

## 8th In-House Philosophy Doctoral Conference

**OPEN TO PUBLIC – CEU Philosophy Dept., Zrínyi utca 14, 4th floor**

	<b>Friday (October 16, 2015)</b>	
	<b>Room 411A</b>	<b>Room 412</b>
10:15-11:00	<u><i>The World-Soul as a Cosmic Principle and its Antecedents in Presocratic Thought</i></u> <b>Mate Herner</b> (Chair: Istvan Bodnar)	<u><i>Truthmaker Theory and the Counterfactual Grounding Problem for Phenomenalism</i></u> <b>Melvin Freitas</b> (Chair: Ferenc Houranszki)
11:15-12:00	<u><i>What Is Representational Content?</i></u> <b>Andrea Csillag</b> (Chair: Istvan Bodnar)	<u><i>Integrated Information Theory and the Hard Problem of Consciousness</i></u> <b>Garrett Mindt</b> (Chair: Ferenc Houranszki)
12:15-13:00	<u><i>Intentions and Overdetermined Wrongdoing</i></u> <b>Anton Markoc</b> (Chair: Andres Moles)	<u><i>Hypnotic Hallucination: A Best Case for Cognitive Penetration?</i></u> <b>David Bitter</b> (Chair: Emma Bullock)
<b>Lunch Break</b>		
15:00-15:45	<u><i>Society-Centred Morality and Duties to Oneself</i></u> <b>Yuliya Kanygina</b> (Chair: Andres Moles)	TBA <b>Linda Lazar</b> (Chair: Philip Goff)
16:00-16:45	<u><i>Love, Justice, and Moral Reasoning</i></u> <b>Marko Konjovic</b> (Chair: Andres Moles)	<u><i>Philosophical Progress and the Structure of Academia: Adventures in Applied Metaphilosophy</i></u> <b>Isik Sarihan</b> (Chair: Philip Goff)
17:00-18:30	<b>Keynote Address</b> <b>Ferenc Houranszki (CEU)</b> <b><u>Agency, Trying, and Final Causes</u></b> <b>(Room 412)</b>	
19:00	<b>Welcome to New Students and Wine Reception</b>	

	<b>Saturday (October 17, 2015)</b>	
	<b>Room 411A</b>	<b>Room 412</b>
10:00 – 10:45	<u><i>A Psychosociophysical Situation</i></u> <b>Hywel Griffiths</b> (Chair: Hanoch Ben-Yami)	<u><i>Electoral Disenfranchisement and Capacity-Building</i></u> <b>Attila Mraz</b> (Chair: Zoltan Miklosi)
11:00 - 11:45	<u><i>Rethinking the Role of Time in Four-Dimensionalism from a Transcendental Perspective</i></u> <b>Michele Luchetti</b> (Chair: Hanoch Ben-Yami)	<u><i>What Kind of Equality Can a Libertarian Pursue?</i></u> <b>Zlata Bozac</b> (Chair: Zoltan Miklosi)
12:00 - 12:45	<u><i>Is There Anything It Is Like to Be an Agent?</i></u> <b>Ehsan Shafiee</b> (Chair: Hanoch Ben-Yami)	<u><i>What's Wrong with the Layer Cake Model of the World?</i></u> <b>Matthew Baxendale</b> (Chair: Maria Kronfeldner)
<b>Lunch Break</b>		
14:30 – 15:15	<u><i>Turning Over the Black Page: Feminist Appropriations of Spinoza</i></u> <b>Zsafia Gode</b> (Chair: David Weberman)	<u><i>Explaining Crowding</i></u> <b>Jay Fogelman</b> (Chair: Christophe Heintz)
15:30 – 16:15	<u><i>Berkeley's Theology and the Divine Will</i></u> <b>David Bartha</b> (Chair: Mike Griffin)	<u><i>Ethical 'Intuitions' as Emotion-Based Responses</i></u> <b>Marius Jakstas</b> (Chair: Simon Rippon)
16:30 – 17:15	<u><i>A Critique of Higher-Order Theory of Consciousness</i></u> <b>Caglan Dilek</b> (Chair: Mike Griffin)	<u><i>Between a Felt Self and a Constructed Self</i></u> <b>Katsiaryna Suryna</b> (Chair: David Weberman)
19:00	<b>Dinner</b>	

# **Abstracts**

## **Keynote Address**

**Ferenc Houranszki (Central European University)**

### **Agency, Trying, and Final Causes**

What distinguishes those episodes in agents' life which manifest their agency from those which do not? Since agency is a causal concept, it seems natural to approach this question as an issue about the nature of causation which is involved in exercising agency. My purpose in this paper is to argue that this can be right only to the extent that causes include what has traditionally been called 'final causes'. I shall not defend the claim here that 'final causes' do deserve the name 'causes'. My aim is only to show that the concept of action is irreducibly teleological. Actions can have efficient causes, and those causes can sometime explain what agents do. But efficient causes cannot explain why what they explain is an intentional action.

