

Warwick Continental Philosophy Conference (6th Edition)

Approaching Value

14th-15th June 2024



PHILOSOPHY

This booklet collects all the relevant information for WCPC 2024 *Approaching Value*.

The information presented here should be accurate. In case of discrepancy, the information on the conference website takes precedence: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/philosophy/research/activities/postkantian/events/wcpc/>

NOTE: In case of last minute changes please follow the guidelines communicated to you from the conference email account.

Conference Booklet Version 1.3

This template originates from [LaTeXTemplates.com](https://www.latextemplates.com) and is based on the original version at: https://github.com/maximelucas/AMCOS_booklet

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About

WCPC

Warwick Continental Philosophy Conference is an annual conference organised by the Postgraduate and Early-Career community of the University of Warwick Philosophy Department. The conference aims to be a meeting point for scholars who understand their work as falling within the purview of 'Continental Philosophy' broadly construed. WCPC operates as a part of the Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy at the University of Warwick.

PKEP

The Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy at the University of Warwick provides a unique forum for discussion and research in 19th and 20th century European philosophy, including interdisciplinary research with scholars across the humanities and social sciences. It organises regular seminars, workshops and conferences to promote innovative work in the field of post-Kantian European philosophy and provide a stimulating research environment for MA and PhD students, junior and senior faculty. For our programme of events, please [click here](#). As a complement to its research programme, the Centre is also closely associated with the MA in Continental Philosophy. The other departments and centres affiliated to the Centre for Research in Post-Kantian European Philosophy include Philosophy, French Studies, German Studies, Film and TV Studies, English, History, Sociology, Politics and International Studies, as well as the Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies and the Social Theory Centre. The Centre is run by a Director, Andrew Huddleston, and a Deputy Director, Tobias Keiling. For a full list of staff associated with the work of the Centre please [click here](#).

Organisation

Organising Committee

Ben Champion Sebastian Hodge Clarissa Muller
Luke Valentine Ying Xue

Organising Advisors

Andrew Huddleston Tobias Keiling

Panel Chairs

Ben Champion Sebastian Hodge Clarissa Muller
Fridolin Neumann Gustavo da Silva Luke Valentine
Ying Xue

Special Thanks

Emily Hargreaves Sarah Taylor

Attending the Conference

Conference Format

The conference is organised into 6 thematic panels of 2/3 papers. The panelists will be given 20 minutes to present their paper, and 15 minutes to answer questions from the audience.

This structure will not apply to keynote presentations. Instead, keynote slots will consist of a 60 min presentation and 30 min Q&A.

The conference will take place in hybrid format, with both in-person and online presentations. During the Q&A, audience questions will be selected by the chair. Please raise your hand if you are attending in person, or use the Teams 'raise hand' function if you would like to ask the question.

Links to the Teams meetings are available in the next section.

If you require a letter confirming your attendance at the conference please email us at wcpc@warwick.ac.uk.

If you encounter any other issues or have questions regarding the conference, please feel free to contact us on the same address as above.

Teams Links

Day 1

[Click here to join](#)

Day 2

[Click here to join](#)

Conference Room: WAO.24

The conference room used is wheelchair accessible. It also has accessible toilets nearby. Gender neutral toilets can be found in the Social Sciences building, in the Student Union Headquarters and in the Dirty Duck pub (these last two buildings are located on the main campus piazza). If you would like to discuss accessibility details further, please don't hesitate to contact us via the relevant section on the registration form or email us at wpc@warwick.ac.uk. For more information on possible routes to the conference see the map attached in the end of the document or visit the official interactive map online (<https://campus.warwick.ac.uk/>).

Travelling to the University of Warwick

The University of Warwick lies between the area of Coventry city and two other towns, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa. Train services run from London Euston station to Coventry train station and from London Marylebone station to Leamington Spa town. Ticket prices vary depending on the time of travel but its best to book your rail tickets in advance to get a good deal. You can book by visiting the following website: <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk>.

From Coventry Train Station

You can either take a taxi or a bus to the University's central campus (you will need to get off at central campus' Bus Interchange, ask the driver if you are unsure).

A taxi rank operates outside the station. The journey will cost you approximately £10-12 and will take 10-15 mins depending on traffic.

Bus services run between Coventry station and the University of Warwick. You can take either the number 11 or the 12X bus from Coventry station (and back). The journey time with the 11 takes 20-25 mins, whereas journey time with the 12X takes 12-15 mins. A single journey costs £2.00 and an unlimited day pass costs £4.00. You can pay by either cash or contactless debit/credit card on the bus (Note: international credit/debit cards may not work on the bus as forms of payment).

From Leamington Spa Train Station

You can either take a taxi or a bus to the University's central campus.

No taxi rank is in operation at Leamington Spa train station but you can call a cab (01926 42 59 59) to take you to the University's central campus. The cost will be approximately £20 and the journey time will be approximately 25 minutes.

Bus services run between Leamington Spa station and the University of Warwick. You can take the number 11 bus, which will take you to the University. The bus stop for number 11 is located on High Street. As you come out of the rail station you will find yourself on a road called Old Warwick Road. Turn left and walk down the road; as you walk down the road you should see opposite a big building called 'Station House', if you see this then you are going the right way. Continue down this road, crossing Lower Avenue. Upon crossing Lower Avenue you will notice that Old Warwick Road has now become High Street. On the opposite side of the road you should see a convenience store called 'Wisla Delikatesy'. From here one can take the 11 bus to Warwick University.

The bus journey goes via Leamington Spa city centre and Kenilworth town and lasts approximately 40 minutes. All bus services run to the main campus' Bus Interchange. A single journey costs (£2.00) and a day pass (£4.00). Be advised that drivers will only accept the exact cash amount and do not give change, alternatively, you can pay via contactless.

University Campuses and Accommodation Locations

The University of Warwick is comprised of three campuses: Westwood campus, Central or Main campus, and Gibbet Hill campus. They are a short distance apart. This year, the conference will be held on Westwood Campus.

University Address: University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom

Please visit this site for an Interactive Campus map: <https://campus.warwick.ac.uk/>. If you are looking for a particular building or room, just type its name in the search bar and you will be shown its exact location.

