BLED PHILOSOPHICAL CONFERENCE 2024
ETHICAL ISSUES: THEORETICAL & APPLIED

BLED PHILOSOPHICAL CONFERENCE 2024
ETHICAL ISSUES: THEORETICAL & APPLIED
June 3-7, 2024 · Hotel Kompas · Bled, Slovenia

Organized by Friderik Klampfer (University of Maribor) and Justin Weinberg (University of South Carolina)

The conference is officially included in the program of the activities of the Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy

Philosophical conferences at Bled, Slovenia were initiated at the suggestion of John Biro, in 1993, at first as a continuation of the IUC - Dubrovnik postgraduate course in philosophy. They gradually started a life of their own, with the help, first, of Eugene Mills and then Mylan Engel, Jr. and Alastair Norcross. The conferences typically take place during the first week of June and are dedicated to various topics in analytic philosophy.

The 2024 Bled Philosophical Conference is dedicated to the memory of Nenad Miščević (1950-2024), who played a crucial role during the first two decades of philosophical conferences at Bled, suggesting topics, attracting first-rate philosophers from abroad, and cultivating a friendly intellectual atmosphere. He will be missed.

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**MONDAY
June 3rd**

8:45 – 8:55   *Opening Remarks*
Justin Weinberg & Friderik Klampfer

9:00 – 10:00   *Why Talking to Our Children about Injustice Cannot Wait*
Rosa Terlazzo (Univ. of Rochester)

10:05 – 11:05   *Knowledge versus Understanding: What Drives Moral Progress?*
Petar Bodlovic (NOVA Univ. Lisbon) and **Karolina Kudlek** (Utrecht University)

11:05 – 11:20   *break*

11:20 – 12:20   *An Alternative to Welfare Perfectionism*
Eric Wiland (Univ. Missouri, St. Louis)

12:20 – 2:00   *lunch*

2:00 – 3:00   *Mental Disorder and the Justification of Standards*
Luca Malatesti (Univ. of Rijeka)

3:00 – 3:15   *break*

3:15 – 4:15   *Why We Should Prevent Optimific Wrongs: a Defense of the Wrong Preventing Principle*
Christa Johnson (Univ. of Dayton)

4:15 – 4:30   *break*

4:30 – 5:30   *Legitimacy as Fairness*
Simon Cabulea May (Florida State Univ.)

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TUESDAY
June 4th

9:00 – 10:00   *Integrity and the Ethics of Eating: A Virtue-Theoretic Defense of Ethical Veganism*
Mylan Engel (Univ. of Northern Illinois)

10:05 – 11:05   *Prudential Reasons and Agency*
Jason Raibley (Univ. of Kansas)

11:05 – 11:20   *break*

11:20 – 12:20   *Boring Anger*
Krista K. Thomason (Swarthmore)

12:20 – 2:00   *lunch*

2:00 – 3:00   *Everyday an Election Day*
Kal Kalewold (Univ. of Leeds)

3:00 – 3:15   *break*

3:15 – 4:15   *Epistemic and Ethical Virtues of Judges and Psychiatric Expert Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings*
Mladen Bošnjak (Univ. of Rijeka)

4:15 – 4:30   *break*

4:30 – 5:30   *The Duty of Beneficence: A Duty to Make Helping the Needy an End*
Douglas Portmore (Arizona State Univ.)

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WEDNESDAY
June 5th

9:00 – 10:00   *Doing and Allowing and Demandingness: Debunking the Dogma*
Alastair Norcross (Univ. of Colorado, Boulder)

10:05 – 11:05   *Moral and Epistemic Normativity*
Matjaž Potrč & Vojko Strahovnik
(Univ. of Ljubljana)

11:05 – 11:20   *break*

11:20 – 12:20   *Rescuing Ourselves from the Pond Analogy*
Julia Nefsky & Sergio Tenenbaum
(Univ. of Toronto)

12:20...   *free time*

1 BLED LAKE
2 BLED ISLET
3 CHURCH OF A MOTHER DEVINE
4 STREAM MIŠCA
5 ADOLF MUHR MONUMENT
6 SMALL LAKES IN BLED
7 BLED CASTLE
8 CHAPEL UNDER THE CASTLE
9 CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN
10 CHAPEL IN VILLAGE GRAD
11 FRANCE PREŠEREN MONUMENT
12 BLED PARK
13 MODEL OF LAKE BLED
14 FOUNTAIN
15 LJUBLJANA STREET
16 STREAM JEZERNICA

✻ Hotel Kompas

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**THURSDAY
June 6th**

9:00 – 10:00 *The Player and the Game: Moral Culprits and the Wrong of Structural Injustice*
David Estlund (Brown Univ.)

