



# 29th Annual Oxford Graduate **Philosophy** Conference *Balliol College, University of Oxford*

<b>Schedule.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Day I: 15 November.....	2
Day II: 16 November.....	3
<b>Abstracts.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Keynotes.....	4
“Quantum Biology” – Sam Fletcher.....	4
“The Constructive Task of a Philosophy of Mind” – Anil Gomes.....	4
“Logic for Virtual Worlds” – Gillian Russell.....	4
Contributed papers.....	5
“Incompleteness of Philosopher King: Gödel and the Concept of Truth in Politics” – İsmail Deniz Demirkan.....	5
“Choice-Based Utilitarianism” – Sylvester Kollin.....	6
“Correspondence Pluralism and Mixed Inference Problem” – Tamaki Komada.....	6
“Evidentialism and Beliefs about the Future” – Yi-Cheng Lin.....	7
“Resemblance and Salience” – Bin Liu.....	8
“How to Get Away With (Ontological) Cheating: A Minimalist Presentist Guide to Defeating Standard Grounding Objections” – Alex McQuibban.....	8
“Virtuous Conflict: The Special Relationship Between the Spirited and Rational Parts of the Soul in Plato’s Republic” – Lauren Miano.....	9
“Value Pluralism and Intervalue Bargaining” – Marina Moreno.....	9
“Does reflection require that we take a step back from our desires?” – Kimon Sourlas-Kotzamanis.....	10
“Deep Neural Networks as Mediators: Rethinking Deep Learning and Scientific Understanding” – Frauke Stoll.....	11
“Finding your True Love” – Phoenix (Wenyue) Wang.....	12
“Silencing Anger: The Epistemic Injustice in Excluding Angry Speech from Public Discourse” – Robin Waldenburg.....	12
<b>Funding &amp; Support.....</b>	<b>14</b>

**Conference chairs:** Rasmus Bakken, Katie Moody, and Ray Pedersen


# Schedule

## Day I: 15 November

		Parallel session #1 (Gillis Lecture Theatre)	Parallel session #2 (Massey Room)
8:30-9:00	<i>registration</i>		
9:00-10:00	<b>Keynote #1</b>	The Constructive Task of a Philosophy of Mind <a href="#">Handout</a>  <b>Speaker:</b> Anil Gomes <b>Chair:</b> Ray Pedersen	
10:00-10:30	<i>coffee</i>	<i>in the buttry; all welcome</i>	
10:30-11:30	<b>Talk #1</b>	Incompleteness of Philosopher King - Gödel and the Concept of Truth in Politics  <b>Speaker:</b> İsmail Deniz Demirkan <b>Comments:</b> Adrian Moore <b>Chair:</b> Rasmus Bakken	Does reflection require that we take a step back from our desires?  Handout:  <a href="#">oxf_handout.pdf</a>  <b>Speaker:</b> Kimon Sourlas-Kotzamanis <b>Comments:</b> Ruth Chang <b>Chair:</b> Meredith Ross-James
11:30-11:45	<i>break</i>		
11:45-12:45	<b>Talk #2</b>	How to Get Away With (Ontological) Cheating: A Minimalist Presentist Guide to Defeating Standard Grounding Objections  <b>Speaker:</b> Alex McQuibban <b>Comments:</b> Oliver Pooley <b>Chair:</b> Rasmus Bakken	Silencing Anger: The Epistemic Injustice in Excluding Angry Speech from Public Discourse  <b>Speaker:</b> Robin Waldenburg <b>Comments:</b> Jer Steeger [remote] <b>Chair:</b> Ray Pedersen
12:45-13:45	<i>lunch</i>	<i>in the buttry; all welcome</i>	
13:45-14:45	<b>Talk #3</b>	Finding Your True Love: Toward a Plenitudinous Speculation  <b>Speaker:</b> Phoenix (Wenyue) Wang <b>Comments:</b> Edward Harcourt <b>Chair:</b> Sofus Messell	Choice-based utilitarianism  <b>Speaker:</b> Sylvester Kollin <b>Comments:</b> Teru Thomas <b>Chair:</b> Ray Pedersen
14:45-15:15	<i>coffee</i>	<i>in the buttry; all welcome</i>	
15:15-16:15	<b>Keynote #2</b>	Logic for virtual worlds  <b>Speaker:</b> Gillian Russell <b>Chair:</b> Rasmus Bakken	
18:00	<i>dinner</i>	<i>at Browns (OX2 6HA); by invitation only.</i>  <b>**cash only</b> for those attending who are not keynote speakers or graduate student speakers	

If you're not attending day II, kindly return your lanyard to any session chair or to the green registration box. We plan to reuse them next year.

