Q&A with UPJA Editorial Team

- [8] An opportunity to give feedback and find out more about UPJA
Alan Bechaz, Racher Du, Will Cailles, and Thomas Spiteri

Presenter Abstracts and Bios

- [1] Dr. Carolyn Mason, University of Canterbury
"Virtues, vices and place attachment"

Saturday June 19th, 1:00 PM - 2:10 PM AEST

There is a virtue associated with forming and maintaining relationships to places. This virtue has not been recognised by philosophers, but it plays a role in indigenous cultures across the world. Hence, place attachment is one of many areas in which indigenous knowledge can contribute to the development of Western philosophy. After explaining what it means for a disposition to act in accordance with this virtue to be a Neo-Aristotelian virtue, examples from Māori culture are used to explain why the way that people form relationships to places can be a virtue in this neo-Aristotelian sense. Recognising this virtue reveals ways of interacting with the world that contribute to human and environmental flourishing, as well as revealing a new way in which indigenous people are harmed when dispossessed of their ancestral land.

BIO: Carolyn Mason is an academic at the University of Canterbury, in Christchurch, New Zealand, lecturing on health studies, ethics, including bioethics and legal ethics, and political philosophy. Her PhD was on practical reason, but her current research is predominantly on ethics. She enjoys examining topics from the social, biological and medical sciences, gathering the scientific, policy and legal information and investigating the associated normative or argument-related issues. She has been a member and Chair of health research committees, and a member of New Zealand's ethics committee on artificial reproductive technology.

- [2] Ng Qian Qian
Taking Hanfeizi's Daoism seriously

Saturday June 19th, 2:10 PM - 2:40 PM AEST (UTC+10)

Existing scholarship on the affinity between the Daodejing and Hanfeizi has either overlooked or failed to address the possibility of a serious connection between the two texts. This paper hopes to contribute to the ongoing debate by showing that the Hanfeizi's political framework is thoroughly Daoistic. The paper will highlight Daoist influences in the processes and outcomes of the political framework illustrated in the Hanfeizi. Specifically, I will correlate Hanfeizi's conceptions of the ruler, treatment of the masses, and end goals of the system to elements in the Daodejing.

BIO: Qian Qian works primarily in political theory, though her research interests are varied--often to a fault--and span classical Chinese philosophy, 19th century German political thought, indigenous Australian history, social theory and feminist epistemology. She is a recent graduate of both the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Australian National University (ANU), and is set to pursue a post-graduate degree researching Political Theory in NUS, or the University of Oxford, the latter dependent on whether a windfall strikes in the next couple of months.

[3] Talia Fell

“Wondering at the Familiar: Irigaray’s reading of Descartes’s *Passions of the Soul* as allowing for the possibility of Wonder towards the Familiar”

Saturday June 19th, 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM AEST (UTC+10)

In this essay I problematise Descartes’ theory of the passion of wonder in *Passions of the Soul*. I argue that his account of wonder works to hierarchise that which can be wondered at, such that the new and surprising is superior to the common and familiar. I argue that this is a problem for how we can rethink and reframe our understanding of various others and entities in the world through our work in philosophy. I then argue that Irigaray’s account of wonder in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* rethinks wonder, allowing for the possibility that we can and should wonder at the familiar. I then use Cixous’ concept of the approach to explore the difficulty of experiencing wonder towards the familiar. I elaborate on the mode of being of the approach, arguing that it involves sensitivity, slowness, and self-transformation. As philosophers, we can cultivate the mode of being of Cixous’ approach in order to open ourselves up to an ethical encounter with familiar entities, so that we can re(en)code and perhaps revalue these others in our systems of meaning.

BIO: Talia is a Philosophy Honours Student at The University of Queensland. She is interested in feminist, political and continental philosophy. Currently, she is particularly passionate about studying the work of Simone de Beauvoir and Hannah Arendt.

