PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
CLASS DAY RECEPTION
CLASS OF 2018

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018

2:30PM

CLASS OF 1879 HALL COURTYARD

Opening Statement

John Burgess
John N. Woodhull Professor of Philosophy
Princeton, University
Departmental Representative

Announcement of Honors

Presentation of Prizes

Tomb Prize

Dickinson Prize

John Martyn Warbeke 1903
Prize in Aesthetics

John Martyn Warbeke 1903
Prize in Metaphysics and Epistemology

Class of 1869 Prize in Ethics

Alexander Guthrie McCosh Prize

Presentation of Books

Refreshments

Christopher Cross

Brian Manson Degen

Zane Friedkin

Fiona Katherine Furnari

Mina Henaen

Edmond Kim

Jaewon Kim

Trent Matthias Kowalik

Matthew Aaron Kritz

J David Lind

Alice Scott Longenbach

Layla Zeitoune Malamut

Robert Roy Marshall

Kekoa Alfred Morris

Lukas Frederick Novak

Garrett Hasten O'Toole

Folasade Eula Runcie

Elon Isaac Schmidt-Swartz

Eric Andrew Schulz

Eric Llewellyn Sease

Jay Steven Sourbeer

Charlie Benjamin Spira

Masako Toyoda

Theodore Nelson Waldron

Noga Zaborowski

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Sarah-Jane Leslie
Hendrik Lorenz
Benjamin C.A. Morison
Alexander Nehamas, *also with*
Comparative Literature
Gideon A. Rosen
Michael A. Smith

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Desmond Hogan
Boris C. Kment
Sarah McGrath

Assistant Professor
Johann D. Frick, *also with*
University Center for Human Values
Harvey Lederman

Christopher Cross

This thesis takes a critical look at eliminative materialism. Eliminative materialists argue that folk psychology (understood as an ontology of mental states, intentions, beliefs, desires, etc.) is flawed beyond repair and should be replaced by a future neuroscience. Contemporary eliminativism is deeply connected with issues of theory reduction because eliminativists construe the (alleged) irreducibility of folk psychology to neuroscience as evidence of the falsity of the former. First, I investigate the development of the model of intertheoretical reduction utilized by contemporary eliminativists and argue that it does not adequately support the elimination of folk psychology. Second, I explore the flip-side of reduction: emergence. I argue that a framework of weakly emergent macroscopic properties can secure folk psychology from elimination. I go on to argue that weak emergentism is consistent with levels of analysis, an indispensable aspect of theory in cognitive science, and I give historical precedent for this claim in the form of the systematicity challenge.

Brian Manson Degen

Recent philosophical work on phenomenal overflow (i.e. conscious experience is greater than, or *overflows*, what we can report) has seized upon George Sperling's 1960 partial report paradigm. Scholars on both sides of the overflow debate acknowledge the important role of attention in Sperling's experiment. While most have an intuitive grasp of what attention is, a precise definition is lacking. This thesis attempts to develop and defend a new conceptual framework of attention referred to as the Identification Claim: attending to some object O can be identified with representing O in a higher-order thought. I then connect recent works in psychology and neuroscience related to attention to the Identification Claim, and use these empirical findings to argue *against* the notion of phenomenal overflow.

SENIOR THESIS ABSTRACTS

Zane Friedkin

I survey the territory of the vagueness problem before introducing a new approach from Fine ([2008], [2015], forthcoming). On that approach, borderlineness is not the central notion, contra the established view. A predicate's having borderline cases is not sufficient for its being vague. A predicate's having borderline borderline cases, or borderline borderline borderline cases, or borderline∞ cases is not sufficient for its being vague. A predicate's vagueness is not a local but a global property that it bears with respect to an application space, not points. Borderline cases happen under suitable constraints. There is no need to deny bivalence or introduce a strong truth predicate.

Fiona Katherine Furnari

This thesis is about the role history plays in our fundamental epistemic norms. After dismissing arguments against time-slice views of epistemic justification and rationality, I argue that the best theory of history's role in epistemology allows history no fundamental place in rationality. I conclude the thesis by emphasizing the importance of non-rational, diachronic epistemic norms for our epistemic evaluations.