## Day II: 16 November

		Parallel session #1 (Gillis Lecture Theatre)	Parallel session #2 (Massey Room)
9:00-9:30	registration		
9:30-10:30	Talk #4	Value pluralism and interval bargaining  Speaker: Marina Moreno Comments: Andreas Mogensen Chair: Sofus Messell	Deep Neural Networks as Mediators: Rethinking Deep Learning and Scientific Understanding  Speaker: Frauke Stoll Comments: Sepehr Razavi Chair: Amit Karmon
10:30-11:00	coffee in the buttry; all welcome		
11:00-12:00	Talk #5	Evidentialism and Beliefs about the Future  Speaker: Yi-Chen Lin Comments: Timothy Williamson Chair: Wanda von Knobelsdorff	Virtuous Conflict: The Special Relationship Between the Spirited and Rational Parts of the Soul in Plato's Republic  Handout:  Virtuous Conflict Handout.pdf  Speaker: Lauren Miano Comments: Simon Shogry Chair: Amit Karmon
12:00-12:15	break		
12:15-13:15	Keynote #3	Quantum Biology  Speaker: Sam Fletcher Chair: Ray Pedersen	
13:15-14:30	lunch in the buttry; all welcome		
14:30-15:30	Talk #6	Correspondence Pluralism and Mixed Inference Problem  Speaker: Tamaki Komada Comments: Ofra Magidor Chair: Sofus Messell	Resemblance and Salience  Speaker: Bin Liu Comments: Jitai Zhang Chair: Amit Karmon
15:30 on	pub trip details forthcoming; all welcome		

**As you leave your final session, kindly return your lanyard to any session chair or to the green registration box. We plan to reuse them next year.**

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# Abstracts

## Keynotes

### “Quantum Biology” – Sam Fletcher

What is quantum biology? It is often taken, in a word, as an interdisciplinary field of research that applies models and concepts from quantum mechanics to explain biological phenomena. But there is a subtlety in this simple description: though necessary, it is not sufficient in itself. After introducing some characteristic examples of quantum biological phenomena, I show how extant accounts of quantum biology have not adequately characterized it—including ones that see it as a kind of quantum engineering by nature—and also why this characterization is important. I propose my own account, arguing not only that it remedies the deficiencies of other proposals, but also that it helps explain some of the history of quantum biology as a field of research and suggests a descriptive and normative research program in the philosophy of interdisciplinary science. The key to these is the failure of a kind of explanatory screening-off between levels of reality that may be of independent interest.

### “The Constructive Task of a Philosophy of Mind” – Anil Gomes

Iris Murdoch begins ‘The Idea of Perfection’ by tracing the ‘inarticulate moments in modern ethics’ back to contemporary thinking in ‘the philosophy of mind’ (IP, p.3) But which philosophy of mind? And what is the connection to ethics? My talk will aim to better situate Murdoch as a philosopher of mind by clarifying the picture of human psychology which forms the backdrop to ‘The Idea of Perfection’ and tracing its implications for the relation between moral philosophy and the philosophy of mind.

### “Logic for Virtual Worlds” – Gillian Russell

In the second half of “Two Dogmas”, Quine argued that there could be empirical grounds to revise logic—at least in principle. Since then the most popular proposal for what those empirical grounds might be has involved quantum mechanics. Still, most logicians seem to think that even this does not give us good enough reason for revision. This paper considers and evaluates an alternative proposal: perhaps the experiences acquired in virtual reality give us reason to adopt an assessment-sensitive logic.