10:05 – 11:05 *Moral Dimensions of Willful Ignorance*
Tomaž Grušovnik (Univ. of Primorska)

11:05 – 11:20 *break*

11:20 – 12:20 *The Normative Authority of Agency*
Kathryn Lindeman (Univ. of South Carolina)

12:20 – 2:00 *lunch*

2:00 – 3:00 *Strawsonian Mercy in Criminal Sentencing*
Craig Agule (Rutgers Univ. Camden)

3:00 – 3:15 *break*

3:15 – 4:15 *Consent and Securing Digital Rights*
Elizabeth Edenberg (City Univ. of New York)

4:15 – 7:30 *free time*

7:30 *CONFERENCE BANQUET*
details TBA

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**FRIDAY
June 7th**

9:00 – 10:00   *Science: The Intellectual Leviathan*
Regina Rini (York Univ.)

10:05 – 11:05   *Material Moral Agency*
Matthew Smith (Northeastern Univ.)

11:05 – 11:20   *break*

11:20 – 12:20   *Psychiatric Euthanasia: Is Moral Panic Justified?*
Friderik Klampfer (Univ. of Maribor)

12:20 – 2:00   *lunch*

2:00 – 3:00   *The Well-Rounded Life*
Amy Berg (Rice Univ.)

3:00 – 3:15   *break*

3:15 – 4:15   *Morality as Beauty*
Justin Weinberg (Univ. of South Carolina)

ABSTRACTS

Craig Agule, "Strawsonian Mercy in Criminal Sentencing"
We praise a sentencing judge for exercising mercy, and we regard a judge with no inclination to mercy as improperly cold. But advocates of mercy in criminal justice face a dilemma that dates to Saint Anselm: If the merciful punishment involves a departure from justice, then mercy seems to be unjust, and thus inappropriate. On the other hand, if mercy involves no departure from justice (perhaps because mercy is a way to describe arriving at particularized justice), then mercy seems superfluous, and justice is all we need. Against this dilemma, I use P. F. Strawson's distinction between the participant attitude and the objective attitude to identify a space for Strawsonian mercy. Because the objective attitude has us see the wrongdoer in the stream of causation, it creates space for us to appreciate how the wrongdoer has suffered and been harmed, and that appreciation creates space for a distinctive sort of mercy. While criminal courts are often in business of holding offenders accountable, where the participant attitude is relevant, the courts are also concerned with other matters, such as deterrence and rehabilitation, where the objective attitude is fitting. This leads to space for Strawsonian mercy in the criminal courts.

Amy Berg, "The Well-Rounded Life"
For many of us, it's good to be well-rounded: to live lives with different pursuits, which are in different areas of life, and where we engage in each pursuit at least partly for its own sake. In the first part of this talk, I'll develop the idea of the well-rounded life. Second, I'll make the case for well-roundedness. The well-rounded life is our best way to get certain prudential goods; some of these are nearly impossible to achieve without being well-rounded. Finally, I'm hoping to get help thinking through how valuing well-roundedness might intersect with other areas of normative inquiry: morality, distributive justice, and meaning in life (and maybe, time permitting, aesthetics).

Peter Bodlovic & Karolina Kudlek, "Knowledge Versus Understanding: What Drives Moral Progress?"
Moral progress is often modeled as an increase (or improvement) in moral knowledge and understanding, i.e., achievements in moral reasoning are thought to be important drivers of progressive moral change. Therefore, contemporary discussion recognizes two (rival) accounts: knowledge- and understanding-based accounts of moral progress, whereas the latter account has been recently contended as superior (Severini 2021). In this article, we challenge the alleged superiority of understanding-based accounts by conducting a comparative analysis of both approaches' theoretical (dis)advantages. We assess the accounts in terms of their potential to satisfy the following criteria: i) moral progress should be possible despite evolutionary and epistemic constraints on moral reasoning; ii) it should be epistemically achievable to ordinary moral agents; and iii) it should be explainable via doxastic change. We argue that knowledge-based and understanding-based accounts are, roughly, equally plausible when it comes to allowing moral progress. However, we believe that the former are slightly less demanding and better at explaining the doxastic change. So, on balance, and contrary to the inferiority view, we find knowledge-based accounts of moral progress more promising.