Mina Henaen

Pascal's wager leads the reader to want to believe in God, and to consequently, believe and become convinced of this by the diminishing of the passions. Analysis of pre-wager, during-wager, and post-wager considerations by considering the potential of deception from Descartes' deceiving demon provides insights into a philosophical framework by which one can decide to believe in something based on expected rewards rather than solely based on its likelihood of being true. This framework, in addition to other philosophical theories concerning belief formation and modification, are then used to discuss the Vaccine-Autism controversy, one that scientists have unanimously taken a position in. While many parents seem

deluded in rejecting a theory defended by science, applying these philosophical insights provide an explanation by which these parents can reasonably continue to believe in a link between autism and vaccines.

Edmond Kim

The "hard problem" of consciousness poses the question of how conscious experience is able to arise. According to physicalism, the world is made up only of fundamentally physical particles, and conscious experience arises from these particles. Panpsychism is one competing theory, which suggests that fundamental particles are both mental and physical. Panprotopsychism is a similar theory, but instead of suggesting fundamental mentality, it suggests there are hidden protophenomenal properties that can manifest as mentality. Panpsychists and panprotopsychists argue that they are better equipped than physicalists in dealing with certain obstacles for those seeking to solve the "hard problem." One such obstacle this thesis looks at is the conceivability argument regarding zombies. Zombies are beings identical to conscious organisms in certain respects, but they lack conscious experience nonetheless. Their conceivability is a problem for various theories of consciousness. Aided by the work of Phillip Goff, I will show that any panpsychist response to the conceivability argument is better recast as a panprotopsychist argument. From there, I will argue that panprotopsychism is not actually distinct from physicalism, and therefore physicalism is true. I will ultimately be arguing on behalf of physicalism by first presenting panpsychist arguments and then showing how those arguments can lead back to physicalism.

Jaewon Kim

Many have attempted to explain the connection between our moral judgments and their corresponding moral motivations. Motivational judgment externalists are convinced that such a connection must be a contingent one, because they believe there exist in the world "amoralists" who make moral judgments but are not at all motivated by them. In this thesis, I explore one of

the most threatening objections to this argument of amoralism, the argument of moral fetishism from Michael Smith. This argument accuses the externalist of explaining the reliability of our moral motivations through a moral "fetish", which cannot be the proper explanation of the good and virtuous person. I first examine the existing objections to Smith's argument, and find that they are ultimately unsuccessful. I therefore present my own solution to the problem that Smith poses, by taking the charge of moral fetishism head-on and explaining why moral fetishism is not as big of a problem as Smith believes. I ultimately conclude that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the picture of fetishism, and that we should embrace the conception of the virtuous agent as a fetishist.

Trent Matthias Kowalik
Lara Buchak's risk weighed expected utility (REU) theory is sensitive to the global structure of bets, which includes features such as the probability distribution of states and the spread of values over possible outcomes of a decision. An assessment of how REU handles diachronic decisions shows what I argue to be two main issues. Firstly, REU maximizers may willingly put themselves into positions that will make them worse off. Secondly, the REU value of a decision that occurs at a certain time period cannot be understood independently of any decisions that occur after it. I argue that both issues result from a lack of distinguishing mathematical possibilities from possibilities that are *physically* permissible in time, and that REU maximizers should use information about the way a randomizing device affects the the way the world unfolds to make decisions. With this in mind, I give a rough suggestion of an alternative way of calculating utility that avoids these objections but maintains some of the intuition behind REU. It assumes that the value of a given spatio-temporal location in a bet is constrained by the possibilities that such a location would entail, and uses such values to understand the value of diachronic bets.

Matthew Aaron Kritz

This thesis examines the thought of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, focusing on his essay from the late 1950s entitled "A Theory of Emotions." The essay presents an account of the epistemology of feeling, in an attempt to uncover the moral function of the emotions. The thesis, in addition to elucidating and contextualizing this fascinating and under-studied philosophical work, posits a few key interpretive claims. First, Soloveitchik offers at least two, if not more, distinct accounts of the emotions and their moral function over the course of the essay which seem to stand in contradistinction with one another, highlighting the ways in which his work engages in conversation with multiple schools of thought concurrently. Second, the essay demonstrates the influence of Max Scheler on Soloveitchik's thinking, particularly with regards to the role emotions play in discovering values and the role appreciating one's existence within time plays in deciphering and shaping one's identity, which Soloveitchik takes to have moral import as the basis for the discovery of the other and the development of sympathy.