## **Graduate Presenters**

**David Bartha**

### **Berkeley's theology and the divine will**

In my talk I will explore the basic features of Berkeley's philosophical theology, with special emphasis on the question of his voluntarism. First, I will show how he dealt with the possibility of forming a notion of God, and with the divine attributes in general, applying them to God literally. Then I will seek to prove that he can be regarded as a voluntarist in the sense that he never allowed any intellectual possibilities in God's mind before and independently of the divine will. According to my interpretation, he holds that all divine ideas or archetypes are intimately connected to God's volitional activity. I will point out that this is not only the case for his late and often neglected works, like the *Siris*, but also true for his earlier works.

**Matthew Baxendale**

### **What's Wrong with the Layer Cake Model of the World?**

The layer cake model (LCM) is a view about the way the world is. It is an articulation of the claim that phenomena in the world are organised into layers. Specifically, the LCM organises phenomena

in the world into distinct, hierarchical levels. It has been used as a model to structure not only the relationship between phenomena in the world, but also the branches of science that study such phenomena, as well as the laws, theories, and explanations provided by those sciences. In other words, the LCM constitutes both an ontological model of the world, and an epistemological framework for investigating the world. Historically the LCM has been closely associated with the unity of science movement and it has been supposed that the declining influence of the movement has necessitated the demise of the LCM. On the contrary, as I have argued elsewhere, the LCM remains prevalent in prominent post-unity accounts of the relationship between phenomena in the world, such as non-reductive physicalism and reductive explanation. Thus, the task of understanding, analysing, and ultimately rejecting the LCM remains an open line of inquiry. Importantly, in relation to my broader concerns, such a task must be completed before a thoroughly pluralist (or dis-unified) account of science, or metaphysical framework more generally, can be developed.

In this presentation I will begin that task by arguing that the ontological aspect of the LCM is false. In order to do this, I will introduce the principle of hierarchic compositionality (PHC) a principle which, I contend, captures the ontological features of the LCM. I will then deconstruct the PHC into three claims about the way phenomena in the world are related. The first, a claim about decomposition; the second pertaining to hierarchical structure; and the third to a unique lowest level of reality. I will argue that all three of these claims about phenomena in the world are false and thus the ontological framework provided by the LCM is false.

**Dávid Bitter**

## **Hypnotic Hallucination: A Best Case for Cognitive Penetration?**

A recent wave of theoretical and review papers argues that perceptual experience is influenced by our beliefs and/or other cognitive states. Yet the proposed best evidence for this claim does not seem to withstand proper empirical scrutiny. I thus propose a better candidate of cognitive penetration: “hypnotic hallucination.” In hypnosis, when given suggestions to perceive the world in a certain way, some people apparently undergo relevant distortions in perceptual experience. The phenomenon is plausibly cognitively mediated, yet implausibly explained by role-play, demand compliance, or attentional shifts. This provides a strong *prima facie* case for cognitive penetration. Notwithstanding, I think there is good reason to doubt that hypnotic hallucination involves genuine alterations in perceptual experience. Accordingly, I argue that the effect is ultimately better construed as a cognitive (delusional) or affective (alief-like) rather than a perceptual (hallucinatory) phenomenon. The upshot is that even by raising the dialectical bar, there is little reason to assume that perceptual experience is cognitively penetrable. Hopefully, the proposed account may also shed some light on why many non-hypnosis studies also find characteristic (albeit less extreme) biases in perceptual judgment.