## Contributed papers

### “Incompleteness of Philosopher King: Gödel and the Concept of Truth in Politics” – İsmail Deniz Demirkan

Mathematical knowledge is used in different aspects of political study, varying from quantitative and statistical tools to analytical models such as game-theoretical figures that provide visualization of rather qualitative and normative abstractions. Nevertheless, it is uncommon to integrate the definitions and discussions of mathematical knowledge and entities with political theory. This paper argues that via their shared characteristics on epistemological questions, these two fields can be integrated, and it would be beneficial in widening the underlying assumptions of political theories. Specifically, the notion of truth has a central place in political epistemology and methodology; to be more precise, it is seen that the conceptualization of this term determines political theory.

In this regard, Plato’s approach is vital in that he differentiated episteme and doxa, where the former relates to knowing certainly, while the latter can be translated as believing. Just as their functions, the objects over these concepts are concerned differ as well; episteme is about objects that are stable, true and precise whereas the objects of doxa are unstable, between what is true and what is not, and they are imprecise. Since it is philosophers who can achieve episteme, in the political realm they can be the ruler since they achieve necessary truths in administration, thus the term “philosopher king” is born. In this picture, characterization of the truth directly resembles the understanding of mathematical mechanisms, as they too are seen as precise, stable and provable. Therefore, the implementation of such truth in politics is legitimized in Platonic theory with reference to the nature of mathematical knowledge and its relationship to philosophical method. Then, if this ground can be shaken, the political conceptualization of one truth and the related political mechanism would be shaken as well. Coming up with an understanding that could define the general characteristics of formal systems was the main concern within the philosophy of mathematics in the early 20th century. Nevertheless, this task was undermined by Gödel’s incompleteness theorems. The first theorem shows that a formal system that is complex enough, the system cannot be complete or decidable.

The second theorem shows that even if the system is consistent, its consistency cannot be proven in the given system itself. These results have been attempted to be adapted into other fields of philosophy; yet one must be cautious not to produce categorical fallacy in such adaptations. In that manner, the main argument of this paper can be summed up as following: (1) The Platonic sense of “truth” in politics claims that there is an unshakeable sense of truth, (2) The definition of such truth relies upon the conceptualization of mathematical knowledge and formal reasoning, (3) Gödel’s incompleteness theorems refute the idea of mathematical conceptualization that was described and (4) therefore, political theories/ideologies/practices that depend upon the given definition of truth cannot be philosophically legitimized. The consequence of this argument is a defence for a political structure where different opinions can be expressed freely.

## “Choice-Based Utilitarianism” – Sylvester Kollin

I develop a new kind of Utilitarianism, dubbed Choice-Based Utilitarianism, on which the rightness or choiceworthiness of prospects is not directly determined by the aggregate of individual welfare levels, but rather the aggregate of individual ‘degrees of permissibility’ based on said welfare, i.e., the degrees to which options are permissible relative to individuals. When individual betterness is incomplete and welfare is set-valued due to e.g. incommensurability or vagueness, degrees of permissibility come apart from degrees of goodness. For instance, in a menu  $M = \{x, y, z\}$  where  $x$  and  $y$  are incommensurable but both are better than  $z$  for an individual, it is not the case that  $x$  and  $y$  are equally good. But they are equally permissible relative to that individual and menu (in virtue of not being worse than another prospect in the menu). Orthodox Utilitarianism overlooks this discrepancy, and as a result violates certain intuitions. I first develop the basic theory of ‘generalised choice functions’, and sets thereof, as measures of degrees of permissibility, as well as argue for a specific measure when welfare is set-valued. The reason for developing this theory is that regular choice functions are too coarse for the purpose of aggregation. I then go on to formulate two versions of Choice-Based Utilitarianism. The rightness of prospects on both theories is determined by the aggregate of individual degrees of permissibility but the axiological parts of the theories differ. One theory ends up being teleological and its axiology context-sensitive, whereas the other is non-teleological but not context-sensitive in this way.