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ABSTRACTS

Mladen Bošnjak, "Epistemic and Ethical Virtues of Judges and Psychiatric Expert Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings"

Errors by judges and psychiatric expert witnesses in criminal proceedings not only violate the defendant's right to a fair trial but can also significantly endanger the life and health of defendants who, due to these errors, are unjustifiably placed in psychiatric institutions and subjected to psychiatric treatment. There have been several such cases in Croatia in the past few years. Therefore, it is worth considering what are the most common mistakes made by psychiatric expert witnesses and judges in criminal proceedings within Croatian legal system, what causes them, and how the frequency of these mistakes can be reduced. I discuss these questions from the perspective of virtue epistemology and virtue ethics. I argue that judges and experts in Croatia make errors because they do not possess the necessary epistemic and ethical virtues required by their profession. As a way of rectifying this problem, I discuss the epistemic and ethical virtues that psychiatric expert witnesses should necessarily possess to minimize the frequency and severity of their errors and explain how these virtues can be acquired
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Elizabeth Edenberg, "Consent and Securing Digital Rights"

Consent has been a core focus of philosophical research in recent years. Philosophers have offered guidance on how we should understand consent, its requirements, and its normative force. However, philosophers have yet to substantially weigh in on consent as if functions in the digital sphere. Existing philosophical theories of consent are ill-suited to explain the centrality of consent in the digital realm. Consent plays a central role in the laws governing our rights in the digital realm, operating as a key mechanism for transferring information rights. In this paper, I will analyze the function of consent in the digital realm. I will argue that this context reveals limitations of existing theories and helps expand our understanding of morally transformative consent. First, I develop a taxonomy of the features of consent that explain its morally transformative power, synthesizing recent philosophical work. Second, I apply this taxonomy to the digital realm to show how understanding what makes consent morally transformative can correct several failures of consent in the digital realm, while also revealing limitations in philosophers' understanding of what it at stake when theorizing about consent. Third, I argue that for consent to work its moral magic for individuals, we must have strong communal protections for rights operating in the background. This points to the need to integrate insights from political philosophy into traditional consent theory. For our theories of consent to be morally meaningful, we must attend to the structural features that secure individual rights.

Mylan Engel, "Integrity and the Ethics of Eating: A Virtue-Theoretic Defense of Ethical Veganism"

Ethical veganism is the view that it's morally wrong to eat meat and animal-derived foods when plant-based foods are available. My aim is to provide a virtue-theoretic defense of ethical veganism grounded in the virtue of integrity. I begin with two real examples that show that we all think that animals deserve direct moral consideration and that there are some ways of treating animals that wrong those animals. These examples help us identify several commonsense moral principles — principles we all share. These principles and the corresponding values they express are used to show that veganism is morally required, not by other people's lights, but by our own lights and our own deeply held moral values and

principles. Anyone who accepts these principles is committed to the immorality of eating animal-derived foods, and any person of integrity will align their conduct with their moral values and commitments.

David Estlund "The Player and the Game: Moral Culprits and the Wrong of Structural Injustice"

In an influential view, structural injustice is a social-structural rather than agentive wrong. Certain kinds of class hierarchy, for example, wouldn't (or, at any rate, let's grant) necessarily be anyone's fault. But such a faultless case wouldn't warrant resentment, indignation, or righteous anger, as wrongs characteristically do. An original framework, Basic-Structural Proceduralism, is proposed in response to this puzzle. Just as (it is commonly held) enforcement of law is permissible only if the law has a source in proper procedure, imposition of even informal prescriptive social norms depends on their arising from an adequate legitimating procedure—in this case, namely, the basic social structure of a society, including but not limited to formal political and legal institutions. When basic social structure falls short in that way such enforcement and imposition will inevitably be widespread anyway, and (much of) it is wrong, and often blameworthy, warranting resentment, etc. Whether or not there are culprits of the problematic structure, there are bound to be culprits from it, so to speak. A "broad" proceduralism of this kind is elaborated, while the question of what the pertinent standards of a basic social structure's procedural adequacy are is postponed.