**Zlata Bozac**

## **What Kind of Equality Can a Libertarian Pursue?**

In today's talk, I will discuss the successfulness of the set of theories commonly known as "left-libertarianism", like Otsuka's (2003), in reconciling the fundamental libertarian concept of self-ownership with social equality. Unlike its probably more famous right-wing counterpart, spelled out by Nozick in his book "Anarchy, State and Utopia", left-libertarianism is trying to offer an egalitarian reconstruction of Locke's political philosophy, showing how Locke's own theory has far more egalitarian implications than the right version would suggest. Unlike Nozick and Jerry Cohen, left-libertarians stipulate that there is not an inherent conflict between the two values, when the two are being understood in an appropriate manner. In this presentation I wish to explore whether libertarian self-ownership is indeed compatible with equality, and if it is, with which type of equality exactly.

**Andrea Csillag**

## **What Is Representational Content?**

According to representational views in the philosophy of mind, mental occurrences, such as instances of perceptual experience, e.g., have representational content. Anti-representationalist approaches, in contrast, deny that anything like representational content would play a role in perception. What does it mean for mental events to have representational content? Is there an understanding of representational content that is worth committing ourselves to?

**Çağlan Dilek**

## **A Critique of Higher-Order Theory of Consciousness**

I will discuss theories on self-consciousness, mainly analyzing David Rosenthal's Higher-Order Thought Theory (HOT) against criticisms coming from other Higher-Order Approaches (Peter Carruthers), Self-Representational Theories (Uriah Kriegel), Phenomenological Approaches (Dan Zahavi) and other alternative accounts (Ned Block). HOT Theory explains consciousness of a first-order mental state by relying on a higher-order mental state, which makes the first one conscious by representing it in an appropriate way. By explaining consciousness in a relational and extrinsic way, the mystery of phenomenal consciousness as being intrinsic to the mental state is unveiled and an explanation is given in a naturalistic paradigm. However, this theory is criticized on various points, some of which are as follows: 1- How can we explain the possibility of misrepresentation in perception? 2- How can a mental state acquire an intrinsic quality through an extrinsic relation? 3- What is nature of the relation between higher-order mental state and first-order mental state in

terms of being contingent or necessary? 4- As higher-order mental states cannot make all kinds of objects conscious by representing them, how can we consider it as an explanation of consciousness? 5- Is what-it-is-like-to-be a particular subject dependent on forming higher-order mental states? The HOT theory will be analyzed through some of the criticisms and I will try to decide whether it is still a promising account to explain consciousness in comparison to other approaches.

## **Jay Fogelman**

### **Explaining Crowding**

The formation, maintenance and dissipation of crowds is a collection of social phenomena and, as such, is a subject for investigation and explanation by social science. I will argue that these processes are not explicable simply in terms of the actions and influences of the members of the crowd viewed in isolation, but that they are embedded in a complex environment, an environment that provides the conditions for crowding processes. I argue that the growth and dissolution of a mob on a public square can be modeled (and explained) in much the same way as the growth and dissolution of a cybercrowd viewing a new Britney Spears video on YouTube.

It is essential to consider a broad range of environmental factors, what I call the 'ecosystem' or the 'ecological factors' that provides the context and infrastructure for the formation of the causal chains.

Developments in network theory will help us to understand the impact of these virtual networks and the role they play in facilitating cybercrowding.

I argue that the range of tools available to social scientists at present leaves gaps in the formulation of a general model. Thoroughgoing explanations of crowding cannot avoid reference to meta-properties such as "fitness", "utility", and "attractors". The result of these dependencies is that the state of the art of crowding theory remains, like the theory of evolution, strong on explanation but short on prediction.

I believe that a broad, interdisciplinary approach shows promise of a unified and rigorous approach to the explanation of a wide and inclusive variety of mass social phenomena.

## **Melvin Freitas**

### **Truthmaker Theory and the Counterfactual Grounding Problem for Phenomenalism**

My task is to address a particular problem for phenomenalism, on the assumption that phenomenalism is (or might be) true. Phenomenalism is the view that (i) the direct objects of perception are mind-dependent objects (viz., sense-data), and (ii) that there are no mind-independent physical objects (Robinson 1994). But then how do we account for our intuitive notion that physical objects are mind-independent? For instance, given phenomenalism, what makes it true (assuming that it is true) that <If I were to taste that cherry, it would be sweet>, or that <If we were all to leave this room, the chairs would still be here>. I call this the counterfactual grounding problem for phenomenalism, that is, the problem of grounding the truth of counterfactual statements about our experience of physical objects. I wish to consider potential solutions to the counterfactual grounding problem inspired by arguments in both the metaphysics of causation and truthmaker theory. In this talk, I consider truthmaker theory as it has been applied and criticized in recent arguments concerning presentism in the philosophy of time. Presentism is roughly the view that only the present time (or present objects) exists. Some philosophers have argued that truths about the past are essentially basic, for instance, they argue that the reason it is presently true that <There were dinosaurs> is grounded in the basic (present) fact that there were dinosaurs. If that's right, then one might also think that present truth of <If I were taste that cherry, it would be sweet> is grounded in the basic fact that the cherry is sweet.

