



Indiana Philosophical Association

Fall 2023 Meeting at The Prindle Institute for Ethics, DePauw University 1-2 December 2023

Meeting Program

Friday, December 1st	Session 1 Prindle Auditorium	Session 2 Prindle 152
9:00 – 9:30	<i>Registration</i> (The Prindle Institute Lobby)	
	Group A Chair: Joseph Gamache	Group B Chair: James Murphy
9:30 – 10:20am	“Revisiting the Last Man and Human Chauvinism” Speaker: Joshua Paschal Comments: Piyali Mitra	Defensible Authenticity: A Threshold View of Well Being Sherry Kao ***
10:30 – 11:20am	The Universe Enframed: Heidegger, The Anthropocene and Space Colonization Speaker: Darien Santmyer Comments: Brian Johnson	Moral Enhancement and Behavioral Trait Variance Brandon Long Michael Hyde
11:30 – 12:20am	“Prison Violence as Punishment” Speaker: William Bell Comments: Neal Baird	Doxastic Wrongs, Expanded Rachel Keith Luke Allen Capek
12:30 – 2:00pm	<i>Lunch</i>	
	Group C Chair: Rachel Keith	Group D Chair: Brian Johnson
2:00 – 2:50pm	Worries About the Import of Moral Autonomy Speaker: Peter Murphy Comments: James Murphy	Deleuze's Two-Fold Ethics in What is Philosophy James Emery ***
3:00 – 3:50pm	Two Paradoxes with Self-Authorship Speaker: Valerii Latyshev Comments: Joshua Paschel	“Revisiting Martin Heidegger's Interpretation of Phronesis” Joshua Paschal Darien Santmyer
4:00 – 6:00pm	<i>Keynote Address</i> , (Location) “The Blame Game” Scott A. Hershovitz, University of Michigan	
6:00pm	<i>Dinner</i>	

Saturday, December 2nd	Session A Prindle Auditorium	Session B Prindle 152
9:00 – 9:30	<i>Registration</i> (The Prindle Institute Lobby)	
	Group E Chair: Jamin Asay	Group F Chair: Piyali Mitra
9:30 – 10:20am	Transparency, Self-Knowledge, and Past Beliefs Speaker: Luke Capec Comments: Rachel Keith	In Defense of Harmful and Dangerous Inquiry in Philosophy Rebecca Tuvel and Eric Sampson Joseph Porter
10:30 – 11:20am	Dissolving the Assymetry Thesis: On the Similarities Between Moral and Non-Moral Testimony Speaker: Paper by Mickey Bergman Comments: Jamin Assay	On Being Where the Action Is Bejamin Claessens Elizabeth Bell
11:30 – 12:15pm	<i>Lunch</i>	
12:15 – 1:00pm	<i>Business Meeting</i> <i>And Presentation of the Graduate Paper Prize to William Bell</i>	
	Group G Chair: Jeremy Anderson	Group H Chair: Sherry Kao
1:00 – 1:50pm	Bob Moses and the Algebra Project: Observations and Reflections Speaker: Madeline Muntersbjorn Comments: David Modrovich	On Pictorial Negation Elizabeth Bell Matthew Groenewald
2:00 – 2:50pm	Anne Conway's Dual Extension: A Response to Hobbes and Descartes Speaker: Nick Louzon Comments: Peirce Logan	Can't Help Falling in Love (with Truth) Jamin Asay Graham Renz

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Author: Jamin Asay
Title: “Can’t Help Falling in Love (with Truth)”

Abstract: Gila Sher argues that the philosophy of truth needs to ask important questions about the value of truth, and how those values are threatened by the current post-truth crisis. I accept Sher’s request, but argue that the phenomena that concern her do not reveal a particularly pressing crisis of truth. I defend *easy-going optimism*, which argues that the value of truth to society is not in genuine danger of disappearing. To do so, I articulate the various things we might have in mind by ‘the value of truth’, and argue that they are not under serious threat.

Author: William Bell
Title: “Prison Violence as Punishment”

Abstract: The United States carceral system, as currently designed and implemented, is widely considered to be an immoral and inhumane system of criminal punishment. There are a number of pressing issues related to this topic, but in this essay, I will focus upon the problem of prison violence. Inadequate supervision has resulted in unsafe prison conditions where inmates are regularly threatened with rape, assault, and other forms of physical violence. Such callous disregard and exposure to unreasonable risk constitutes a severe violation of the rights of prisoners by the state. While there have been numerous legal, political, and activist efforts to draw attention to this issue—with the goal of reforming and making prisons safer—my goal is different. I argue that inmates who are victims of prison violence have a right to their sentences being automatically reduced.