You can either walk, which takes around ten minutes, or take a taxi between Westwood and Main Campus. If you decide to go by taxi, then you can pick a taxi up at the Central campus' Bus Interchange to take you to Westwood campus. The University's Bus Interchange is located right next to the Warwick Arts Centre.

Buses from Coventry and Leamington Spa all stop on Kirby Corner Road. Information regarding accommodation in the Coventry, Kenilworth and Leamington areas can be found here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/staff/offcampus/relocation/service/shorttermaccommodation/>

Information regarding hotel rooms located on campus can be found here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/conferences/bed-and-breakfast>

Assistance and Emergency Contact

In case of emergency, please dial 999 from any phone and speak either to police or ambulance services. For less urgent matters, campus security are available 24 hours a day and can be reached on 024 7652 2083, or 22083 from an internal Warwick campus phone.

Timetable

IP: In-person Talk, OL: Online Talk, KL: Keynote Lecture

Day 1: Friday, 14th of June

9:20–9:30	Conference Introduction		
9:30–11:15	Panel 1		
9:30–10:05	IP	Matt Munnelly UCL	Embodiment, Normativity and Self-Knowledge: Beauvoir's 'Problem of Destin'
10:05–10:40	IP	Roman Altshuler Kutztown	Identity, Values, and Freedom
10:40–11:15	OL	Ellie Palmer Edinburgh	Surviving Death Through Watsuji and Tanabe: The Impact of Immortal Selfhood on Social Values
11:15–11:45	Coffee Break		
11:45–13:15	KL	Lambert Wiesing Jena	Luxury and Beauty or: Purpose without purposefulness and purposefulness without purpose
13:15–14:30	Lunch Break		
14:30–16:15	Panel 2		
14:30–15:05	IP	James Kinkaid Bilkent	Moral Dogmatism: Towards a Levinasian Metaethics
15:05–15:40	IP	Mari van Stokkum Amsterdam	Passive Experience of Value: Husserl, Lipps
15:40–16:15	IP	Ankur Ranjan IIT Madras	Taylor's Authenticity
16:15–16:45	Coffee Break		
16:45–17:55	Panel 3		
16:45–17:20	IP	Berker Basmaci The New School for Social Research	The Logic of Singularity in Hegel's Aesthetics
17:20–17:55	IP	Errol Boon University of the Arts Utrecht	The Truth Value of Artworks: Proposal for a New Approach

Day 2: Staurday, 15th of June

9:30–11:15	Panel 4		
9:30–10:05	IP	Michael Koch SUNY Oneonta	The Aesthetics of Continual Clearence
10:05–10:40	IP	George Williams Independent	The Principle of Sufficient Reason and the Origin of Value
10:40–11:15	OL	Maik Niemeck Marburg	Is Concern for Oneself Unconditional?
11:15–11:45	Coffee Break		
11:45–13:30	Panel 5		
11:45–12:20	IP	Yiran Yang Renmin	The Contemporary Value of Philosophy as Constructive Force: Exploration of the Relationship Between Human and Nature based on Marxism and Chinese Philosophy
12:20–12:55	OL	Toma Li Independent	Ethics is in the outside: A new Marxist Reading of Lacanian Psychoanalytic Ethics
12:55–13:30	IP	Christopher Wortman KCL	What's Left of Nietzsche?
13:30–14:45	Lunch Break		
14:45–16:15	KL	Rachel Cristy KCL	Nietzsche on "Evil", Mistrust, and Suspicion
16:15–16:45	Coffee Break		
16:45–17:55	Panel 6		
16:45–17:20	IP	Alessio Porino Salerno	The Rationality of Violence: Foucault's Alleged Irrationalism
17:20–17:55	IP	Judith Norman & Alistair Welchman Trinity (TX) & UT San Antonio	Value and violence: Turning to Sartre

List of Abstracts

Day 1: Friday, 14th of June

Embodiment, Normativity and Self-Knowledge: Beauvoir's 'Problem of Destin'

Matt Munnelly

IP

University College London

For Simone de Beauvoir, the treatment of children's bodies is sexed and normatively laden. The boy's body is interpreted by those around him in such a way that the embodied experience of those interactions allows for the realisation of the boy's transcendence and subjectivity. The girl's body is treated in a way that restricts embodied experience of transcendence and subjectivity. Followingly, the boy's body affords him more transcending projects. Perhaps more perplexing is the suggestion that the child, thus embodied, comes to know their destiny. Beauvoir's ontology, seemingly, rejects any suggestion of pre-determined futures. Why, then, does she consistently imply the child to have a destiny that is known to them? I label this difficulty 'the problem of destin': if the self is fundamentally a transcendent subjectivity, then it cannot be true that children have, much less know, things about their futures. This paper expounds this apparent contradiction and proposes a way of dissolving it. Beauvoir can coherently commit to (1) her ontology and (2) her suggestion that the child is embodied such that they can have knowledge of their 'destiny'. I suggest that the object of knowledge when destiny is 'known' to the child is categorised as formal knowledge of the future that guides behaviour. Such knowledge corresponds to knowledge of one's transcendence and subjectivity. §1 introduces Beauvoir's 'Problem of Destin': through analysis of Beauvoir's ontology, knowledge of destiny is shown to arise from embodiment. For instance, the boy's body is received as transcending—and thus as valuable—if it has a penis. Such treatment affirms the boy's transcendence and subjectivity. Upon entering adolescence, the girl's body is viewed as sexed, but is objectified and viewed as affording mere immanence. These sexed normative interpretations of children's bodies are phenomenologically internalised. Second, I evaluate inadequate categorisations of knowledge of destiny, drawing criteria from their shortcomings for what a successful interpretation requires. The criteria are that an interpretation must: take Beauvoir to be making an epistemological claim that does not commit her to predetermined destinies; not take the child's knowledge to allow for 'particular' claims about their future; grasp the specificity that Beauvoir gives to knowledge of destiny; and take such knowledge of destiny to be capable of being known. Section 3 proposes an epistemological categorisation of Beauvoirian 'destiny' that can meet the criteria from the preceding section: it allows for the child to have no fixed destiny but know things about their future. I argue that Beauvoir's claims of destiny are best understood through a 'formal' (rather than material) interpretation of the knowledge of one's destiny. The child, through the process of embodiment, comes to know the kind of ontological capabilities available to them (transcendent/immanent and so forth), without knowing the particular ways in which these capabilities will be exercised. This solution illuminates Beauvoir's significant account of how normatively laden treatment of the body gives rise to gendered phenomenological self-knowledge.