## “Correspondence Pluralism and Mixed Inference Problem” – Tamaki Komada

This paper explores the mixed inference problem within the framework of correspondence pluralism, which posits that truth is always a matter of correspondence but that the way propositions correspond to reality varies across domains (Sher, 2013, 2015, 2023; Barnard & Horgan, 2006, 2013; Horgan & Potrč, 2008). In correspondence pluralism, while truth always involves correspondence, it acknowledges that different modes of correspondence exist. For example, the proposition "Snow is white" corresponds directly to reality, while "Torturing cats is wrong" may correspond to reality, reflecting a more indirect form of correspondence. The paper examines how these varying types of correspondence can still preserve truth in logical inferences.

The mixed inference problem arises when premises and conclusions depend on different modes of correspondence, creating difficulties in maintaining truth preservation across the inference (Tappolet, 1997). For example, consider the argument: "If snow is white, then torturing cats is wrong," and "Snow is white," leading to the conclusion "Torturing cats is wrong." If "Snow is white" is true due to direct correspondence to reality, and "Torturing cats is wrong" is true due to indirect correspondence to reality, the inference seems to fail in preserving truth. This is problematic because valid inferences should maintain truth, yet this discrepancy in correspondence types challenges that requirement.

The paper proposes a solution by introducing the concept of generic correspondence, which serves as a unifying truth property underlying both direct and indirect correspondence. This idea is based on the determinable/determinate relation from property theory, where a determinable property (like "red") can manifest in specific determinates (like "crimson") (Wilson, 2023; Funkhouser, 2006). In the same way, generic correspondence encompasses both direct and indirect modes of correspondence. Thus, even though propositions may correspond to reality in different ways, they all share the common truth property of generic correspondence.

By identifying generic correspondence as the underlying property, the paper shows that truth can be preserved across mixed inferences. When a proposition exhibits either direct or indirect correspondence, it also exhibits generic correspondence. Therefore, even if premises and conclusions rely on different modes of correspondence, they still maintain a shared truth property, ensuring the preservation of truth throughout the inference. This approach resolves the tension between logical form and truth preservation, allowing for the validity of mixed inferences in correspondence pluralism.

In conclusion, the paper provides a novel solution to the mixed inference problem by highlighting the unity of truth across different modes of correspondence. It demonstrates that generic correspondence unites distinct types of correspondence, ensuring truth preservation even in mixed inferences. This solution not only addresses the logical validity of mixed inferences but also maintains the diversity of truth in correspondence pluralism, offering a new perspective on how to reconcile truth diversity with the requirement for truth preservation in logical reasoning.

This account shows how correspondence pluralism, by recognizing a unifying element like generic correspondence, can resolve the mixed inference problem and preserve truth across varying types of correspondence, thereby supporting the validity of mixed inferences in logical reasoning.

### “Evidentialism and Beliefs about the Future” – Yi-Cheng Lin

This paper argues that evidentialism—understood as the view that one has an epistemic duty to believe a proposition if supported by sufficient evidence—fails to govern beliefs about the future under an open future framework. According to the open future view, future-tense propositions are neither true nor false. Given this, future-directed beliefs cannot be true, and thus cannot constitute knowledge. The paper presents a knowledge-based argument: if a proposition lacks a truth value, then it is not true; if it is not true, then it cannot be known; and if belief is normatively governed by knowledge (as per the knowledge norm of belief), then we are not epistemically obligated to believe it. This challenges evidentialism’s claim that sufficient evidence alone generates epistemic obligation, at least for future-directed beliefs.

This paper then responds to a set of objections by Ichikawa (2022), who questions the implications of the knowledge norm for suspending judgment. These objections are defused by adopting a weak reading of normative negation—denying that one is obligated to believe a proposition does not entail that one is forbidden from believing it. This yields a threefold normative structure: belief, suspension, and lack of duty to believe. The paper concludes that evidentialism plausibly applies to beliefs about the past and present but cannot account for epistemic obligations concerning the future, given the metaphysical possibility of an open future. Thus, evidential norms may need to be temporally indexed, or supplemented by pragmatic or practical considerations for future-oriented beliefs.