Author: Elizabeth Bell
Title: “On Pictorial Negation”

Abstract: It seems strikingly obvious that pictures cannot express negation, especially if we understand negation as a sentential connective that switches the truth value of statements. If negation is necessarily a sentential connective that toggles the truth value of statements, then pictures cannot represent negation. For, it is apparent that pictures are neither sentences, nor are they the types of things that have truth values. Against this commonsense view, I argue that pictures can represent negation by challenging three common arguments to this conclusion. The first of these three arguments centers on the seeming lack of ‘truth evaluability’ of pictures. Pictures are not things that are true or false. The second focuses on pictures’ lack of syntactic structure which sentential connectives require. The last rests on the belief that pictures can only express positive information. If one can only express positive information, then there is no way to express a negation.

Author: Mickey Bergan
Title: "Dissolving the Asymmetry Thesis: On the Similarities Between Moral and Non-Moral Testimony"

Abstract: It is difficult to deny that we all rely on testimony for coming to know swaths of basic knowledge. Statements regarding what food we ought to eat, what the weather will be like a few days from now, or who the twelfth president of the United States was are examples of information that we acquire through testimony. Most of us do not have qualms with acquiring knowledge in this way. However, we might wonder whether the situation is the same for testimony with moral substance. I argue, contrary to the asymmetry thesis, that moral and nonmoral testimony are not as different as has previously been supposed. I will suggest that moral testimony can be justifiably adopted for the same reasons that nonmoral testimony can be justifiably adopted—those reasons being that it is possible to evaluate the sources of moral testimony through indirect means which touch on their reliability.

Author: Luke Copek
Title: "Transparency, Self-Knowledge, and Past Beliefs"

Abstract: Alex Byrne and others defend a view of self-knowledge on which our first-personal access to our mental states is explained by transitions which satisfy the transparency condition. We gain knowledge of our mental states by making the right kind of transition from "worldly" mental states to beliefs about our own minds. In this paper, I argue that transitional transparency accounts of self-knowledge cannot explain our first-personal access to certain kinds of recently past mental states. I argue that transparent transitional rules cannot account for certain cases where we change our minds; cases where we (a) judge that p at t_1 , (b) subsequently lose this belief, at t_2 , and (c) do not make the right kind of transition between t_1 and t_2 . Furthermore, there is good reason to think that our knowledge of these past beliefs cannot be explained by a transition that is in accordance with the transparency condition.

Author: Benjamin Claessens
Title: "On Being Where the Action Is"
Abstract:

What is identification, and why do we identify as we do? Theorists have defended a wide variety of answers, but there is far from consensus about the issue—nor is there a satisfying extant account. This paper will present a theory of identification. Identification, I will argue, first requires that we explain events teleologically; in doing so, we posit temporally enduring selves, and christen those events as actions. To identify with an action is to be where the self, to whom the action is attributed, is. On this analysis, you do not identify with an intrusive thought, because you do not explain the event teleologically. If you were to so explain it, the thought would appear, not as a mere event, but as an action: an action attributable to an agent that exists where you are. You would thereby identify as the thinker of the thought.

Author: James Emery
Title: “Deleuze’s Two-Fold Ethics in *What is Philosophy?*”

Abstract: My claim is that Deleuze, in *What is Philosophy?*, presents the outline of a normative ethics; first, in so far as it is a creative activity on par with the arts and sciences; and secondly, as it is a unique intellectual pursuit. One fold of this ethic is that philosophy, as a generally creative activity, should continually resist clichés by moderately engaging with chaos. Deleuze’s general ethic for creative practices is a call to fight a two-sided battle, one against chaos, and the other against opinion, with each battle being fought with resources scavenged from the other side. The other fold of the ethic is what pertains specifically to philosophy. Philosophy uniquely works with concepts whose modality of being is virtual. The particular ethic of the philosopher calls for a counter-effectuation of the event, an extracting of the virtual event from an actual state of affairs, isolating it as a concept.