J David Lind

One prominent debate within the philosophy of psychiatry is whether addiction is better conceptualized as a choice or as a disease. In response to Marc Lewis' recent argument in favor of the choice model of addiction, Jerome Wakefield contends that addiction still qualifies as a disease according to his hybrid concept of "harmful dysfunction", which appeals to both normative and non-normative criteria. I argue, however, that Wakefield's analysis actually gives us no reason to think that addiction is a disease. After summarizing his analysis, I identify and expand on the central failings of the non-normative criterion of Wakefield's concept in order to undermine his appeal to "dysfunction". I then critique the remaining normative criterion of "harm" before presenting what I believe to be a more compelling criterion for treatment, namely, the loss of control. I conclude by considering how the failure of Wakefield's argument supports Lewis' notion of addiction as a non-pathological outcome of normal learning processes.

SENIOR THESIS ABSTRACTS

Alice Scott Longenbach

It is a popular theory that there is an inherent moral distinction between acts of killing and acts of letting someone die: it is often worse to kill someone than it is to let them die under otherwise similar circumstances. I argue that in some cases, an abortion is an act of letting a fetus die; in others, it is an act of killing. Given the assumption that there is a general moral distinction between killing and letting die, I attempt to show that abortion is a special case; thus, abortions that kill a fetus are not morally worse than abortions that let a fetus die, and that both are permissible.

Layla Zeitoune Malamut

Proponents of an inferentialist theory of self-knowledge argue that the competing agentialist account can only be a successful epistemological theory if it appeals to the very inferentialist explanation it wants to resist. Contrary to this claim, I argue that there is a way for the agentialist to successfully explain the epistemology of self-knowledge without having to appeal to any processes of inference. This epistemology of self-knowledge is grounded in our capacity to make normative commitments to certain propositions or act-types, and to know that we have made these normative commitments in a way that is both non-observational and non-inferential.

Robert Roy Marshall

As metaethical expressivists have adopted deflationary understandings of certain semantic and metaphysical concepts their views have become increasingly difficult to distinguish from archetypal forms of realism. In my thesis, I argue that the archetypal realist should find this convergence constructive. It points the way towards a plausible defense to a class of explanatory objections archetypal realists must meet, viz. those from inference to the best explanation and from the evident lack of a reliable correlation between normative judgments and normative truths.

Kekoa Alfred Morris
Aristotle asserts that change is a real feature of the world, defined as "the actuality of that which exists potentially, insofar as it is potentially this actuality", and in order to render change intelligible, an unmoved mover must exist to guarantee the eternity of change. This argument, like other cosmological arguments from deduction, relies on the strength of its starting premises to deduce the existence of a non-contingent, necessary being. The most fundamental premise for Aristotle, which he appeals to as the ultimate arbiter in his proof, is the intelligibility of the world. Insofar as his proof is rigorous in the mathematical sense, the consequences of his deduction can merely restate the starting postulates in a new form, therefore any divine features belonging to the unmoved mover speak more to the spiritual nature of a belief in the order of nature.

Lukas Frederick Novak
Arguments that proceed from moral premises to ontological conclusions are rare and worth studying. Mark Johnston makes a family of arguments of this kind across three papers: "The Personite Problem;" "Personites, Maximality, and Ontological trash;" and "Is Hope for Another Life Rational?" He argues that, on the basis of consequent moral complications, persons cannot be considered as a certain class of things. In this thesis I collect Johnston's arguments into a coherent framework, and assess that framework's strengths and weaknesses as a vehicle to knowledge about what persons are.