### “Resemblance and Salience” – Bin Liu

The resemblance theory of depiction is laden with criticism. One common objection argues that this theory is untenable, as it fails to adequately specify the respect or respects in which pictures resemble the objects they depict. In defence of resemblance theory, Abell appeals to Lewis’s analysis of convention, explaining the resemblance that governs depiction in terms of agents’ interpretative competence regarding

the convention- characteristic respects of resemblance. Whilst her approach contributes to establishing the role of resemblance in the diversity of pictorial styles, it remains insufficient in two respects: it is incompatible with Lewis's theory on communicative intentions and fails to accommodate all instances of depiction. This paper, based on Lewis's notion of salience and Carroll's view of communication, remedies these inadequacies by advocating the concept of social salience competence. This paper enhances the explanatory power of resemblance theory, and advances research on the origin and evolution of conventions in pictures.

## “How to Get Away With (Ontological) Cheating: A Minimalist Presentist Guide to Defeating Standard Grounding Objections” – Alex McQuibban

Presentism—the view that only present things exist—has long been motivated on account of its intuitiveness and simplicity. However, it has also been criticised for offending intuition and simplicity in explaining talk of non-present times whose existence the presentist characteristically denies. In this paper, I defend presentism against the objection that for presentism to ground talk of non-present times, it must offend simplicity (particularly, qualitative parsimony) and/or intuition. I begin with an overview of presentism and parsimony/simplicity, before reconstructing the aforementioned objection, rejecting typical presentist responses, and defending an ‘ontological cheating’ solution instead.

In Part I, I distinguish presentism's commitment to a dynamic ontology, noting that unrestricted quantifiers range over only present objects, and that this set changes with time. I emphasise that criticisms presuming the presentist's misuse of tense misconstrue the view. I then turn to parsimony, highlighting the distinction between quantitative and qualitative parsimony, and noting that philosophical orthodoxy prioritises the latter. I argue that while presentism is often defended via appeal to quantitative parsimony, a more damning objection concerns its potential to violate qualitative parsimony in answering standard objections.

Part II considers how responses invoking Lucretian properties, haecceities, and ersatzism, though superficially solving semantic problems, risk bloating the presentist ontology by introducing qualitatively extravagant entities or kinds. While fictionalism avoids ontological extravagance, it does so at the cost of offending powerful intuitions about the factivity of past and future truths, and potentially requires a costly error-theory. I suggest that all these standard responses are compromised either in parsimony or intuition.

In their place, I defend an ‘ontological cheating’ strategy, according to which presentists should take tense seriously. Past and future truths are grounded not in present being or abstract surrogates, but in the very things which did and will exist but do no longer. This view relies not on exotic entities but on the simple, intuitive idea that truth is grounded in what propositions are about. For propositions about non-present times to be truth-apt (and in a way that distinguishes them from ‘truths’ about the straight-forwardly fictional), they must simply be grounded in no-longer-existing-being or yet-to-exist-being, notions which are fully coherent within a properly tensed presentist framework and need not entail the ontological commitments of being-tout-court. Many truths to which even eternalists are presumably committed—including negative existentials—already implicitly rely on grounding in ‘non-being’, e.g. ‘lack’. Differences in the truth conditions of propositions, even those about present objects whose existence is uncontroversially admitted by all relevant camps, also maps cleanly onto differences in what



propositions are about. This form of ontological cheating, then, is far from being ad hoc or extravagant. It aligns with a more fundamental and elegant intuition than the standard norm grounding truth on being.

Ultimately, externalist concerns are misplaced: presentists can solve the grounding problem without sacrificing intuitive commitments to the factivity of non-present events or compromising on simplicity. They do so, simply by taking tense seriously and grounding truth in what propositions are about—a simpler, stronger, more elegant solution to grounding.

### “Virtuous Conflict: The Special Relationship Between the Spirited and Rational Parts of the Soul in Plato’s Republic” – Lauren Miano

We learn in Books III and IV of the Republic that the rational and spirited parts of the soul have a special relationship to each other, at least when they are in a good condition. These parts are described as being in harmony with each other and the spirited part is characterized as the rational part's "natural ally." Although the existence of this special relationship is well-known in the literature, the question of what the nature of this relationship is has been largely overlooked.