Author: Joshua Fahmy Hooke
Title: “Revisiting Martin Heidegger’s Interpretation of *Phronesis*: Unveiling the Nexus Between Understanding (*Verstehen*) and Self-Understanding (*Seinsverständnis*)”

Abstract: My primary goal in this paper is to provide a principled overview of Martin Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle’s *phronesis*. In the received view, Heidegger uses *phronesis*—*practical knowledge*—to renounce theoretical philosophy, advancing a concept of *understanding* (*Verstehen*) as socially purposive action and skillful embodied coping. This reading is unsatisfactory because it ignores the systematic and constitutive analysis of self-understanding (*Seinsverständnis*) fundamental to Heidegger’s ontology. Recent exegetical work following the received view replicates this inadequacy and fails to improve discussions on Heidegger and Aristotle. To reconcile this oversight, I provide a detailed analysis of the kinship between Heidegger’s concept of *understanding* and Aristotle’s *phronesis*. I argue that a principled account of *practical knowledge* is comprised of the skillful grasp of intelligible beings (*Seiendes, Seiendheit*) and a *phronetic* sense of *reflexive* (*sic*) contemplation that retrieves the meaningful relationship (*Bezug*) one has toward their actions through self-understanding. This result supports Heidegger’s phenomenological breakthrough towards a sense of Being (*Sein*) as the ground of intelligibility.

Author: Sherry Kao
Title: “Defensible Authenticity: A Threshold View of Well-Being”
Abstract:

Subjectivists about well-being hold that for a state of affairs to contribute to an agent’s well-being, the agent’s pro-attitude toward it is indispensable. But no matter how strong one’s pro-attitude toward X is, there can be a mismatch between one’s pro-attitude and well-being. To solve this defective attitude problem, some idealize one’s attitude to aim at the good, while others insist no mismatch exists. The idealizers face the losing ground problem: it is the

idealization, not one's attitude, that grounds one's well-being. I propose my threshold view: so long as one's pro-attitude is authentic and defensible, X contributes to one's well-being. To be authentic, one's pro-attitude must be affirmed and compatible with one's aspirations. To be defensible, it must not be grounded in false beliefs, must be attainable, and not disproportionately compromise other values that one equally cares about. Authenticity blocks the losing ground problem; defensibility, the defective attitude problem.

Author: Rachel Keith
Title: "Doxastic Wrongs, Expanded"

Abstract: A person doxastically wrongs someone in virtue of what they believe. Philosophers so far have explored doxastic wrongdoing in the context of beliefs whose content are about the injured party. In this paper, I argue that we can doxastically wrong one another without explicitly believing anything about the person we wrong. In other words, a person can be doxastically wronged by a belief that is not directly about them. I argue that beliefs about social groups, beliefs about oneself, and beliefs about the world more broadly all have the potential to doxastically wrong. I do so by arguing that people do not exist in a vacuum, and we do not mentally represent them as such. We recognize that people exist in relation to other people in a shared world. Therefore, our beliefs about other people and the world in which we all live impact the way we mentally represent, and therefore relate to, particular people.

Author: Valerii Latyshev
Title: "Two Paradoxes of Self-Authorship"

Abstract: In this paper, I develop a gradualistic framework for thinking about free will. Freedom is usually opposed to constraints, but we may also see constraints as enabling freedom instead: the functioning of the human brain and the human mind is enabled by the constraints that their constitutive parts are placed under. I explore the possibility that the same constraints that enable us to have the kind of freedom we do have also preclude us from having the kind of freedom we want to have. More specifically, I argue that self-authorship that Frankfurt, Wolf, and, later, Ismael require as the enabling feature of human freedom leads to a paradox: the same constraints that allow us to (partly) author ourselves necessitate that we cannot author ourselves to the degree that they require. I propose two such freedom-constraint interactions and answer objections employing latest work on the transformative experience and the interventionist theory of causation.

Author: Brandon Long
Title: "Moral Enhancement and Behavioral Trait Variance"

Abstract: This paper delves into the ethics of genetic enhancement related to changing behavioral traits, specifically focusing on disagreeability. We argue that such enhancements can either harm or benefit individuals, depending on whether they increase or decrease behavioral variance. Increasing the average level of a trait can be harmful because it reduces variance, which may hinder the development of virtue. Moreover, it might limit career choices and autonomy. However, decreasing variance can be acceptable in cases where a behavior is definitively virtuous or when increased variance would harm autonomy. For example, reducing violence aversion may decrease variance but promote virtue, while enhancing intelligence universally benefits autonomy, making decreased trait variance harmful.

