UPJA Virtual Conference for Undergraduate Philosophy
18th-19th July 2020

Session 1: Saturday July 18th, 5:00-8:10pm AEST

Keynote Address

[1]	Hobbes on Power and Sexual Difference Assistant Professor Sandra Leonie Field, Yale-NUS College	5:00pm

Student Presentations

[2]	A Transcendental Argument for Induction Leon Guest, University of Aberdeen	6:10pm
[3]	Reconceptualising Confucian Freedom Ang Wei Xiang, Nanyang Technological University	6:50pm
[4]	The Ethics of Social Distancing: Negligence and Frustration Kyle van Oosterum, University of St Andrews	7:30pm

Session 2: Sunday July 19th, 11:00-3:00pm AEST

Student Presentations

[5]	The Fragmentation of Critical-level Utilitarianism Patrick Williamson, Australian National University	11:00am
[6]	Kierkegaard's Rational Passions: Emotion, Meaning, and Selfhood Brylea Hollinshead, University of Canterbury	11:50am
[7]	Drunk Bayesians (or How to Incorporate Higher-order Evidence) Jake Stone, University of Sydney	12:30pm
[8]	Making Space for Blindness: Vision, Touch and Molyneux's Problem in Kant's Theory of Experience Campbell Rider, University of Melbourne	1:20pm
[9]	Photography, Causality, and Realism Anita Pillai, Monash University	2:00pm

Q&A with UPJA Editorial Team

[10]	An opportunity to provide feedback and find out more about UPJA Kida Lin, Matthew Wiseman, Rory Collins, and Anita Pillai	2:40pm

Presenter Abstracts and Bios

[1] Assistant Professor Sandra Leonie Field, Yale-NUS College, "Hobbes on Power and Sexual Difference"

Saturday July 18th, 5:00-6:10pm AEST

Scholars and critics of modern patriarchy turn to Thomas Hobbes for an especially clear-eyed analysis of patriarchy. For Hobbes, even if we agree that all human authority must be established by contract, not by nature, this does not make authority deeply consensual. There is such thing as a contract of domination, and the conjugal contract between husband and wife is such a contract. Women's subordination within male-headed households may be a choice, but it is a choice which arises from and perpetuates the domination of men over women.

In my paper, I'll question the present-day value of the official Hobbesian analysis of patriarchy, in particular, its conception of power as 'domination'. Legal frameworks and cultural conceptions upholding male heads of household are in retreat in many contemporary jurisdictions, yet phenomena of sexual stratification continue to trouble us, in ways that elude the theoretical framework of domination and subjection.

I'll contrast power as 'domination' with Hobbes's second, alternative analysis of power: power as 'deference'. On the 'deference' model of power, it is not a question of total vertical subjection to a single master, but rather of strategic action to negotiate a complex and shifting landscape of potential allies, patrons, and detractors. Hobbes himself does not apply this analysis to sexual difference, but I will suggest some advantages to this approach to address our new political realities.

Assistant Professor Sandra Leonie Field is a political philosopher. Her research investigates conceptions of political power and their implications for democratic theory; she approaches these themes through engagement with texts in the history of philosophy, especially Hobbes and Spinoza. She is the author of Potentia: Hobbes and Spinoza on Power and Popular Politics *(Oxford University Press, 2020). More broadly, she teaches and is interested in political thought, theory, and philosophy, both historical and contemporary; moral philosophy, both Western and non-Western; and social theory. Asst Prof Field is a committed teacher; she strives to connect philosophy and theory to students' lived experiences. She completed her PhD in Politics at Princeton University in 2012, in the Program in Political Philosophy. She holds a Masters degree in Philosophy at the University of New South Wales (Australia), where she was also awarded a University Medal for her Honours research. Her undergraduate studies were in Mathematics and Philosophy at the University of Sydney.*

[2] Leon Guest, University of Aberdeen, "A Transcendental Argument for Induction"

Saturday July 18th, 6:10-6:50pm AEST

> The problem of induction is a philosophical problem regarding the possibility of inferring claims about what we have not observed, on the basis of what we have observed. In my talk, I will explain how David Hume argues that these inferences are ungrounded, because they all assume a principle of uniformity. He offers two possibilities of justifying the principle, but shows that neither option is satisfactory. Next, I will apply MacNamara's analysis of the use of induction in language, to demonstrate the necessity of induction in ascribing meaning to words, using a simple deductive argument as an example. From this analysis, I will explain how this leads to a transcendental argument for the possibility of inductive inferences. The argument will demonstrate that as induction is necessary for meaning in language, then the inductive sceptic will have to assume the validity of inductive inferences, in order to argue against the validity of inductive inferences. Finally, I will consider Stroud's objection to transcendental arguments and assess that even accepting the objection, the transcendental argument is still of significance for the sceptic.

Leon is about to go into his final year studying a major-minor in Physics and Philosophy at University of Aberdeen. His research interests include combining stochastic systems with the metaphysics of possibility, as well as Artificial Intelligence, and photonics. He is especially interested in the philosophy of science and the philosophy of religion. His most recent paper proposes a transcendental argument as a response to the problem of induction, drawing on insights from the philosophy of language. After graduating, he intends to pursue a career in physics, either in the space industry or data science.