Rather, most arguments that make use of this relationship and attempt to explain why it exists rest on the assumption that it consists in an agreement in value and thus a lack of cognitive and conative conflict between these two parts. In this paper, I will challenge this assumption by providing evidence that these two parts of the soul, even when they are in a good condition in a virtuous soul, will sometimes conflict as a result of the spirited part's inability to do rational calculation. I will conclude by offering a brief sketch for what this interpretation suggests about how we should understand the harmony between the rational and spirited parts, as well as in the soul more broadly.

### “Value Pluralism and Interval Bargaining” – Marina Moreno

Our ethical and rational lives are complex, multifaceted, and, it seems, often irreducibly pluralist. While standard decision theory would have us believe that our rational preferences are complete, i.e., that for any two options  $x$  and  $y$ ,  $x$  is either better than, worse than or equally good as  $y$ , experience, as well as many scholars, tell a different story: Sometimes, maybe even very often,  $x$  and  $y$  are incommensurable (e.g. Ross 1930, Thomson 1997, Hampshire 1983, Stocker 1989, Dancy 2004). Importantly, such incommensurability does not imply that  $x$  and  $y$  are wholly incomparable (cf. Chang 1997). Most of the time, we can make some comparisons. For instance, we may see very clearly that  $x$  is better than  $y$  with respect to, say, the value of justice, while  $y$  is better than  $x$  with respect to, say, the value of equality. But what makes for the incommensurability of  $x$  and  $y$  is that we cannot reduce justice and equality to a further underlying value of, say, goodness. In opposition to value monists, pluralists believe that we hit rock bottom before a single unitary value is reached.

Value pluralism is an attractive position for many reasons. Among them are that it can account for the often non-additive and discontinuous nature of value, for genuine value conflicts and rational regret, as well as for pluralism in how we ought to respond to different values. However, value pluralism also faces serious challenges. How can we make rational choices when incommensurable values conflict? It seems implausible that there is both widespread incommensurability between different options as well as no possibility of settling rational preferences between them. Such a view would leave us ill-equipped to face

the practical reality of navigating difficult choices. And to make matters worse: If the right response to incommensurable values means leaving our preferences incomplete, we are even exploitable by money-pump schemes. Yet, if there is a rationally justified procedure to trade off different supposedly incommensurable values, can we still call such a theory truly pluralist? Are we not effectively introducing a common measure, thereby reducing the supposedly plural values to a single underlying value?

In this paper, I introduce a novel framework for modeling pluralist value theories that addresses these challenges. I contend that plural values impose distinct, non-reducible demands of instrumental rationality on us. From this premise, I propose that the rational response to choices marked by incommensurability is to represent them using bargaining theory, treating each value as an independent agent with its own utility function. To illustrate my approach, I employ Nash bargaining to show how it advances the discourse on value pluralism: it offers a rational decision-making process that circumvents both practical paralysis and exploitation via money-pumps, all without introducing a common metric among values—thus preserving the core appeal of pluralism. I conclude that value pluralists have good reason to consider

bargaining theory, and game theory more generally, to make progress on the central problems they face.

### “Does reflection require that we take a step back from our desires?” – Kimon Surlas-Kotzamanis

According to Korsgaard, our need for reasons for action is the product of our ability to reflect on our own desires and recognize them as such, which generates a ‘distance’ from them, making them no longer sufficient for acting. Contrast this with a view of desire held by Simon Blackburn (1998) and T.M. Scanlon (1998) among others, according to which, having a desire involves occupying a certain practical perspective on the world. Normally, the agent’s desires feature in her deliberation by presenting features of the world as practically salient. While for Korsgaard desire poses the question of what to do, for Blackburn and Scanlon, it instead professes to answer that same question. Of course, upon reflection, an agent might decide that the apparent reason presented by a particular desire was after all weak or illusory, but no wholesale ‘stepping back’ is required.