Author: Nick Louzon
Title: "Anne Conway's Dual Extension: A Response to Hobbes and Descartes"

Abstract: In her *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, Anne Conway mentions three philosophical opponents by name: Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza. In this paper, I will examine Conway's argument against Hobbes's and Descartes' conception of body. My argument will proceed in three steps. First, I will identify an overlooked argument for God's corporeality suggested in *Leviathan*, Hobbes's 'argument from extension.' Second, I will argue that because Conway's main response to Hobbes leads to her positing two kinds of extension, material and 'virtual,' she was responding to Hobbes's argument from extension. Third, I will argue that Conway's response to Hobbes is both adapted from Descartes' notion of 'extension of power' in a 1649 letter to Henry More and serves as a response to Descartes' mechanism

Author: Madeline Muntersbjorn
Title: "Bob Moses and the Algebra Project: Observations and Reflections"

Abstract: The Algebra Project founded by Robert P. Moses (1935-2021) is a community of organizers who build consensus around quality mathematics education in public schools in the United States. The AP works from the grassroots up: from individuals (students, teachers, parents) to institutions (boards, districts, policies). As an educational endeavor, the AP starts from the premise that anyone can learn mathematics, in general, and algebra, in particular. As a philosophy of mathematics, it's a curricular process that starts from shared student experiences, undergoes linguistic articulations and reformulations, and ends in familiar formal notations. This didactic process reflects the origins of mathematics and other formal systems of knowledge as ways of organizing experiences using artificial languages as well as other cognitive artifacts such as drawings, maps, worksheets, etc. Significantly, Bob Moses enacted his philosophy, from his ethics to his epistemology, as a father, mathematics teacher, guest lecturer, collaborative writer, and community organizer.

Author: Peter Murphy
Title: "Worries about the Import of Moral Autonomy"

Abstract: Consider a morally restricted life. This is a life in which every choice you face is a choice from a set of options, where one option is morally required and the rest are morally forbidden. You never face an option that is merely morally permissible (i.e. an option that is permissible, but not required). In an important paper, Seana Shiffrin argues that morally restrictive lives lack what she calls *moral autonomy*. In addition to pointing out ways in which such lives are bad, she goes on to argue that the correct moral view cannot imply that our lives are morally restricted ones. She concludes from this that all forms of maximizing consequentialism are false. I spell out her argument, critically probe it, and offer an objection to it. If moral autonomy is a good, no more than the claim that it is a good appears in the correct moral view.

Author: Joshua Paschal
Title: "Revisiting the Last Man and Human Chauvinism"
Abstract:

In their seminal paper "Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics" (originally presented in 1973; published in a collection in 1980), Richard and Val Routley offer an interesting thought experiment. In what is label as the last man example, they ask us to imagine "The last man surviving the collapse of the world system sets to work eliminating, as far as he can, every living thing, animal or plant." (pg. 121). The problem is clear: it is not obvious how traditional ethical considerations bind the last man to not simply destroy everything, since he is the last person left. In this paper, I want to revisit this Last Man. What does the last man do wrong by scorching the forsaken planet? What answers can environmental philosophy offer us now? I argue that it is not just chauvinism, but an existential arrogance that defines this last man.

Author: Darien Santmyer
Title: "The Universe Enframed: Heidegger, The Anthropocene, and Space Colonization"

Abstract: In this paper I present a Heideggerian conception of the Anthropocene as revealing Earth as a resource we exploit for our benefit and argue that two popular arguments for space colonization depend upon viewing space through this lens. I will begin by briefly reviewing Heidegger's account of the essence of modern technology and present an account of the Anthropocene based on it. I will then survey two popular arguments for space colonization: space has valuable resources we can use; and we need to establish a permanent human presence on other planets to ensure the survival of the human species. I will then show how these arguments for space colonization depend upon the concept of the Anthropocene I presented, thereby reproducing the problem they purport to solve. I will then address a possible objection to my use of Heidegger's account of modern technology.

Authors: Eric Sampson and Rebecca Tuvel

Title: “In Defense of ‘Harmful’ and ‘Dangerous’ Inquiry in Philosophy”

Abstract: Recently, some philosophers have argued that we should censor the expression or inquiry of “harmful” or “dangerous” ideas in philosophy. Against this view, we defend the “institutional model.” On our view, academic philosophy is an institution complete with roles and role-players designed to achieve the institution’s legitimate goal. Its legitimate goal is finding the truth and its role-players (philosophers) play their role by presenting the best arguments, theories, and objections as they see them—even if those views are de re morally heinous. We draw parallels with a wide range of other institutions where similar conclusions are far less controversial: the adversarial legal system, entertainment (e.g., acting, stand-up comedy), and markets. In each case, the relevant institution has a legitimate goal, and, in pursuit of that goal, role-players are morally permitted to act in ways that they would not necessarily be permitted to act outside the institutional context.