## **Zsófia Göde**

### **Turning Over the Black Page: Feminist Appropriations of Spinoza**

For the past decades, Spinoza has seen a surge in popularity amongst prominent feminist philosophers (of history), such as Susan James, Moira Gatens, Genevieve Lloyd and Hasana Sharp. The growing feminist interest in Spinoza, however, is far from self-evident: the so-called "black page" of the unfinished Political Treatise, containing quite literally Spinoza's last words to us, explicitly refers to the exclusion of women from political participation. While some have tried to show that such claims are inconsistent with the general thrust of his philosophy, feminist interpreters of Spinoza need not and, for the most part, have not taken a defensive stance regarding "the black page." In my talk, I would like to draw attention to how the study of historical texts can provide inspiration for contemporary critical projects insofar as they prompt us to unmask our presuppositions and question standard interpretations of the canon. In the case of Spinoza, his re-conceptualization of supposed binaries between the body and the mind or nature and culture,

along with his theories of affects and knowledge could prove to be a fertile ground for feminist critics looking for conceptual schemes alternative to the current disciplinary mainstream.

## **Hywel Griffiths**

### **A Psychosociophysical Situation**

I'll illustrate the interdependence of psychological, social and physical factors in the origin and development of concepts by considering mathematical concepts, including their biological, cultural and historical roots.

## **Máté Herner**

### **The World-soul as a Cosmic Principle and its Antecedents in Presocratic Thought**

In the seminal dialogue of his late period, the *Timaeus*, Plato presents his first comprehensive account of the creation and functioning of the cosmos. He describes it as the most perfect created entity, a living being, which – as all living beings – is governed by a soul. The World-soul permeates the other component of the cosmos (the “World-body”) in its entirety, initiating and governing all its motions and changes, while at the same time responsible also for the genesis of all instances of correct knowledge and opinion apprehensible for humans, and serving as the paradigm of the constitution and the ideal workings of the human soul.

The idea of cosmic intelligence is not Plato's invention. It features in the works of several Presocratic philosophers: Mind for Anaxagoras, God for Xenophanes, Light and Fire for Parmenides, Logos and Fire for Heraclitus, Love and Strife for Empedocles are all active cosmic agents, often with psychic characteristics, responsible for the harmonious workings (and in some cases the creation) of the cosmos. While certainly similar, the function and significance of these concepts are far from being identical to those of Plato's World-soul in the *Timaeus*. In my thesis, I would like to investigate the relationship between the World-soul and the principles in Presocratic cosmologies, which are relatable to it.



**Marius Jakstas**

## **Ethical ‘Intuitions’ as Emotion-Based Responses**

The core of my proposal is that, with regard to ethical philosophy at least, the term ‘intuitions’ should be dropped, mainly due to its often confusing and inconsistent use among various authors (and sometimes even within a single author). In cases where, I think, we can speak sensibly about something like ‘intuitions’, by which I mean, broadly speaking, spontaneous, non-inferential insights or hunches about what is right and wrong, just and unjust (i.e. a subset of this term’s use, which has also been taken up by experimental philosophy), we are much better-off calling them emotion-based responses. This would not only bar confusion but also offer a powerful response, or so I contend, to the key challenges faced by ethical intuitionism, namely the objections from recalcitrant intuitions, imperfect cognitive heuristics, framing effects, and cross-cultural variation. For my proposal to go through, however, I need a sufficiently clear explanation of what I mean by emotions. Here I rely on Robert C. Roberts’s somewhat unorthodox perceptual account of emotions, which, in turn, is inspired by Wittgenstein’s views on aspect-perception. Both of these I will briefly sketch at the beginning of my presentation.