To defend Korsgaard’s picture, Schapiro (2011, 2021) argues for a bipartite view of agency, according to which the self has an ‘inclining part’ (an animal-like faculty for generating motivation) and a ‘reflecting part’ (a rational faculty in charge of deliberation). When the inclining part generates an impulse, the whole agent in this way finds herself in a state of internal division: her inclining part is pulling in one direction, and her reflective part is aware of being pulled but needs an independent reason to go along, if it is to do so. This raises the question of how impulsive action is possible: why would the reflective part ever assent to following an inclination in the absence of good independent reasons? Schapiro answers: in order for the agent to unify herself.

In this paper, I argue that Schapiro cannot make good on this answer without abandoning the Kantian view that the reflective part needs a reason from an objective point of view, independent of the agent’s desires. If, in deliberation, the agent is going to view the inclining part as hers, she has to already identify

with it practically. That is, its motive must already be her own prior to reflection. In light of this, I propose an alternative Humean explanation of the origin of our need for reasons: an agent needn't feel out of step with her desires in order to come to reflect on whether to act on her impulses or not. Instead, the experience of regret following impulsive action is enough to make it apparent that, a lot of the time, one should think twice before following an inclination. The need for reflection, then, need not be rooted in scepticism about inclination as such, but may instead be based in the fact that individual inclinations are not by themselves a reliable guide to acting well by the lights of the agent's own practical perspective, given by her desires.

## “Deep Neural Networks as Mediators: Rethinking Deep Learning and Scientific Understanding” – Frauke Stoll

Deep Neural Networks (DNNs) are rapidly transforming scientific practice, yet their epistemic status remains deeply contested. While their predictive success is undeniable, the opacity of these models has led to disagreements about their capacity to contribute to scientific understanding. Optimistic accounts (e.g., Sullivan, 2022) hold that DNNs can directly yield explanatory insight; sceptical views (e.g., Räs and Beisbart, 2024) argue that their opacity precludes explanatory understanding. This paper challenges the assumptions underlying both positions.

Rather than asking whether DNNs explain, I argue that their epistemic value lies in a prior and under-theorized stage of scientific inquiry: the constitution of phenomena. Building on the distinction by Bogen and Woodward (1988) between data and phenomena, I show that before explanation becomes possible, science must identify and fix what counts as an explanandum. This is not a trivial observational step but a substantive epistemic achievement that often requires sophisticated tools to distill stable regularities from messy data. Here, I argue, lies the true contribution of DNNs: not as explainers, but as instruments for detecting, abstracting, and stabilizing candidate phenomena. Through their high-capacity pattern-recognition abilities, DNNs render latent empirical structures epistemically visible — structures that can subsequently become the target of explanatory theorization.

This reframing resolves a core tension in the literature. It explains why DNNs can be epistemically indispensable despite failing to offer interpretably structured explanations. Moreover, it situates techniques from explainable AI (XAI) in their appropriate context: not as surrogates for causal or mechanistic models, but as aids in articulating and conceptualizing the phenomena DNNs uncover. Rather than bridging directly to theoretical understanding, XAI helps clarify what has been detected — an essential precursor to understanding why it holds.

I further develop this argument by invoking the model-theoretic notion of mediation advanced by Morrison and Morgan (1999), extending it to an earlier epistemic phase. Whereas traditional mediators bridge theory and already-constituted phenomena, DNNs act as pre-theoretical mediators between raw data and emergent phenomena. This comparison not only illuminates the unique position of DNNs in scientific inquiry, but also underscores their continuity with historical instruments like the spectroscope or phenomenological models like Rydberg's formula; devices that shaped scientific understanding not by explaining, but by revealing what needed to be explained.

Recognizing DNNs as epistemic mediators offers a more nuanced and accurate account of their scientific role. It avoids the extremes of techno-optimism and reductive scepticism, while providing a layered view of understanding that accommodates the realities of contemporary data-intensive science. DNNs do not replace explanation but they help generate the explananda on which explanation depends.