Tomaž Grušovnik, "Moral Dimensions of Willful Ignorance"

According to many contemporary ethicists, including Michele Moody-Adams, willful ignorance and denial are among the most important obstacles to moral development. The talk begins with a definition of willful ignorance and, in dialogue with some recent definitions proposes that intention to ignore is a necessary condition for willful ignoring while the suspicion that p is not. Furthermore, following Kevin Lynch's reflection on the meaning of the adjective "willful", I distinguish between "willful" ignorance and "voluntary" ignorance: while the latter covers all cases of intentional avoidance of knowledge, the former can be reserved only for morally blameworthy cases of voluntary ignoring. Second, the talk turns to the moral dimensions of voluntary ignoring and, in a discussion with Daniel DeNicola, first shows that it is not necessarily morally blameworthy. On the contrary, there seems to be not only a right but also a duty to remain voluntarily ignorant, as I show with a pair of cases. Still, a number of cases of voluntary ignorance can be conceived as "willful ignorance", i.e. as morally blameworthy. Alongside other criteria for identifying instances of willful ignorance, I argue that socio-political context and coercion can play an important role in determining degrees of blameworthiness. For example, under totalitarian rule with severe punishments for disobedience, willful ignorance of p may be less blameworthy than in democracies. Nevertheless, these arguments need to be carefully weighed so as not to be abused: for example, the right to remain ignorant based on the argument that knowledge would harm an epistemic agent would be invalid if it would hinder moral progress.

Christa Johnson, "Why We Should Prevent Optimific Wrongs: A Defense of the Wrong Preventing Principle"

Deontological ethics holds that there are certain optimific actions that are wrong to perform. For instance, it would generate the most value to push a hiker off a footbridge, if doing so

would prevent a trolley from killing five others. However, deontologists consider this optimific action to be wrong. Call these sorts of actions optimific wrongs. The question raised is whether, if an agent can prevent an optimific wronging, she ought to. Morgensen (2016) has argued that it is morally permissible to allow optimific wrongs. That is, even if I ought not push the hiker off the footbridge, if I see someone else about to, I may allow that person to do so. I disagree. I contend that we ought to prevent optimific wrongs. To make my case, I will defend what Morgensen and others call the Wrong Preventing Principle (WPP): for any wrong action, there is some reason to prevent that action over and above those reasons associated with preventing harm to the victim(s). While the literature has largely condemned WPP, I argue both that there is a strong intuitive and theoretical foundation for WPP and that the seemingly problematic implications of WPP can be dispelled.

Kal Kalewold, "Every Day an Election Day"
Voting occurs on Election Day. In the history of electoral democracy, this fact has been closely identified with the practice of elections. However, I argue the temporality of election time generates problems that undermine or disable crucial democratic values such as responsiveness, popular rule, and government accountability, among others. This talk outlines and defends a new electoral system I call Registral Voting. Under this system voters electronically register their votes daily— thereby eliminating the distinction between electoral and non-electoral periods— with the results determined by summing up votes over the whole term of office. Under Registral Voting, every day is election day. Registral Voting has number of normatively attractive properties. It eliminates the capacity of politicians to manipulate near-election events for their benefit and enhances retrospective voting, allowing voters to make informed choices based on a wide range of salient information as and when they arise. Registral Voting preserves the virtues of electoral democracy while mitigating or eliminating anomalies of election time highlighted by critics of elections.

Friderik Klampfer, "Psychiatric Euthanasia: Is Moral Panic Justified?"
The aim of the paper is to morally evaluate psychiatric euthanasia, i.e. the practice of euthanizing patients with a psychiatric diagnosis. More precisely, my target is a very popular argument to the effect that very few psychiatric conditions, if any, fulfil the following three conditions: they a) are incurable, b) cause patients unbearable suffering, and c) leave their decisional competence intact. In contrast to this, I argue that those characteristics that are supposed to render euthanasia of patients with mental diseases and/or disorders particularly morally problematic and/or prone to abuse and error (prognostic uncertainty, patients' irrationality and/or high dependency/vulnerability, suspension of autonomy and capacity for judgment, manic episodes, delusion, deliriousness, pathological death wish, and the like), do not support an outright ban on psychiatric euthanasia. This much, at least, holds true of those mental conditions that are commonly found among cases of psychiatric euthanasia, from dementia and clinical depression to borderline personality disorder. I then assess the protocols set up to evaluate the requests of such patients for their salience. I conclude by briefly discussing the implications of my view for the eligibility of patients with other, more controversial, conditions, including heavy psychosis, intense mood disorders and anorexia.