Identity, Values, and Freedom

Roman Altshuler

IP

Kutztown University

Christine Korsgaard has put forward a metaethical theory according to which the constitution of our identity is the constitutive aim of agency. We choose values in order to constitute ourselves, and then allow ourselves to be guided by those values. I will argue that while Korsgaard's account is clearly close to existentialist meta-ethics, there is a key difference: while self-constitution is a necessary outcome of agency, it is not the constitutive aim of agency. The constitutive aim is freedom. We can see this through the lens of two thinkers: Simone de Beauvoir and Jorge Portilla. Beauvoir distinguishes ontological freedom, the freedom that defines the human condition, from moral freedom, which she equates with willing oneself free and willing others free. Values are chosen within our choices of projects, which define our identities. The significance of willing oneself free is that only by doing so—only by aiming our projects at the freedom of others rather than restraining them—can we justify our values. On this picture, willing oneself free is the constitutive aim of agency, since in acting we necessarily seek to justify the values embedded in our projects, and we can do so only by willing others free. Self-constitution is a byproduct of aiming at willing ourselves free, so that even when we fall short of the goal, we still constitute ourselves through our projects and their embedded values. Portilla's work helps to clarify the relation between identity, value, and freedom. While leaving out meta-ethical questions about how values are constituted, Portilla argues that they appear to us in different guises. Some values appear as unreflective and necessary, like the coolness of a glass of water on a hot day. Other values appear as optional. But some values appear as ones in light of which we constitute ourselves. We strive to become such values, and while this aim always eludes us—one cannot become honorable or just or, in Portilla's example, punctual, because it is always possible to fail to be that in the future—we do constitute ourselves by means of such values. So while for Beauvoir all our values are implicated in our choice of identity, Portilla narrows down their role. Even if all our values in some sense are coextensive with our identity in some suitably broad sense, identity in a more precise sense—what is really core to who we are—is constituted by adherence to a special set of values. Portilla's interest is in showing how *relajo*—a tendency toward public mockery that undermines our adherence to values—undercuts self-constitution. But his point goes beyond self-constitution: *relajo* seems like an attitude of taking nothing seriously, and so seems to be a way of freeing ourselves from the demands of value. But Portilla shows that by cutting us off from adherence to value, *relajo* undermines our freedom. Both accounts therefore show what I take to be the essential existential attitude: that in choosing values, we are aiming at freedom, not at self-constitution.

Surviving Death Through Watsuji and Tanabe: The Impact of Immortal Selfhood on Social Values

Ellie Palmer

OL

University of Edinburgh

Prior to the growing global secularisation, the belief in the afterlife, immortality, something akin to the 'soul', and some form of persistence of our existence post-bodily-death were common worldviews embraced across a wide array of cultural and religious traditions. However, as the world gradually loses faith in any God, these ideas traditionally associated with religiosity are simultaneously lost, resulting in a shift in how human beings perceive death. Whilst it is now less common for us in a more secular society not to presume the existence of the soul, Cartesian dualist sentiments remain. We have hung onto the Platonic notion propelled by the Cartesians that the soul is not dependent on the physical body; all we have done is replace 'soul' for 'self'. We have developed a supremacy of mind over body which has created a disconnect between our selves and the world, leading to a general lack of concern for the external, physical realm in which our bodies, other people and the environment are situated, thus creating the perfect breeding ground for a starkly individualistic societal system of ethics to prevail. In an age plagued by global conflict and the impending climate crisis, the necessity to address this disjunct could not be more prevalent. One brick-wall frequently faced by ethicists is translating any concern into practice with a species that at times appears to be hardwired to prioritise its own self-centred interests. I argue, however, that there is another way to frame one's thinking such that care for the external world, and our moral actions reflecting this, is intrinsic: through the reframing of self as essentially spatial and relational, and ultimately temporally extended beyond the death of our consciousness. Referring to Watsuji's theories of the social self and betweenness, I hold that the understanding of self can be expanded to encompass a notion of identity which can be found embodied in our interpersonal relationships, our relationships with nature, and with material artefacts. After establishing this stance of an extended spatial boundary of identity, I explore the temporal implications of the self embodied by relations and artefacts which may long outlive our bodily death, involving the idea of symbolic immortality, whether our legacy and what we physically leave behind in the world has a deeper connection to our identity than first considered, and what this means for the existence and persistence of the self in the world after death. Further, making reference to Tanabe, not only do these physical artefacts that constitute the self remain, but I argue our social relationships can persist after death through existential cooperation; the mutual interaction of love. Ultimately, I claim that the adoption of this view of selfhood enables us to stop restricting our desires, commitments and goals to avoid those which are potentially threatened by our own deaths or unable to be achieved within our lifetime, thus the understanding of self in this spatial, interconnected and temporally extended way in turn helps to expand the sphere of things that we care about and therefore leads to more future and community-minded ethics.

