

## **UPJA Virtual Conference for Undergraduate Philosophy Program 2023**

**Day 1: Saturday June 24th, 10am - 12:30 PM AEST (UTC+10)**

### **Saturday Keynote**

**[10:00 - 10:50]** 'Aristotelian Objections to the Centrality of Work, and a Rejoinder'

Jean-Philippe Deranty, Macquarie University

### **Student Presentations**

**[11:00 - 11:30]** 'Transracial Adoptees, Hermeneutic Injustice, and Coalitional Politics'

Beau Kent, University of Melbourne

**[11:30 - 12:00]** 'The Status of Lesbian Womanhood: A Critique of Monique Wittig'

Ruby Allen, University of Queensland

**[12:00 - 12:30]** 'On Honesty: Nietzsche's Free Spirits in the Service of Higher Values'

Leonardo Salvatore, Soka University of America

**Day 2: Sunday June 25th, 4:00 - 6:00 PM AEST (UTC+10)**

### **Sunday Keynote**

**[4:00 - 4:50]** 'Feminist Bioethics in Practice: the Ethics of Organ Donation and Transplantation'

Wendy Rogers, Macquarie University

### **Student Presentations**

**[5 - 5:30]** 'Pre-Reflective Self-Identity For Those Suffering from Severe Cognitive Loss'

Phoebe Elridge-Smith, University of Wollongong

**[5:00 - 6:00]** 'Leviathan Republic: Revealing the Logical Constraints of Social Contract Theory'

Evelyn Richards, University of Sydney

### **Keynote Presenters' Abstracts and Bios**

**[Saturday Keynote]** Jean-Philippe Deranty, Macquarie University  
Saturday June 24th, 10:00 - 10:50 am AEST (UTC+10)

**Title:** 'Aristotelian Objections to the Centrality of Work, and a Rejoinder'

**Abstract:** Contemporary objections to the centrality of work can draw on a number of intellectual traditions: for instance, the historical sociology of the modern work ethic inspired by Max Weber, or critical accounts of alienation and reification based on Marx's concept of abstract labour. One particularly influential reference point for critics of the centrality of work is Aristotle's distinction between two kinds of intentional action: intrinsically valuable action (praxis) versus instrumentally valuable action (poiesis). The presentation has three parts. First, we look at the normative translation of the distinction, and how it leads to a demotion of work. Second, we briefly consider the main modern authors who have used this distinction and its normative implications to ground their own critical accounts of modernity. In the third part, we present a rejoinder to these Aristotelian objections to the centrality of work. We highlight the conceptual instability of the dichotomy and how poiesis can in fact be construed as the basis for individual self-realisation and collective freedom.



*Jean-Philippe Deranty is a professor at Macquarie University in the Department of Philosophy. His writings mainly concern the issues of recognition and work, and the philosophy of Hegel, Axel Honneth, and Jacques Rancière. Recent publications include: 'Negativity in Recognition: Post-Freudian Legacies in Contemporary Critical Theory' (in Recognition and Ambivalence, eds. Heikki Ikäheimo, Kristina Lepold, and Titus Stahl, Columbia University Press, 2021); 'Post-Work Society as an Oxymoron: Why We Cannot and, Should Not, Wish Work Away' (European Journal of Social Theory, August 2022); and 'Democratize Work: The Case for*

*Reorganizing the Economy* (Constellations, May 2023). He also has a book forthcoming with Oxford University Press: *The Case for Work*.

**[Sunday Keynote]** Wendy Rogers, Macquarie University  
Sunday June 25th, 4:00 - 4:50 PM AEST (UTC+10)

**Title:** 'Feminist Bioethics in Practice: the Ethics of Organ Donation and Transplantation'

**Abstract:** Feminist bioethics has its roots in the belief that both the focus of traditional bioethics, and its very concepts, are problematically gendered. Traditional bioethical analysis has tended to focus on the rights and interests of the abstract and disembodied individual in isolation from society and history, while offering purportedly universal rules for generic and substitutable people. The end result is the covert gendering of the bioethical subject as a white, able-bodied, heterosexual, privileged male, with subsequent erasure of salient differences, including of gender, that are linked to injustice and oppression.

In response, feminist bioethics has developed influential accounts of relational autonomy, care, dependency, and vulnerability, and adopted pluralist methodological approaches that attend to people's lived experiences. By paying attention to power dynamics, epistemic biases, and the particularities of exclusion and marginalisation, feminist perspectives offer distinctive tools for analysing social injustices. In this paper, I will use the example of organ donation and transplantation to illustrate the strengths that feminist bioethical analysis can bring to bioethical issues.