ABSTRACTS

Kathryn Lindeman, "The Normative Authority of Agency"

Constitutivists about practical normativity aim to derive the content and authority of practical reasons and requirements from some constitutive feature of action or agency. However, in addition to being subject to normative authority in the exercise of their agency, there is an intuitive sense in which agents also have normative authority as the potential patients of the agency of others. This puts agents in a position to have normative authority and status with respect each other, a feature that has gone unaddressed by contemporary constitutivist accounts. In this paper I have three tasks. First, I show that current constitutivists accounts are unable to provide satisfactory accounts of the normative authority of agency. Second, I argue that these failures result from accounts of agency that understand the characteristic activity of agency to be one that is performed, in the first instance, by each agent in isolation. Finally, I consider (and provide reasons for optimism about) the prospects for a complete constitutivist account of practical normativity, requiring an account of agency in which each agent is essentially acting with others.

Luca Malatesti, "Mental disorder and the justification of standards"

To make progress on the current and longstanding debate on the concept of mental disorder, we need to adjudicate the aims of this debate and the methods to achieve them. I propose a methodological framework for prescribing a revision of the concept of mental disorder. Within this framework, I argue that in devising the concept of mental disorder, some desiderata should be satisfied. Such an account should investigate the notion of mental disorder as involving (1) a unitary condition across the individuals that have it and (2) harmful (3) incapacities (or limited capacities) to align (4) with properly justified standards. A further important desideratum is that (5) the concept of mental disorder should cohere with a satisfactory account of what makes mental a mental disorder. In this talk, I focus on the type of standards, and their justifications (desideratum 4), that are necessary for individuating the relevant incapacities, (desideratum 3), that are harmful in psychiatric relevant ways, (desideratum 2). Such standards must determine when the source of harm is within the person and derives from clinically relevant incapacities.

Simon Căbulea May, "Legitimacy as Fairness"

In Rawls's political philosophy, principles of justice govern the basic structure of society as a whole. Principles of political legitimacy are more particular: they apply to the structure of political decision-making authority. On the standard analysis of the concept, they specify the conditions of a government's moral right to rule. So justice and legitimacy are different concepts. But conception of legitimacy should still be presented as (at least) part of a conception of justice. I argue that this means, in justice as fairness, principles of legitimacy must be selected in the original position. Hence: legitimacy as fairness. I set out a way for these principles to be selected that does not prejudge how much injustice is compatible with legitimacy. This involves a parallel session of the original position in which citizens are represented as participants in the political process rather than as members of the public more broadly. I then argue that selected principles of democratic legitimacy should take lexical priority over competing demands of justice, including non-equivalent demands of the equal liberty principle. This vindicates the uncompromisingly democratic credentials of justice as fairness.

ABSTRACTS

Julia Nefsky & Sergio Tenenbaum, "Rescuing Ourselves from the Pond Analogy"

Peter Singer famously argues that when we spend money on pleasures or luxuries for ourselves, such as a meal at a restaurant or new clothes that we do not need to stay warm, we are doing something gravely wrong. Singer's argument proceeds from general principles, but in the process Singer (famously) draws an analogy between spending money on small pleasures and not saving a child drowning in a pond when you could easily do so. There have been many attempts to reply to Singer, and several of these make important contributions, and succeed in rejecting Singer's general principles. But we argue that these replies fail to explain where the Pond Analogy goes wrong. Instead, they actually presuppose that there is a prior independent explanation. More generally, we show that responding to the analogy is a different and more fundamental task than people have understood. We cannot get out of the analogy—as many seem to think—by developing a more plausible conception of morality than Singer's. Instead, the development of a plausible conception of morality depends on being able to break the analogy in a prior way. In the final part of the paper, we sketch what we think is the right way to break the analogy. We argue that the focus on Singer's principles has led people astray; in order to show why the analogy fails, we need to also challenge a seemingly innocuous auxiliary hypothesis at the core of the argument. We then suggest that a broader version of this answer underwrites, much more generally, the difference between perfect and imperfect duties.

Alastair Norcross, "Doing & Allowing & Demandingness: Debunking the Dogma"

In this paper I explore the connection between the doing/allowing distinction and the demandingness of morality. In particular, I attempt to undermine the putative support that the intuition that certain approaches to morality are overly demanding gives to investing the doing/allowing distinction with a certain kind of moral significance. The significance I have in mind is, roughly, that doing harm is morally worse than allowing harm and/or that it is harder to justify doing harm than allowing harm. A rejection of the moral asymmetry between doing and allowing is a feature of every serious consequentialist approach to ethics. So I treat the moral asymmetry claim as a nonconsequentialist claim. I show that the intuitions underlying the claim that morality is relatively undemanding are unreliable. Furthermore, I argue that the principle that the doing/allowing distinction has intrinsic moral significance, along with many other nonconsequentialist principles, embodies a strange fetishism of causal processes, that obscures moral clarity, and serves mostly to rationalize the neglect of the powerless and underprivileged by the powerful and privileged.