Garrett Hasten O'Toole
Modern physics seems to tell us that our universe contains certain fundamental constants—constants whose values are uniquely suited to allowing life to exist. Many philosophers argue from this information that there exists either a life-desiring designer of the universe or a multiverse. Why, however, do we assume that the life-permitting attributes of the universe's constants require a response? This thesis explores what would

make it such that this fine-tuning phenomenon requires further explanation. I analyze three potential reasons why further explanation may be required: the Grouping-Universes Argument, Van Inwagen's Principle, and the Carlson and Olsson Method. I find that each of these potential reasons rests on the assumption that a designer would want to create life—an assumption that can usually be argued against. Therefore, I suggest that one can escape the conclusion of most fine-tuning arguments by arguing that the existence of humanity, though unlikely, is unsurprising and thus requires no further explanation.

Folasade Eula Runcie
Race has been, and continues to be, an integral part of American history. It is important in how we identify and understand ourselves. Furthermore, racial classifications are important in how interact with others and how they interact with us. In this thesis, I seek to understand what exactly racial identity is by examining it from a biological, social, and ethical point of view. I discover that race is both a social and ethical identity which is important in our self-conception. Additionally, I argue that in a world with racial equality, race will remain an important ethical identity, especially for African Americans, as it provides information about one's ancestral history.

Elon Isaac Schmidt-Swartz
Kantian modernity is a worldview of which the power of reason is a central component, an overarching ideology in which reason is the vehicle of moral progress. In the aftermath of the violence wrought by the two World Wars, German thinkers begin to challenge Kantian modernity—they view their time, not as the culmination of the age of reason, but as an era of estrangement. In this thesis, I show that Yeshayahu Leibowitz, a German-born Israeli thinker in the mid-twentieth century, both challenges Kantian modernity and remains indebted to Kant's ethical-religious framework.

    Leibowitz claims that his view of Judaism is an alternative to the views of Hermann Cohen, a Jewish proponent of Kantian

modernity in late nineteenth century Germany. I demonstrate that Leibowitz is more similar to Cohen than he recognizes. I demonstrate that, while Cohen accepts the Kantian practical philosophy on which he finds an academy, he also urges his readers to look beyond the paradigm established by Kant, that, with World War One on the horizon, he pivots away from the totalizing effects of Kant's ethical-religious framework and towards religion, hoping to discover the individual amidst plurality. I look to Kant's writings to demonstrate that Leibowitz also borrows from Kant's practical philosophy as he formulates a religious existentialism.

In all, I show that, like Cohen in the decades before him, Leibowitz views religion as a way of rescuing the individual in an era of estrangement.

Eric Andrew Schulz

Moral rationalism is the belief that if an action is morally right, then all agents have reason to perform that action. I investigate the possibility of rejecting moral rationalism and remaining a moral realist. Following Railton, I note that in order to count as a revision rather than an elimination of the concept moral rightness, an anti-rationalist view of moral rightness must be able to provide an account of its central normative features. Accordingly, I trace the central normativity of moral rightness, as well as the existence of widespread moral motivation, to the existence of "selfless desires." I define a self-desire as an intrinsic desires that the interests of one or more person are served.

Eric Llewellyn Sease

Nietzsche and Zen Buddhism are two approaches which have often been taken to be quite opposed. In one area, their view on the self, however, their views are surprisingly quite alike. On a close reading, both deny the "self" in much the same way, though they use different language. Rather than merely challenge intuitions at a philosophical level, both approaches aim at influencing their audiences' lives intimately, and propose certain ideals one could aspire to. However, there is a tension between

their denial of a causally autonomous self and the voluntary pursuit of such an ideal.

The first two sections analyze Nietzsche and Zen's ontological view on what kind of self we fundamentally have; the third section aims to show parallels between their normative, achievement-oriented philosophies.

Jay Steven Sourbeer

In this thesis, I will argue that considerations of risk exposure do not lexically outweigh considerations of fairness, rights, and solidarity in certain scenarios found in warfare. These scenarios require actors to make decisions in states of either incomplete or extremely detailed knowledge about the consequences of their actions. I will first address the impact of the advent of drones on battlefield decision-making, and I will offer a case from the 2015 film "Eye in the Sky" to illustrate the importance of distributing epistemic risk in decisions having an impact on statistical vs. identified lives. Then, I will offer a historical case from World War II to argue that rights considerations can and do outweigh considerations of minimizing casualties. Finally, I will address the curious case of "No Man Left Behind" rules in the military using a historical case from the Global War on Terror, and explore whether justifying reasons for our intuitions in these cases exist. I will conclude in each case that we do in fact have justifying reasons for taking into account considerations other than straightforward calculations of risk and expected casualties.