- [4] Christian Carbonell Palasí
"Minimal Reasons for Actions of Trust"

Saturday June 19th, 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM AEST (UTC+10)

According to the Humean account, agents are motivated to act in virtue of their having certain motivating reasons, where these reasons are conceived as pairs formed by desires and means-end beliefs (Smith 1987), or more generally by pro-attitudes and beliefs (Davidson 1963). When it comes to actions of trust, however, Paul Faulkner (2014) maintains that they do not permit a Humean explanation. Since A needn't believe that S will ϕ in order to be rationally motivated to trust S to ϕ , then it follows that A needn't have a means-end belief either. In this conference, I shall assess this view and consider to what extent it is correct. My point is that Faulkner's proposal needs some qualification to be correct, for means-end beliefs allow for at least two different conceptions, namely, a strong and a weak one. Whereas I agree he is right under the strong interpretation, I think he has to concede that weak means-end beliefs do motivate actions of trust given the intentional nature of these latter. The constitutive dependence relation holding between A and S's ϕ -ing in a trust situation is goal-specific, which means that A intends something from her trusting S to ϕ . Thus I contend trusters have to believe that it is possible to accomplish their intentions by means of their trusting, because intending requires this doxastic perspective about the possibility of the intended (Moya 1990). I then hope to show that weak means-end beliefs are part of the reasons minimally needed to motivate actions of trust.

BIO: Christian is about to finish a BA degree in Philosophy at the University of Valencia, and will begin a Master's in Analytic Philosophy at the University of Barcelona next year. Following the completion of his masters program, he plans on pursuing a PhD in Philosophy in the UK. His research interests primarily lie in philosophy of action, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language and epistemology, though he is also keen on logic and existentialism. He has recently defended his Bachelor's Thesis concerning the cognitive motivation of actions of trust, which is the topic he is presenting at the conference.

[5] TBC

Saturday June 19th, 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM AEST (UTC+10)

[6] Matthew Evans

"The Explanatory Strength of Evolutionary Morality - A Response to Street and Joyce"

Sunday June 20th, 10:20 AM - 10:50 AM AEST (UTC+10)

Some philosophers believe the ability to form moral judgements can be explained through an appeal to evolutionary forces, arguing that they raised the fitness of early humans and were selected for in subsequent generations. This account of morality has been seized by some philosophers who believe that a link between evolution and moral phenomena can be used to undermine our faith in the existence of moral truths, a sharp rebuke to moral realism and associated strands of metaethics. Sharon Street argues that moral realism cannot provide a satisfactory account for the link between evolution and moral truth, while Richard Joyce argues that the questionable reliability of evolutionary processes should give us reason to doubt the reliability of moral beliefs. In this paper I will argue that while Street and Joyce do pose interesting questions for proponents of evolutionary morality, they are ultimately unsuccessful at undermining moral realism through the evolutionary account. I will also broadly argue against the use of the evolutionary account to critique moral realism given general scepticism about its explanatory strength.

BIO: Matthew is currently a Politics, Philosophy and Economics honours student at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia. He is specialising in political philosophy and is particularly interested in the ethics of labour relations and social alienation but enjoys all schools of philosophy. He is a passionate sports fan, particularly interested in tennis and basketball.

[7] Tanya Sharma

Reconciling No-Self and Narratives in Buddhist Thought

Sunday June 20th, 10:50 AM - 11:20 AM AEST (UTC+10)

This essay explores the capacity of Buddhist narratives to be morally edifying by tackling the apparent paradox where stories, which consist of characters and places (or "wholes"), can bring one closer to attaining a Buddhist

outlook, an ideology that stresses no-self, transience, and dependent arising, or a clear absence of any “wholes”. It argues that narratives are transformative because they show us exactly what adopting a Buddhist outlook looks like. Achieving a clearer Buddhist outlook, thus, involves reading a wide range of narratives holistically. This conclusion is attained by placing the work by Hallisey and Hansen (1996) and Maria Heim (2014), which highlight the mechanisms through which narratives do moral work, in conversation with each other as well as considering Carpenter’s (2020) thesis on the transformative vision attained through narratives.

BIO: Tanya is a rising third-year at Yale-NUS College, Singapore, where she is pursuing a major in Global Affairs and a minor in Economics. She is passionate about studying and using philosophy to create a tangible social impact. In particular, she is interested in Buddhist thought and narrative ethics as well as the intersection of philosophy with issues relating to social justice, gender, care work, and notions of productivity. Outside of academics, she loves spending time in nature and reading.

[8] Alan Bechaz, Racher Du, Will Cailles, and Thomas Spiteri
Q&A with UPJA Editorial Team

Sunday June 20th, 11:20 AM - 11:40 AM AEST (UTC+1)