Douglas Portmore, "The Duty of Beneficence: A Duty to Make Helping the Needy an End"

In this talk, I argue that the duty of beneficence is the duty to adopt helping the needy as a major, continually relevant, life-shaping end. In the process, I consider some recent alternative proposals from Hurka, Muñoz, and Pummer, showing that they all fail to account adequately for our duties at each moment, our duty over a lifetime, and the relationship between the two.

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Matjaž Potrč & Vojko Strahovnik, "Moral and Epistemic Normativity"

We aim to investigate analogies and disanalogies between moral and epistemic evaluation, focusing on often underappreciated dimensions of epistemic normativity and what epistemology can learn from ethics. We proceed from the following tenets. Belief fixation (the formation and maintenance of beliefs) is a form of agency, even though it is rarely, if ever, under direct voluntary control. Belief fixation has several key hallmark features of agency: in particular, it involves the capacity to appreciate good evidential reasons in support of a given proposition and the capacity to form and maintain a belief because of the good evidential reasons that support it. Aptly evidence-responsive belief fixation, being an agentive phenomenon, constitutes epistemically virtuous epistemic agency, a form of virtuousness that is intimately bound up with epistemic rationality: appreciation of, and responsiveness to (evidentially) good reasons for belief. For instance, some forms of epistemic rationality involve an epistemic agent's own subjective standards of evidential support and likely truth, whereas others concern objective likely truth relative to a pertinent body of evidence. Also, some forms of epistemic rationality are highly "diligentic," in the sense of being largely directed at whether or not an epistemic agent has formed a belief in a duly responsible way; whereas others are primarily "valuational," in the sense of being directed mainly at how well an agent's belief-forming processes are tracking likely truth relative to the agent's available evidence. Also centrally important will be the character of conscious experience, which plays a very significant role in responsiveness to epistemic reasons. Thus, virtuous epistemic agency is intimately bound up not only with epistemic rationality but also with aspects of conscious experience that figure in exercises of epistemic rationality. Putting forward the basic contours of our evidentialist view, we will explore some of the following dimensions of epistemic evaluation included in it: evidence-responsiveness vs. reliability; evidentially holistic vs. evidentially non-holistic; consciously represented vs. chromatically appreciated; synchronic vs. diachronic; subjective vs. objective; deontic vs. axiological (aka teleological) vs. diligentic vs. aretaic; propositional vs. doxastic; core epistemic virtues vs. ancillary epistemic virtues.

Jason Raibley, "Prudential Reasons and Agency"

Several philosophers have claimed that well-being "had better be normative" in a sui generis way if it is to be an ethically significant concept. In other words, its normativity cannot turn out to be agent-neutral, or to be related to reasons that agents have to satisfy present desires, because in these cases there will be no distinctively prudential reasons for action. Accordingly, this paper considers competing proposals about how to understand the normativity of well-being. It rejects expressivist views, views on which there is an analytic connection between prudential facts and reasons for action, and primitivist views. It then considers several versions of the view that there is a non-conceptual link between evaluative welfare-facts and pro tanto (justifying) agent-relative reasons for actions and attitudes. It evaluates these with special attention to the explanation they each provide for why this link might obtain.

Regina Rini, "Science: The Intellectual Leviathan"

We live in a time of science-denial. From the realities of covid-19 to climate change, childhood vaccines and even the shape of the earth, many people now seem to actively reject the authority of scientific experts. Philosophers bemoan populist ignorance, but I will argue

that this response evades the fundamentally rational core of science-denial. I will show that modern specialized sciences have a Hobbesian epistemic structure, one that makes resentment of scientific elites both predictable and (partly) rational. Modern sciences are so specialized that they force non-experts into a deep form of epistemic dependence, such that experts play the Hobbesian role of Leviathan, with unquestionable authority over certain epistemic norms. This parallel to political theory helps us see the tragic dilemma built into the reception of science in democratic societies. In politics, we both resent and reject unquestionable Hobbesian authority. In science, we cannot reject it, as much as we might want. What remains is a rational residue of resentment, directed against the democratic inequality of scientific expertise. Failing to acknowledge the rationality of this resentment has left us poorly equipped to respond persuasively to science-denial.