Moral Dogmatism: Towards a Levinasian Metaethics

James Kinkaid

IP

Bilkent University

Much contemporary metaethical theorizing is dominated by what Korsgaard (1996) calls “the normative question”: What is the source of the distinctive kind of normative claims morality makes on us? To attempt an answer to the normative question is in effect to answer the moral skeptic, who holds that morality has no normative force of its own independent of self-interest. Closely related to the normative question is Williams’s (1979) distinction between internal and external reasons. Moral reasons, it seems, must be external to our motivations, lest they be objectionably “hypothetical” in Kant’s sense. Yet as Mackie (1977) argues, external reasons are “queer” entities that seem not to fit into a broadly naturalistic view of the world. Numerous interpreters have noted that Levinas, despite proposing to elevate ethics to the status of “first philosophy,” does not seem interested in answering the normative question (Morgan 2007, Barber 2008, Setiya forthcoming). This might be taken to show that Levinas’s rich descriptions of the face-to-face encounter with the other cannot make any contribution to metaethics, i.e., to the study of the metaphysics, epistemology, and semantics of moral discourse and practice. Against this impression, I intend to argue that for Levinas, a well worked out phenomenology of the face-to-face encounter offers an alternative to a certain Kantian way of answering the normative question. Insofar as the normative question asks us to respond to a skeptical challenge, we can understand Levinas as employing a more general phenomenological strategy for responding to skepticism to the special case of moral skepticism. The more general anti-skeptical strategy is “dogmatic” in Pryor’s (2000) sense: skepticism is undermined by working out an account of defeasible, immediate perceptual justification. Applied to the moral case, the claim is that a moral phenomenology shows that because we are presented with external reasons in the face-to-face encounter, we have defeasible, immediate perceptual justification for taking ourselves to be bound by them. That the reasons given to us in the face-to-face encounter for Levinas are external is suggested by his critique of moral theories based on the idea of “the Same.” A paradigm case of a Same-based moral theory is Kantian constitutivism, according to which our moral obligations flow from a value constitutive of our very rational agency. For Levinas, in contrast, our moral obligations flow from a value that is revealed to us in an experience of “transcendence,” “height,” or “infinity.” Whereas the Kantian constitutivist responds to the skeptical worry by identifying a value that is internal to the agent yet non-contingent, Levinas’s moral phenomenology shows that we have strong *prima facie* perceptual justification in taking ourselves to be beholden to truly external reasons. My proposed Levinasian account has affinities with broadly phenomenological/intuitionist views defended by G.E. Moore, Husserl, Scheler, and Murdoch. A distinctive advantage of Levinas’s view is that he interprets what is given in the face-to-face encounter in an imperatival manner, as an “appeal,” whereas other phenomenological/intuitionist views tie our experience of value less directly to our reasons.

Passive Experience of Value: Husserl, Lipps

Mari van Stokkum

IP

University of Amsterdam

The early Husserl proposed that values are the objects of an experience referred to as Wertnehmung (parallel to the German word for “perception,” Wahrnehmung). Moreover, he argued that acts of valuation are founded on doxic acts: for instance, in order to experience a car as “beautiful,” I must have a perception of the car itself as it is parked in the dealership. Both perception and valuation are presupposed, in turn, in the decision to act (e.g., now I want to buy this car). To sum up, then, volition is founded on valuation and valuation is founded on perception. These founding relations, in which the doxic element holds a primary position, still reflect the influence of Brentano, for whom feelings of love and hate must always refer to an object already perceived. While this scheme was never discarded, it became embedded in a more encompassing architectonic as Husserl made the transition from static to genetic phenomenology. Genetic phenomenology discloses a “passive” dimension of experience. Taking a leaf from the insightful exposition by Roberto Walton (2017), I will defend the reading that on the passive level of experience, feeling has priority over perception and comportment. My primary way of orienting myself in the world is a matter of desire (Streben), in which the objects of perception are never “neutral” givens, but rather defined by relevance or irrelevance. It is only on the active (versus the passive) level of experience that I can isolate a doxic act (S is p) on which valuation and volition are to be founded in turn. Little attention has been paid to the correspondences between Husserl’s genetic outlook and Lipps’ mature philosophy of Feeling, Willing and Thinking (1902). “Feeling,” for Lipps, is never a hedonic quality accompanying perceptual experience, but rather a primary way of accessing reality in terms of its “subjective possibilities” (subjektive Möglichkeit). Within this mode, the world I engage with cannot be abstracted from my own being and sense of orientation, as would be required in a pure doxic act. Genetically speaking, therefore, one may conclude that “value” is precisely foundational for any intentional act, whether it be doxic, evaluative or related to a course of action. But we must be careful to specify the meaning of “value” on the level of passive experience. The proto-intentional “value” disclosed on the level is not to be confused with value-predicates that mimic factual properties (e.g., the car is “new” as well as “beautiful”). On the passive level, value is absolute precisely in the sense that I do not have to pose the question whether it belongs to the object itself or emerges from my relation to the object.

Taylor's Authenticity

Ankur Ranjan

IP

Indian Institute of Technology Madras

Authenticity captures modernity and its discontents in an unparalleled manner. Whether it is some of the most profound intellectual reflections or ubiquitous influence on popular culture, authenticity continues to assert its relevance. There is no consensus on conceptualizing authenticity. However, historical trends have gradually emerged, broadly categorized as self-discovery and self-creation models. The gaping difference between these two models is more than merely historical. The romantic quest for meaning and an existential pursuit of freedom resist simple reductionism in aestheticism. It underlines the central contradiction in the rhetoric of Enlightenment between reason/understanding and freedom. Charles Taylor's hermeneutic strategy promises symmetry to overcome the inherent dilemma of authenticity by arguing that "[D]iscovery and invention are two sides of the same coin." In this case, the same coin refers to language's world-disclosing, constitutive, and dialogical capacity. Taylor attempts to rescue authenticity from the subjectivism and relativism of the preceding models, purging its trivial practices from self-centeredness and self-indulgence. By abstracting the value of self-fulfillment from the practices of authenticity in the West, he argues for recognizing that implied in the project of authenticity is a higher or spiritual aspiration. Taylor situates the individual within a symbolically structured common world constituted by "higher goods" beyond subjective will and inclinations demanding our "awe, allegiance, or respect," reminiscent of Heidegger's "language speaking." The moral ontology that intertwines self and morality opens a wide range of literature trying to make sense of its methodological, thematic, and procedural difficulties and consequences. Readings diverge from different strands of objectivist and contextualist interpretations of Taylor's normative commitments, as both these impulses are apparent in his writings. This paper confronts the implications that Taylor's moral philosophy opens for his account of authenticity. He conceives authenticity as a tension between individual demands—creation or discovery, uniqueness, and opposition to conformity—and communal commitments to "horizons of significance" and understanding in dialogue. An objectivist reading renders the uniqueness of one authentic individual from the other obscure. On the other hand, a contextualist reading reveals an ambiguity about the validity criteria for judging authenticity from inauthenticity. Since the contextualist strand tends to predominate the discussion on Taylor, this paper seriously deals with the second predicament. By exposing the "dialectic of recognition" between participants and the dialectic between intersubjectivity "always already" produced and an anticipated intersubjectivity, I highlight the indissoluble connection between meaning and validity within the internal structure of hermeneutics and dialogue. The guiding standard of the "best account" is insufficient to regulate the dialectics mentioned above. We take Taylor's Gadamerian influence for granted in our exposition and do not foreclose the possibility of a resolution due to the "interwoven strategy" in his many-faceted oeuvre. Despite these limitations, this work throws light on the political oblivion in Taylor's account of authenticity and an unsettling numbness to account for a risk of self-deception.