[3] Ang Wei Xiang, Nanyang Technological University, "Reconceptualising Confucian Freedom"

Saturday July 18th, 6:50-7:30pm AEST

> In Confucian scholar Li Chenyang's *The Confucian Conception of Freedom*, he conceptualised a theory of freedom that relates an individual's decision-making and self-cultivation processes with the processes of socialisation the individual goes through. His motivation behind this article is to purport a political philosophy that allows individuals in a particular society to realise the good. In his article, he argued that Confucian freedom is a form of actualised freedom whereby individuals 'choose the good'. In this essay, I will discuss several short-comings of such a conception and attempt to shift the focus from 'choosing the good' to 'choosing' itself. I will point out that

conceptualising actualised freedom as 'choosing the good' will have queer implications. Subsequently, I will argue that actualised freedom does not merely consist of an individual's choosing of the good but also his consciousness of his choosing. Such a consciousness, as I will argue, cannot be acquired without self-cultivation and meaningful socialisation. I draw passages from Mengzi and Xunzi to formulate a supplementary account to Li's conception of freedom. In doing so, I preserve the role of socialisation and cultivation in conceptualising Confucian freedom.

Wei Xiang is a third-year philosophy undergraduate studying at Nanyang Technological University. His interests are in ethics and existentialist philosophy. He has recently completed a research on Kierkegaardian faith, attempting to reconceptualise the 'leap of faith' with MacIntyre's theory of virtue ethics. He is still surveying his interests and wish to keep his options open at the moment.

[4] Kyle van Oosterum, University of St Andrews, "The Ethics of Social Distancing: Negligence and Frustration"

Saturday July 18th, 7:30-8:10pm AEST

Social distancing is one of a family of public health interventions implemented in communities before the more robust measures of antivirals and vaccinations can be created and distributed. Ethical questions about social distancing belong to the field of public health ethics in which philosophers and public health professionals discuss the problems with these measures, and which conditions may justify their implementation. I discuss two interesting ethical questions regarding the imposition of widespread lockdown and social distancing measures inspired by events from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

First, I argue that governmental negligence during the management of a pandemic may challenge the legitimacy of the measures it imposes. Second, I argue that certain forms of civil disobedience may be justified during a pandemic. Both of these arguments raise questions about what moral obligations fall upon both citizens and governmental agents during a pandemic. I address these obligations by prescribing and justifying a set of moral duties that arise in a fairly intuitive way. Finally, I consider and respond to concerns about the ethical questions I have discussed and I conclude with a nod to where further research could be conducted.

Kyle will soon be commencing his Masters in Philosophy at the University of Cambridge after having obtained an MA in Philosophy from the University of St Andrews in 2020. His research is broadly within moral and political philosophy with a specific interest in questions around the legitimacy of democracy, the ethics of climate change, social epistemology and moral normativity. Following the completion of his masters program, he plans on pursuing a PhD in philosophy in the US or UK.

[5] Patrick Williamson, Australian National University, "The Fragmentation of Critical-Level Utilitarianism"

Sunday July 19th, 11:10-11:50am AEST

> In welfarist population axiology we wish to rank different possible populations along the better than / equal to relation. One prominent axiology, critical-level utilitarianism, says that individual lives must fall above a specified 'critical level' in order to make a positive contribution to the comparative status of a given population. In this talk I develop a new dilemma for critical-level utilitarianism. I argue that critical-level utilitarians must fragment the critical level when evaluating between multi-species populations, in other words, that critical-level utilitarians must assign different critical levels for different populations composed of different species. But I also argue that such a move opens the door to certain axiological puzzles and objections as yet undiscussed within the literature. In light of these puzzles and objections I conclude that critical-level utilitarianism should not be taken as a morally plausible welfarist axiology.

Patrick is a jack of many philosophical trades at the cost of being bamboozled by all. He recently graduated from Philosophy Honours at the Australian National University, where his thesis explored population axiology in light of non-human animal populations. He's keen to do a PhD before too much longer, and first got interested in philosophy after reading "God and Time" in late high school. He drinks two coffees a day, listens to fantasy audiobooks, and climbs rocks at his friend Rory's house. He's slowly working his way through a Spotify playlist called '1000 Best Songs of Countdown 1974-1987', because otherwise he'll just listen to the same two 90s bands on repeat all year round.