Matthew Smith, "Material Moral Agency"
Often, discussion of moral agency—the capacity to act morally (as opposed, for example, to the capacity for intentional action, which many animals have)—focuses on questions around which mental capacities are relevant to moral agency. For example, some might think that the capacity to recognize and act on reasons is a necessary condition for moral agency. Many of those who skeptical about practical reason—sentimentalists or Humeans (but not Hume himself)—still give accounts of moral agency in terms of psychological capacities. In this essay, I complicate this single-minded focus on psychological capacities. I first argue that this approach obscures the material, non-mental elements of our capacity to act morally. Almost all forms of moral reasoning, I argue, have a material component of some sort. These might be, for example, various forms of media or they might be spaces in which people gather. I argue that these material components are not necessarily constitutive of moral agency but are often enough constitutive of actual moral agency that we should attend to them. I then argue that the wrong sorts of material components of moral agency can deform or otherwise compromise our moral capacities. For example, degrading art or the prevalence of isolating spaces can negatively affect our capacities for moral agency, turning us from virtuous agents into vicious agents.

Rosa Terlazzo, "Why Talking to Our Children About Injustice Cannot Wait"
In this paper, I appeal to the values of fairness and solidarity to argue that white parents ought not put off conversations about racial injustice. First, I note that Black parents are obligated to talk to their children about racial injustice early in order to protect them from racial injustice. I argue that white parents' reason not to wait is triggered by two kinds of unfairness: first, that conversations about racial injustice are painful for all children but especially painful for children learning that they are the targets of the injustice; and second, that white parents have the option of waiting while Black parents do not. Appealing to fairness alone, however, plausibly leads to objectionable leveling down. Accordingly, I appeal to the value of fairness via the value of solidarity. Solidarity is widely taken to involve a kind of felt kinship with those one stands in solidarity with, and a concomitant desire to share their fate. However, I argue that difference as well as similarity should provide reasons to engage in acts of solidarity: namely, recognition of the ways in which the same system unfairly benefits oneself while harming others. It is this position that white parents find ourselves in.

ABSTRACTS

Krista K. Thomason, "Boring Anger"

Moral philosophers have defended the value of anger on the grounds that it is intimately related to our sense of justice. According to arguments like these, feelings of anger can alert us to injustice, stand as testimony to injustice, and help motivate us to address it. But what should we make of feelings of anger that have nothing to do with injustice—cases of what I call boring anger? Boring anger is the anger we experience at all of life's little irritations: being put on hold when you call your insurance company, getting stuck behind people with complicated orders at the coffee shop, or missing the train trying to get to work. It's typical to think that there is no value in boring anger, and that we would be calmer, more well-adjusted people if we just let it go. I argue that boring anger can still be valuable even if it's not about injustice. Boring anger is part of our emotional attachment to our lives and we wouldn't be better off without it.

Justin Weinberg, "Morality as Beauty"

Philosophers may disagree over which moral norms are correct, but tend to agree that morality is its own distinct normative domain with a distinct normative character. In this paper, I explore an alternative to morality's distinctiveness: the idea that morality is best thought of as a type of beauty. There are various types of beauty—the beauty of a flower is a different type from the beauty of a story—and we sometimes mark these types of beauty with different words: a cake may be *delicious*, a mathematical proof may be *elegant*, a musical phrase may be *harmonious*, etc. We could take "moral" to be of a piece with these other kinds of beauty. I discuss reasons for taking this idea seriously, some philosophical and practical upshots of doing so, and some objections.

Eric Wiland, "An Alternative to Welfare Perfectionism"

Contemporary welfare perfectionists typically identify well-being with the development and exercise of virtue. Although I am sympathetic, I articulate three problems with this view. First, development and exercise are not on a par: they play different roles. Second, developing virtue is a drag. Third, there seem to be other welfare goods. I develop an alternative view resembling perfectionism but that avoids these problems. Welfare is chiefly the actualization of virtue. However, virtue is actualized not just in action, but in judgment, motivation, emotion, and feeling as well. Further, approximations of these actualizations also approximate welfare. This explains why the continent are doing better than the vicious, why positive emotions are welfare goods, and why you don't need to be perfect in every way in order to live well.