The Logic of Singularity in Hegel's Aesthetics

Berker Basmaci

IP

The New School for Social Research

My paper addresses the contentious role of aesthetics in Hegel's philosophy. In contrast to the prevailing view that considers Hegel's conception of art merely as a limited medium for the manifestation of truth—a limit supposedly overcome through pure thought—I argue that this perspective overlooks the subtleties of Hegel's standpoint, particularly in creating a dichotomy between sensory appearances and a metaphysical conception of truth. Through a thorough examination of Hegel's theory of artistic beauty in his later lectures on aesthetics in alignment with his theory of conceptuality in the final part of his *Science of Logic*, I demonstrate that artworks embody a vital conceptual content that significantly contributes to our understanding of categories in Hegel's logic. Specifically, I contend that Hegel's notion of the "absolute idea," expressing the complete penetration of an object by its concept, is best understood through the unique model of intelligibility that artworks provide. Unlike other forms of the idea such as life and cognition, artworks illustrate the ways in which an object can be determinate and significant in its singularity. My paper consists of two parts. In the first part, "Logic and Aesthetics in Hegel," I sketch Hegel's innovative theory of concrete universality, which moves beyond formalist approaches to logic. For Hegel, conceptuality is paradigmatically expressed through the organic-ecological and selfconscious/historical processes. In these emergent formations, conceptual universals are manifest as the immanent form of singular objects, rather than relating to their objects or, extension, as type to token: Life exists only in the differentiation into different species, which exist only through the autopoietic processes of the individual organisms that are its members; self-consciousness is only actual as spirit (*Geist*), an indefinitely expansible group of individuals historically constituting a social whole through the participation of their members in certain normative practices of mutual recognition. In the second part, "Art and the Logic of Singularity," I show a crucial way in which works of art would prove central to the intelligibility of Hegelian concrete universals. In both ecological and historical frameworks, we see the diminishment of the significance and contributions of the singular element in an object, restricting it to mere membership in a broader form of universality, such as the life of the species or the political state. Conversely, artistic forms supervene on the logical structures of organic and social life with an inferential content that foregrounds the singularity of the object. I argue that this, for Hegel, allows the sensuous manifestation of the logical Idea, despite the reality of the non-ideal in the forms of death, ignorance, and violence. Lastly, I apply this thesis through a set of examples, including the ancient Egyptian pyramids, Sophocles' tragic play *Antigone*, and Marian paintings from late medieval Europe. According to my analysis, the logical function of art according to Hegel is to make the logical ideal of a complete saturation of conceptuality and objectivity manifest as a real possibility under non-ideal conditions, through their aesthetic syllogism of singularity.

The Truth Value of Artworks: Proposal for a New Approach

Errol Boon

IP

University of the Arts Utrecht

This paper proposes a new value-centred approach to the old continental theme of artistic truth. I will set out a conceptual framework in order to discuss whether this enables us to develop new accounts of non-discursive truth and/or employ old ones anew. In short, I will conceptualise artistic truth as a value attributed to a non-discursive process of thought. I will set out this approach in three steps. First, with regard to truth in general, I argue that truth must always be regarded as a value; that is, as something that applies to (rather than exists in) the world. More specifically, I argue that truth is an intellectual value – that is, a value that we attribute to a thought broadly construed (e.g. to a proposition, theory or revelation). Aligning with most theories of truth both in analytic and continental traditions, this value could be characterised as a value that presupposes a relation between two relata, namely a relation (which I call ‘truth form’) between something that is true (‘truthbearer’) and something that is the cause of its truth (‘truthmaker’). Second, contrary to most analytic theories of truth, I argue that this thought, which ‘bears’ truth, should always be understood as a process of thought instead of mere content. After all, an isolated fact cannot be arbitrarily true independently from a subject valuing it as such for a reason. We do not value a meaning content per se; we call a thought true because it does something, because it directs the mind through a certain progression of thought that enhances our understanding. It is this process of thought that persuades us to value the content as true. Third, having characterised truth in general as a value of a process of thought, it becomes clear what the question of artistic truth exactly amounts to. For while our discursive thoughts are processed through discourse – i.e. combining words and concepts, which in themselves are neither true nor false, into assertions that can take a correct form that enhances one’s understanding – it is hard (if not impossible) to explain how this discursive combination is performed by the non-discursive material of art. Theories of truth, however, typically conceptualise truth as a discursive value: they assume (a) a discursive truthbearer (e.g. a sentence or proposition), (b) a discursive truthmaker (e.g. logical or semantic properties of the proposition) and/or (c) the discursive truth-form of correctness. Contrary to this, I propose to see artistic truth as a value of non-discursive thought. If we believe that, for instance, works of music, painting and dance have an intellectual value, we need to reconsider the discursive paradigm in our thinking of truth. This task urges us to explain (a) how the value of truth can be applied to a non-discursive thought (thought contained in aesthetic material), (b) how this value is oriented to other modalities of being than factual reality alone, and (c) how the form of truth can be different from the value of correctness. The general aim of this paper is to set out this framework about the intellectual value (i.e. truth) of art. I would like to discuss with the public whether this framework either enables or restricts us to emancipate, reconsider and compare various accounts of artistic truth available in continental philosophy (e.g. Hegel, Heidegger, Adorno), including accounts of art’s intellectual potential which do not use the notion of truth (e.g. Susanne Langer, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze).