[6] Brylea Hollinshead, University of Canterbury, "Kierkegaard's Rational Passions: Emotion, Meaning, and Selfhood"

Sunday July 19th, 11:50am-12:30pm AEST

> Passions (emotions) play a central role in Kierkegaard's work. He is often interpreted as advocating for passion over reason and regarding emotions as feelings which lack cognition. I argue that Kierkegaard's view should in fact be read as a cognitive theory of emotion—emotions involve evaluative judgements and beliefs which can be rational, and might also be seen as perceptions of personally-significant value.
>   Interpreted this way, Kierkegaard holds "sharpened" emotion as crucial for a meaningful life. However, he does not blindly advocate for all passions, but recognises emotion can be distorted in two ways: (1) by becoming irrational (involving false beliefs about value), and (2) by becoming

sentimental (abstracted away from value altogether). I propose that the characters of the aesthete "A" and the ethical Judge William in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* present a contrast between such "distorted" and "sharpened" emotion. I will show how "A"'s emotions exemplify irrational and sentimental distortion, and why Kierkegaard considers this emotional orientation to lack depth and meaning. I will then show that Judge William, by contrast, should be viewed as an example of sharpened (or rational and authentic) passion, and why this emotional orientation leads to a life of greater meaning and fulfilment.

Brylea is a final year undergraduate at the University of Canterbury majoring in philosophy and classics, and minoring in art history. Her main area of interest is ethics, particularly in relation to ancient philosophy, philosophy of emotion, and existentialism. In her most recent research, she draws on insights from ancient Greek, continental, and analytic traditions to advance an account of our emotions as rational phenomena which are crucial for living ethical and meaningful lives. She plans to continue her studies and undertake a MA in philosophy in the UK.

[7] Jake Stone, University of Sydney, "Drunk Bayesians (or How to Incorporate Higher-order Evidence)"

Sunday July 19th, 12:30-1:10pm AEST

First-order evidence is evidence which has a direct relationship to some hypothesis. Whereas, higher-order evidence relates to the nature of one's first-order evidence or one's ability to perceive and interpret that evidence correctly. For example, when checking the temperature first-order evidence could include your perception of the mercury in a thermometer. While higher-order evidence could include such things as learning that you had unknowingly been drugged. The distinction between these two types of evidence is important as higher-order evidence appears to prevent an agent from giving first-order evidence its full due; if I was drunk when I read the thermometer is it permissible to rely on my perceptions of the temperature? The aim of this presentation is to resolve this apparent tension by developing a Bayesian model of rational inference which can accommodate both higher-order and first-order evidence.

In 2018 Jake completed an Honours degree in philosophy with the Australian National University and is currently a master's student studying machine learning with the University of Sydney. Jake's work focuses on decision making, epistemology, and how formal philosophy can help improve artificial intelligence.

[8] Campbell Rider, University of Melbourne, "Making Space for Blindness: Vision, Touch and Molyneux's Problem in Kant's Theory of Experience"

Sunday July 19th, 1:20-2:00pm AEST

Spatiality is central to Kant's theory of cognition, but he never addressed the experience of congenitally blind individuals. In this paper I develop a reading of Kant's theoretical philosophy that is able to explain the different spatial experience of blind persons. In so doing, I aim to demonstrate that Kant's philosophy is not irredeemably "ocularcentric" — predominantly concerned with visual perception and therefore exclusionary of those who encounter the world through other sense modalities. To do this, I advance the view that auditory and tactile perceptions exemplify the primarily qualitative and temporal basis of non-visual experience. I explain how Kant's philosophy may have dealt with blind individuals' understanding of objective spatial co-existence, distancing him from the view that blind tactile experience is purely successive. Finally I address the role of bodily movement in tactile perception, noting an important continuity between Kant and Gareth Evans. I then consider how Kant may have answered Molyneux's problem: would a congenitally blind person, after having their eyesight restored, recognise visually what they had until then only known through touch?

Campbell is currently completing his honours thesis at the University of Melbourne. He is interested in uncovering the contemporary relevance of enlightenment philosophy, while at the same time exploring its historical influence on the development of current attitudes towards knowledge, perception, and metaphysics. At the moment he is studying embodied cognition and non-visual sense modalities in order to conceptualise alternatives to the optical paradigm of perceptual experience. He plans to pursue graduate studies in the history of philosophy.

[9] Anita Pillai, Monash University, "Photography, Causality, and Realism"

Sunday July 19th, 2:00-2:40pm AEST

We are familiar with the observation that photographs depict realistically. In this talk, I consider this claim and address the role of causality in photography by (i) outlining and rejecting two accounts of photographic realism known as Transparency and Likeness and by (ii) outlining and defending a new account of photographic realism known as Causal Matching. I propose that while Transparency and Likeness fail to be defensible forms of realism, Causal Matching is a plausible and defensible account. This account proposes that photographs are realistic insofar as their properties "align" or "match" the properties of the scenes they depict. I suggest that this conception of realism provides an answer to the question of what it is that

makes photographs realistic. This talk concludes that further investigation into the implications of Causal Matching is a worthwhile project.

Anita is an Associate Editor at UPJA, and will soon be commencing her Masters in philosophy at Monash University after having completed her honours in 2019. Her current research begins to outline a new model for a timeless God using a background framework of special relativity and atemporal accounts of causality. Her more recent paper outlines a novel account of photographic realism grounded in the causal alignments between photographic properties and those of the scene photographed. She plans on undertaking a PhD in philosophy in the US while continuing her work as a freelance portrait artist.