Scientific understanding, I argue, is a layered process involving distinct epistemic achievements. By highlighting DNNs' role as epistemic mediators, this paper provides a new philosophical framework for understanding machine learning's place in scientific reasoning: one that recognizes their limitations while illuminating their contribution to discovery.

### “Finding your True Love” – Phoenix (Wenyue) Wang

This paper examines the philosophical inquiry into the uniqueness and irreplaceability of the beloved, questioning why one person is loved over another. I focus on whether reasons for love are tied to the beloved's individual traits or are contingent on causal- historical connections. Through some extreme hypothetical cases, such as the existence of an indistinguishable duplicate of the beloved, I explore the intuitive preference for the original lover despite the lack of compelling reasons to reject the duplicate. In particular, I press some complaints against the causal-historical account of love, suggesting it inadequately explains the beloved's irreplaceability and uniqueness. As an alternative, a plenitudinous account is proposed, identifying the beloved's coincident counterpart with some particular temporal and modal identity. However, challenges remain in determining if this counterpart qualifies as a person and sustains a genuine love relationship. I also aim to question whether love's reasons attach uniquely to individuals or are shaped by contingent historical connections.

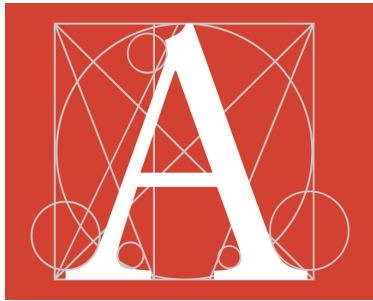
### “Silencing Anger: The Epistemic Injustice in Excluding Angry Speech from Public Discourse” – Robin Waldenburg

Anger is often seen as a violent emotion, counterproductive for achieving social progress and unfit for public discourse. Recent work in feminist philosophy, however, has challenged this dominant image and indicated that angry speech may actually have a distinct epistemic value, in that public expressions of anger can point out injustices that would otherwise be overlooked, and facilitate a closer understanding of them. Thus, a framework of democratic speech that allows for the expression of anger seems epistemically superior to one that perpetuates the framing of anger as unacceptable in the public sphere.

In my paper, I go one step further and suggest that if there is indeed an epistemic value to angry speech, then an anger-inclusive framework of democratic speech is normatively demanded not only from an instrumental perspective of epistemic superiority, but also from a perspective of justice. The idea behind this argument is that there are situations to which anger is an objectively justified emotional response. Legitimate reasons for such apt anger, however, are distributed unequally across society: Individuals who face genuine moral violations in their daily lives have more reasons to be angry. The exclusion of angry speech from public discourse, as I try to show, serves a means of silencing those who are subject to injustices in at least two ways: First, illocutionary silencing occurs when an angry speech act is not interpreted as an epistemic contribution to the discussion, and its epistemic content—its message—is therefore disregarded. Instead, the speech is read as a mere expression of emotional agitation and

turmoil, or, especially when prejudices and stigmata are operating, as loss of control, emotionalism, or neurotic behaviour. Second, even when an expression of anger is correctly recognised in its epistemic content, it can be silenced by preventing it from having a chance to persuade. We can then speak of perlocutionary silencing: The audience may correctly understand that the expression of anger is a claim that an injustice has been committed, and still fail to give this claim proper consideration. Insofar as the distorted credibility judgment by the audience is a result of prejudices against angry speech, this constitutes a case of testimonial injustice: The speaker is wronged in her capacity as a giver of knowledge. The same is true for illocutionary silencing, albeit it occurs before a credibility deficit can even arise—as a matter of fact, it inhibits the formation of any credibility judgment at all. In this case too, however, the audience does not recognise the speaker as a knower, creating an instance of an epistemic injustice. This provides strong normative reasons for revising the dominant paradigm of purely rational discourse. Thus, by linking the research on anger to the literature on epistemic injustice, my paper contributes to the debate on the role of emotions in public discourse.

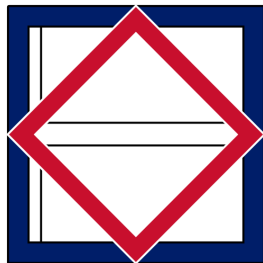
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