Day 2: Saturday, 15th of June

The Aesthetics of Continual Clearance

Michael Koch

IP

State University of New York Oneonta

The Scottish Highland clearances continue today. There is a deep history of how the forces of capital and internal colonialism motivated the original clearances. James Hunter has superbly documented the relation between English romanticism, the Celtic twilight and the aesthetic of vacancy that underlies so much of the contemporary valuation of the Highlands. Nonetheless, it is critical to construct the philosophical genealogies that underlie this aesthetic history.

This paper begins by recounting how the romantic re-envisioning of nature constructed a system of value where the economic value of landscapes is determined by the value of the viewscapes and the playscapes contained therein. Such aesthetic value far outstrips any productive value that can be derived from the environment. This is especially so in the context of global systems of trade where all productive value is minimized. By the forces of capital. The paper will then argue that this new system of value, centered around leisure and play, created a highland metaphysic of the sublime that continues to drive economic choices and public investment. The viewscapes and playscapes so created were once deer parks. Now they are national parks. Whatever we call such emptied places, what has not transformed is the displacement of multi-generational residency as land is set aside for leisure, for play and for preservation. This displacement is a process of continual clearance.

In constructing a genealogy of the metaphysic of place and value that determines lived reality of the Highlands, the paper builds a case study around a particular place, the island of Eilean Shona, Moidart, Lochaber. This small coastal island is within the Morar, Moidart, and Ardnamurchan National Scenic Area. According to NatureScot such areas “cover 13% of the land. Their outstanding scenery makes them our finest landscapes.” Eilean Shona was likely a place of neolithic habitation and there is some evidence of dwellings dated to that era. Most of the crofting families were cleared during the middle of the nineteenth century. Shortly after this clearance the island was sold to an English seafaring captain and since then it has been privately owned. Currently it is the site of holiday cottages and the main house is rented as an event space.

The Principle of Sufficient Reason and the Origin of Value

George Williams

IP

Independent

In this presentation I wish to lay out a process of dissolution and construction, of decay and revival – of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and the origin of value in intensity. The PSR can broadly understood following Schopenhauer and contemporary debates (c. Della Rocca) as the question "why?", that every proposition must have an explanation why it is the case. My first claim shall be that the PSR is incapable of satisfying its own demands. My second claim is that, given ontological meaning as a value rather than mere logical importance, the PSR results in either the twin forms of famine or self-consumption. The result is a fundamentally nihilistic structure. To argue my first claim, I shall elaborate the use of the PSR by Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel in order to show the extent to which their accounts are deficient to fulfil the strongest demands of the PSR. As a result, I shall argue that the PSR remains constitutionally dissatisfied. Drawing upon Nietzschean arguments, it will then be possible to link my first and second claims: that the PSR results in either famine or self-consumption when given ontological significance as a value. I illustrate this argument through Erysichthon of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, demonstrating that as a value the PSR is fundamentally nihilistic. Only as logical structure is the PSR contained to fruitfulness. Yet this bracketing of the PSR into a logical domain is no small feat given the simple pervasiveness of the question "why?". As Della Rocca argues, the PSR appears of intuitive significance in its relevance and total application to reality – what I take to be the PSR as organisational value. In which case, it appears as if its only resolutions are a shrug of the shoulders or the drowning out of its incessant questioning in deafness – both of which lean on bad faith. This leads me to the second part of my presentation in which I shall attempt to open up a horizon that overcomes this bad faith. I shall lay out what I take to be the conditions for such an overcoming: a self-consciousness that is at once reflective (i.e. capable of asking "why?") yet filled with another value so powerfully that the PSR loses meaning, reduced to logical function. It's in pursuit of this structure in reality that I turn to a notion of intensity as those experiences which are at once immediate in their sensory force, yet simultaneously reflective in such a manner that the force of the experience is amplified by this reflection. This is an experience most commonly found in art, resembling the sublime as found from Longinus to Burke and Kant. Yet it might also be found in the experience of love and a plurality of other experiences that fulfil its conditions. For instance, if someone were to ask, "why do you love them?", whilst you are in the grips of romance – the question appears absurd and misapplied. Such an experience overcomes the PSR not through bad faith, but through an aware relegation of the PSR's meaning into subordination to that intensity. It's thus from these intense experiences that I claim self-conscious value arises.

Is Concern for Oneself Unconditional?

Maik Niemeck

IP

University of Marburg

That most people take a special interest in themselves seems to be an indisputable fact. Regardless of whether an event is considered to be tragic or wonderful, when we realize that we are involved in it, the event becomes something that matters to us and arouses our interest, at least to some minimal extent. The 19th century philosopher Rudolf Hermann Lotze was one of the first to take this fact seriously in developing his theory of the mind and self-awareness. More recently, several contemporary philosophers (Guillot & O'Brien 2022; Johnston 2013; Kreuch 2019; Niemeck 2022; Setiya 2015; Textor 2018; Wiesing 2020) have also discovered Lotze's original insight and assume that thoughts about ourselves are accompanied by a distinctive evaluative attitude directed toward their intentional objects. While there appears to be considerable agreement that there is such a thing as a special concern for oneself, there are also significant differences in how researchers understand the nature of this self-concern. In this talk, I will discuss the claim that concern for oneself has an unconditional and non-instrumental nature (Textor 2018; Guillot & O'Brien 2023), which was also held by Lotze himself. According to this view, self-concern is something that we have in virtue of the kinds of beings we are, independently of any other ways we may think, wish or emote. While Guillot & O'Brien (2023) argue that our nature as agents compels us to be concerned about ourselves, Textor (2018) concludes that it is our nature as feeling beings which grounds this unconditional self-concern. I remain neutral on this issue, but the reason for this suspension is that I don't believe that the nature of self-concern is unconditional. This is what I want to argue for first, before defending an instrumentalist position. To this end, I will discuss the arguments that Guillot & O'Brien (2023) present to justify the unconditional nature of self-concern, and then offer some counterexamples that cast doubt on the claim itself. I will mainly challenge an argument that Guillot & O'Brien (2023) call "the argument from non-objectuality". Even though I don't believe that self-concern is unconditional, I agree with Lotze, Textor and Guillot & O'Brien that there is something special about it. This is because even in those cases where we do not care about ourselves as an end in itself, we still need to be concerned about us in virtue of all the other things we adore, want or are in any other way interested in. In this respect, concern for oneself in most situations is a necessary means, and every other concern necessitates self-concern. I will argue that this instrumental self-concern is not grounded in our nature as agents or feeling beings, but in our nature as vulnerable and limited beings that have to persist to realize their goals. Our permanently endangered existence is the reason why this instrumental concern for ourselves is an integral part of our mind's architecture. I would like to make a plea for this idea in the last part of the presentation.