Charlie Benjamin Spira

We tend to think of the laws of nature (e.g. the speed of light and gravitational force) as metaphysically contingent. That is, we think that the laws of nature could have been otherwise. In this thesis, I ask whether the laws of morality resemble the laws of nature in exactly this respect. Are the laws of morality metaphysically contingent? Could they have been otherwise? I apply Marc Lange's theory of natural necessity to Gideon Rosen's theory of normative necessity to see if the two are at all compatible.

Masako Toyoda
Possibly the most infamous thesis of the *Republic* is presented near the end of book v. Socrates claims that philosophers must rule for the establishment of a just city (473c11-e1). His preliminary book v argument for this claim (before we get the full thrust for the claim in books vi and vii) establishes that this is because philosophers have ἐπιστήμη while non-philosophers are limited to δόξα. Socrates there presents ἐπιστήμη as set over things in the intelligible realm and δόξα as set over things in the sensible realm. Straightforwardly, this argument is objects-oriented in the sense of there being clearly demarcated objects corresponding to each cognitive power.(There have been valiant attempts to read this argument in a different way. Gail Fine's seminal paper "Knowledge and Belief in Republic V" (1990) attempts to do this, but fails for reasons many reasons outside the scope of this thesis.) The cave allegory in book vii also appears to be objects-oriented in this sense. The line analogy is traditionally read as objects-oriented as well. Since the sun, line, and cave are all part of Socrates' support for the book v argument, it is unsurprising that many have thought the line to be objects-oriented in the same sense as the book v argument and also for it to be the case. I argue that the line analogy is *not* objects-oriented in the same sense. I provide a positive interpretation of the line in which each section corresponds to cognitive processes of a certain kind, most critically relying on Socrates' description of the third and fourth sections of the line from 510b4 to 511e3. I show that my interpretation of the line resolves many persisting difficulties in the literature for the objects-oriented view of Socrates' overall argument for the book v claim.

Theodore Nelson Waldron
This thesis seeks to explore the impact the development of the Internet and associated technologies (such as smartphones and texting) has had on human life; to determine whether this impact has been positive, negative, or neutral; and to explore what the moral implications might be if it were to be negative. To achieve this end, I approached the question of the Internet's

impact from three different perspectives, introducing the thesis by presenting sources from the popular media and experimental psychology in my first chapter, then drawing on Aristotelian virtue ethics in my second to make two arguments relating the Internet and virtue: a modest argument and a strong argument. The modest argument concluded that the Internet is not intrinsically harmful, but simply another context in which people pursue lower goods like pleasure that distract from the good life. The strong argument, meanwhile, concluded that the Internet is intrinsically harmful, and habituates us to be akratic (ruled by our emotions, as opposed to by our reason) by the various stimuli it presents in its current form, such as advertising, which is used to lead people to take actions they would not otherwise by exploiting human psychology and offering targeted emotional stimuli. Accepting the strong argument as true, I then examined what, if anything, might legitimate the harms of the Internet. Finally, I used democratic theory to present a limited positive account of what reforms could be made to the structure of the Internet to legitimate the power structures it contains, mitigate its negative impact on human life, and potentially even direct it towards virtue, making it a tool that leads us towards the good life as defined by Aristotle, rather than away from it.

Noga Zaborowski
Deception *simpliciter* is often invoked in related debates on lying and self-deception, suggesting a well-established conception of the phenomenon. In fact, the literature is far from unified. In this thesis, I trace one common line of thought that attempts to hone in on a definition of deception. I examine three plausible definitions, ultimately rejecting each one and introducing instability into the project. I then propose how this instability can be explained by appeal to our intuitions about the role of justification in deception, specifying how differences in the latter lead to different definitions of deception. This suggests a unifying framework for our concept of the phenomenon that was found lacking at the outset.