*Wendy Rogers is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Macquarie University as well as Co-Director of the Macquarie University Ethics and Agency Centre. She works in the field of practical bioethics and is particularly concerned with feminist approaches, drawing on her medical as well as her philosophical training. She recently co-edited *The Routledge Handbook to Feminist Bioethics* (2023) and co-authored 'Medical AI and Human Dignity: Contrasting Perceptions of Human and Artificially Intelligent (AI) Decision Making in Diagnostic and Medical Resource Allocation Contexts' (Computers in Human Behavior, 2022).*

## **Student Presenters' Abstracts**

Beau Kent, University of Melbourne

Saturday June 24th, 11:00 AM AEST (UTC+10)

### **'Transracial Adoptees, Hermeneutic Injustice, and Coalitional Politics'**

Positioned at the intersection of a non-white cultural/ethnic identity and white enculturation, transracial adoptees in Western countries occupy a social location which resists neat categorisation. That is to say, transracial adoptees do not neatly fit into the social categories designated either by their racial and/or ethnic identity or (typically) that of their adopted family, and often fall between the cracks. I argue that this in-betweenness reveals a lacuna in conceptual and hermeneutical resources. The first main task of this paper is to argue that we do not have the relevant resources to adequately articulate our experiences, which thereby also constitutes a hermeneutical injustice. I then provide a potential method for concept generation using Mariana Ortega's notion of 'hometactics' to argue that one way forward may be to engage in a practical 'making-do' rather than try to create more theoretically rigorous and abstract concepts. Following on from this I offer some considerations about the possibility of doing coalitional politics, in a way that hopefully avoids epistemic appropriation.

Ruby Allen, University of Queensland

Saturday June 24th, 11:30 AM AEST (UTC+10)

### **'The Status of Lesbian Womanhood: A Critique of Monique Wittig'**

This presentation reconstructs and critiques Monique Wittig's famous argument that "Lesbians are not women." Wittig claims that because lesbians do not fulfil the roles ascribed to women by heterosexual society (i.e., forming romantic and sexual relationships with men), they do not fall under the category of 'woman'. My main critiques of Wittig's argument are that her theory is substantiated by her cisgendered, white subject position, which negatively implicates her theoretical position by neglecting intersectionality and homogenising lesbians as a sexual group. Furthermore, Wittig's lesbian identity relies on the construction of 'woman', which seemingly defeats her goal of abolishing gender difference. Finally, lesbians in community with other lesbians may perceive themselves to be non-women, but, ultimately, will always be subject to the dominant male gaze, and will thus be subject to social relationships with men regardless of their consent status. Ultimately, in some contexts, some lesbians may be considered not-women; however, the characteristic of being a lesbian is not sufficient for this end.

Leonardo Salvatore, Soka University of America  
Saturday June 24th, 12:00 PM AEST (UTC+10)

### **'On Honesty: Nietzsche's Free Spirits in the Service of Higher Values'**

In a series of influential papers, Nadeem Hussain outlines a reading of Nietzsche as a "revolutionary fictionalist." According to Hussain, Nietzsche predicates his injunctions for the "free spirits" on a metaethical error theory, which rejects attitude-independent moral properties and holds that moral judgments are all systematically false. In this paper, I examine two critical issues in Hussain's fictionalist interpretation. I first argue that the fictionalist reading stems from inconclusive textual evidence and is thus uncharitable. I then argue that it fails to account for Nietzsche's view of honesty as an uncompromising value. From this latter point, I argue for an alternative interpretation; namely, that Nietzschean fiction-making is useful only insofar as it serves "higher," fixed, real values. I finally highlight two shortcomings of my arguments and offer several queries for further examination.

Phoebe Elridge-Smith, University of Wollongong  
Sunday June 25th, 5:00 PM AEST (UTC+10)

### **'Pre-Reflective Self-Identity For Those Suffering from Severe Cognitive Loss'**

I argue that some philosophers following the tradition of Locke and Descartes have overly cognitivist theories of the self. I critique this approach to selfhood as I find it is not inclusive of those suffering from severe cognitive deficits. I argue instead that approaches to the self should be inclusive of those with diminished cognitive capacities as they remain 'selves', though perhaps the nature of their 'self' has changed. As such, I propose embodied personhood is a more inclusive definition of selfhood than those cognitivist theories that I consider.

Evelyn Richards, University of Sydney  
Sunday June 25th, 5:30 PM AEST (UTC+10)

### **'Leviathan Republic: Revealing the Logical Constraints of Social Contract Theory'**

Social contract theory (SCT) holds that the legitimacy of government stems from the multitude consenting to particular social and political arrangements. Most scholars understand classical social contract theorists Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau as proponents of distinctive regime types; authoritarianism and democracy, respectively. I, however, investigate whether the overarching framework of SCT could constrain accounts of government legitimation and dissolution. I argue that there are three essential structural elements that restrict any SCT account: 1) the state of nature prevents cooperation; 2) the social contract enables cooperation by legitimising government; and 3) collapse of government qua return to the state of nature occurs automatically. I compare Hobbes's

Leviathan and Rousseau's Two Discourses and The Social Contract to explain these logical constraints. I find the authors present structurally equivalent theories, whereby government is both formed and dissolved under the same conditions, thereby challenging conventional understanding of the accounts as substantially distinct.