The Contemporary Value of Philosophy as Constructive Force: Exploration of the Relationship Between Human and Nature based on Marxism and Chinese Philosophy

Yiran Yang

IP

Renmin University of China

Although the era of “Capitalist Philosophy” has passed, philosophy is still needed as a world view and methodological principle for understanding and transforming the world. As the process of globalization accelerates, the endogenous shortcomings of the logic of capitalist production have been widely exposed. Ecological problems are increasingly becoming a global crisis that threatens the survival of mankind and poses a challenge to the sustainable development of human society. Faced with the ecological crisis, the contemporary value of philosophy as constructive force should be highlighted. Philosophy involves how human beings can construct a higher level of order based on the body, and philosophical principles are survival guides to guide human beings to make correct value choices. Discussions on whether the values of nature and ecology are in conflict with those of human beings have been going on for a long time, but they have never been able to get rid of the division between anthropocentrism and androcentrism, which is based on traditional dualistic thinking. Marxism and Chinese philosophy, two outstanding achievements of human civilization, can provide a new way of thinking. Although Marxism and Chinese philosophy were born in different times and regions, they have inherent unity in understanding the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. Marx advocated that man and nature are mutually essential and called for communism as a double reconciliation between man and nature. The Chinese philosophy of “the unity of Tian and man” advocates that man should cultivate himself and realize himself in nature, and that man and nature should be in harmony with each other for sustainable development. Both of them reflect that the ecological value of nature is not in conflict with the value of human freedom. In a state of harmony, nature is the base for human practical activities and the space for human freedom. Reflecting on the harmony between human beings and nature requires that the constructive role of philosophical thought in helping people to understand the relationship between self, nature and society be brought back into play. The ecological crisis embodies the extreme antagonism between human beings and nature and reflects the fact that the relationship between human beings is in a universal conflict, which is a prominent manifestation of the crisis of modernity on a global scale. The fate of humanity’s demise as species being has become a possible existential event. Although we are in an era different from that of philosophical sages, we should also answer the questions of our time, “what happened to the world” and “where is mankind going”. Exploration of the relationship between human beings and nature from the perspective of the contemporary value of philosophy will provide a new theory and a way forward for the construction of a beautiful global homeland, which is a modern exploration and a true practice of the ideal society.

Ethics is in the outside: A new Marxist Reading of Lacanian Psychoanalytic Ethics

Toma Li

OL

Independent

My paper intends to discover the relationship between self and ethics based on Japanese philosopher Karatani Kojin's critique of solipsism. Solipsism, to his reflection, is the way of thinking which attribute the exposition that applies to oneself to everyone else. Karatani's problématique not only responded to a critique of Cartesian subject in a post-structuralist sense, but also anchored with nihilistic value-searching in Japanese burgeoning 60s economic. In the Japanese context, a vulgar Deleuzianism emerged, which sought to immerse oneself in a world of pure difference, escaping the mundane tasks in a playful way. Karatani on the one hand propose to maintain the difference in both political (ethical) and individual domain, he realized that a new media of critique must be done so as to bring historicized reality into the over indulgence of poetizing life on the other. To this extent, he started to rethink the Subject which coated with modernity, capitalism, orientalism, imperialism into his now critique, thus shifted his research to the concept of 'Exterior', which inhibited the unreachable other that is both contingent and indetermined. More importantly, it reveals his approach to discover the moment which a whole subjectivity collapsed. Although for Karatani himself who adopted a deconstructionist approach to unveil the groundless and contradictory nature of Subject's introspection by examining the language game in Wittgenstein and Gödel's incompleteness theorems, I will provide a different pathway in debate of schizoanalysis and psychoanalysis to further stress the solipsistic subject in ethical critique. I will first try to return to Lacan's analysis of Freud and how Lacan moves from questions about the subject to a psychoanalytic ethics to critique Lacan's ethics in terms of two different kinds of irony in Karatani's history and repetition. Lacanian ethics and vulgar reading of Deleuze both took an ironical gesture in replacing negation with affirmation, thus abandoned the historicity of subject in the praxis sense of ethics. Moreover, I will move to Karatani's trajectory from Self to Other in analyzing its practical implication of his Marxist reconfiguration of psychoanalytic ethics for traversing the fantasy. In addition to how his reconstruction was based on the spatial and relational Japanese thinking (whether it is from Kyoto school phenomenology or some potential derive in anti-western-centralization). By adapting such way, He uses Takeda Taijun's study of Records of the Grand Historian Shiji as an example, depicting the many relationships between human beings and society that are indelible within a sense which Takeda called shame. Unlike the Christian ethic of seeking salvation under an original sin, it gives rise to a more positive way engaging oneself into ethic practice. Through Karatani's case I will argue under his reconstruction, history becomes a relational space supplementing the guidance of practice missing in Lacanian psychoanalytic ethics. Furthermore, it points to a more concrete way of traversing the fantasy that avoids the fetishistic reimagination of pure difference under the ethical nihilism. From a new Marxist perspective, difference is re-realized in the form of ethical engagement.

What's Left of Nietzsche?

Christopher Wortman

IP

King's College London

While the attempts to bring Marx and Nietzsche into dialogue have produced a rich body of philosophical work, such comparisons rarely engage Nietzsche's concept of slave morality. If the so-called left Nietzschean tradition has been loath to discuss this concept, it is perhaps because it is difficult to reconcile Nietzsche's politics, brought to the fore in slave morality, with those of Marx. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche's privileging of value-creating master morality over value-perverting slave morality implies an anti-egalitarian, anti-democratic stance that is antithetical to the political demands of Marx's communism. Against interpretations which frame Nietzsche as an apolitical thinker, Tutt (2024) has recently argued that Nietzsche's politics must be taken into account when integrating his thought into critical social theory, lest these positions be inadvertently reproduced by a Marxist or even liberal democratic political project. Such arguments raise questions about the value of politics for Nietzsche's thought, the value of Nietzsche for contemporary philosophy, and whether the value of philosophy can ever be politically neutral. This essay pursues these questions, considering how the methodological overlap between Nietzsche and Marx—their technique as “masters of suspicion” in Ricoeur's famous phrase—informs their politics and can thus shed light on a radical political impulse held in common by them. Nietzsche's critique of slave morality shares a similar aim to Marx's critique of ideology, particularly his analysis of the commodity-form as an ideological mechanism; their critiques expose a transformation of value on which both slave morality and capitalist ideology hinge. In this way, both Nietzsche and Marx set out to critique this transformation of value, and thus reading Marx's critique of ideology, specifically commodity fetishism, alongside Nietzsche's critique of slave morality highlights their affinity as masters of suspicion—not merely as methodological allies, but as thinkers of the social for whom the critique of value is the necessary first step for any future politics. The essay proceeds in three sections. In the first, I compare Nietzsche's views on morality with Marx's theories of ideology, and consider how despite having different approaches to historical change, each understand value as measured initially by human flourishing and fundamental to social life. In the second, I explore how for both Nietzsche and Marx, slave morality and commodity function through a transformation of value and how both recognize this transformation as produced by a specific historical and political conjuncture. In the third section, I argue that this critique of ‘false’ value is itself a political gesture which shapes the respective political horizons of Nietzsche and Marx, with particular reference to Bataille's essay *Nietzsche in the Light of Marxism*.

The Rationality of Violence: Foucault's Alleged Irrationalism

Alessio Porino

IP

University of Salerno

Throughout his philosophical work, Michel Foucault never ceased to investigate what could be repressive, subjugating, and ultimately violent in rationality. This has made him the target of different charges of irrationalism. For instance, Habermas portrays Foucault's early work as a celebration of unreason as a limit-experience and an anti-enlightenment attack on a supposedly authoritarian reason. These kinds of criticisms move from an alleged opposition between rationality and violence, which has a long-standing tradition in Western philosophy and indeed portrays the former as an antidote to the latter. From this perspective, Foucault's work has been interpreted as an assault on rationality and its supposed role as a mediating and pacifying force, seemingly detached from the conflicts inherent within society. The charges of irrationality are also tied with another criticism often levelled at Foucault's thought, which denounces the lack of a normative foundation to distinguish what is politically desirable from what is not. Suggesting that rationality also possess a potential for violence seems to imply a certain blurring of the distinction between the two terms, even from a normative perspective – if violence can be rationalized, then it may also become potentially justifiable. The purpose of my presentation is to analyse the relationship that Foucault establishes between rationality and violence by demonstrating how this does not stem from a devaluation of rationality per se, but from a pluralistic conception of the forms of rationality, some of which may involve violent acts. I will start by delineating the relationship between violence and rationality throughout various stages of Foucault's work, spanning from *History of Madness* to his final years. This will illustrate how Foucault consciously establishes this relationship, even though sometimes not explicitly. I will then discuss the charges of irrationalism raised against him, investigating their theoretical assumptions. Subsequently, I will clarify the role that rationality retains within Foucauldian thought, focusing on the writings devoted to Kant and the definition of the *Aufklärung*. Finally, I will show that, despite the link made between violence and certain forms of rationality, this does not imply either a devaluation of reason or a normatively agnostic stance towards violence.

Value and violence: Turning to Sartre

Judith Norman & Alistair Welchman

IP

Trinity College & University of Texas San Antonio

Franz Fanon's description of decolonial violence has been a touchstone for many analyses of the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, although many people have rejected this framework as justifying or even celebrating violence. A less frequent point of reference has been Jean-Paul Sartre, whose famous introduction to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* explicitly addresses the white European readers of Fanon who are inclined to be shocked by Fanon's analysis. Sartre's analysis functions not so much to assuage the shock as to account for it; he is working at the intersection of epistemology and axiology, and shows how this shock is a function of what we would now call, after Charles Mills, white ignorance. In this paper we look at how Sartre provides a useful framework for understanding how many people in the US and British "metropole" have reacted to Palestinian violence. The interesting thing about white ignorance, in Sartre's analysis, is that it is not ignorance of facts or of a critical understanding. The citizens of the metropole might well be in possession of facts about the brutality of colonialism, and sympathetic with the aspirations of the colonized subjects. Rather, it is specifically ignorance of the knowledge specific to the epistemic position of the oppressed, which entails a distinctive sort of meaning-making and value-positing. That is, the metropole is a degraded position from which to understand the value of violence as a challenge to a hegemonic, legitimizing discourse. This is what Sartre is concerned to demonstrate. One way in which colonizers are in a poor epistemic position is that they are structurally located in a permanent subject position, objectifying or 'animalizing' (as Fanon says) the colonized. In a tacit critique of his own individualized account of the constitution of selfhood in the dialectic of the look of the other in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre here interprets the challenge Fanon's text lays before its colonial readership as an experience in 'discovering one's true self as an object.' Part of this discovery is that of one's complicity in the violence of colonialism itself, a realization that lays the basis for a decolonized understanding of violence in decolonial praxis. The insight here is not merely into the nature of violence, but the nature of praxis itself. Something that Sartre demonstrates is absent from the perspective of the metropole is the way in which theory and practice are not distinct (indeed, that this distinction is a function of colonial epistemologies). Borrowing from Leonard Harris, we will show how Sartre's analysis of Fanon points us to a perspective that sees how ideas matter, how theory can have a liberatory value.

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