**Yuliya Kanygina**

## **Society-Centred Morality and Duties to Oneself**

The notion of moral duties to oneself is often regarded with skepticism. My aim in this talk is to explore one reason for this skepticism. It stems from the presupposition that morality is essentially a social enterprise concerned with our relations with each other. Stated in this abstract way, this presupposition may seem to be a serious objection to the concept of duties to oneself. I argue, however, that once specified, this objection appears to be unjustified.

I specify two ways in which morality can be characterized as an essentially social enterprise. On one understanding (I), morality can be regarded as social by definition. That is, only those actions are distinctively moral which have consequences or which bear upon the wellbeing of other people or, more broadly, on other sentient creatures as well as other rational beings. Alternatively (II), morality can be regarded as social in a procedural sense. That is, the principles prescribing which actions are right and wrong are determined by a community of people by means of a hypothetical agreement. The idea that moral actions are those which have bearing on other people’s well-being does not serve as the criterion used in decision-making.

With regard to one, I argue that, firstly, it does not find support in moral language of ordinary people. Secondly, it begs the question against a number of not obviously non-viable first-order moral theories. (II) may be further specified in a number of ways. I will argue that on some specifications, it does not represent a genuine threat to the idea of duties to oneself, while the other specification is such that the view built within its framework is unsound.

**Marko Konjovic**

## **Love, Justice, and Moral Reasoning**

Part of the richness of human life, at the meta-level, is the ability to acknowledge that there are multiple sources of normativity. Yet, this richness continues to provoke extensive debate. After all, we do want to act for the right reason. For example, when we are thinking about parents who provide care for their children, most would agree that they should do it out of love. Acting out of a sense of justice, the reason others would endorse, would be seen as faulty. So, love and justice, viewed as distinct values (the moral nature of love is subject to controversy), represent different grounds upon which we can make claims over others. If it is true that both love and justice are genuine reasons for moral action, why must they be opposed? How does recognizing that we owe our beloved something out of justice prevent us from responding to them out of love? Moreover, why must we choose one over the other? In other words, is giving precedence to either the perspective of love or the perspective of justice the only way to resolve the conflict? If not, then how might we go about resolving the tension? These are some of the questions I wish to examine in more detail.

**Linda Lázár**

**TBA**

**Michele Luchetti**

## **Rethinking the role of time in Four-Dimensionalism from a transcendental perspective**

The problem of persistence through time of material entities is a thoroughly debated issue in contemporary analytic metaphysics. Four-Dimensionalism is one of the most developed and better-supported theories accounting for how objects extend over space-time. According to a minimal and mostly shared perspective, the fundamental (i.e. minimal) assumptions of Four-Dimensionalism boil down to the following theses (Luchetti, 2014):

1. The universe is a four-dimensional manifold of which one of the dimensions is time.
2. Material objects extend four-dimensionally in space-time. They have a spatial as well as a temporal extension.
3. Four-dimensional entities extend in time by having temporal parts.

Although traditionally Four-Dimensionalism is thought to find support in static views of time and eternalist ontologies (Carroll and Markosian, 2010), many pictures have been drawn in which Four-

Dimensionalism constitutes a broader picture together with Presentism (Brogaard, 2000), the Spotlight view or even Endurantism (Parsons, 2000). However, more recent accounts have stated that the assumption of the relativistic frame is an essential precondition to investigate the persistence conditions of material objects in terms of four-dimensionalist metaphysical perspectives (Balashov, 2000; Gibson and Pooley, 2006). Indeed, these accounts provide compelling arguments in support of the view that the foundations of Four-Dimensionalism do not rest upon the assumption of any specific metaphysical view of time. The aim of this presentation is that of presenting a challenge to the common view that Four-Dimensionalism requires an ontological commitment to time (or times), by arguing that 'time' assumes different meanings in thesis 1) and 3) on the basis of the methodological approach derived from Ernst Cassirer's transcendental epistemology. According to Cassirer's functionalist paradigm, based on a dynamic and evolutionary account of kantian categories, objects themselves are in no way fundamental, it is the immutable structures at the grounds of their mutable relations, expressed by our symbolic languages (mathematics, physics, etc), that constitute the invariant characters of reality (Cassirer, 1910). When it comes to the philosophical interpretation of the principle of relativity, Cassirer draws a distinction between the pure concept of time and the relativistic space-time. The first one does not have an independently subsistent, 'real' correlate, but constitutes one of the possibility conditions of experience and objective empirical knowledge. Its 'being' boils down to the function it has within the context of scientific (and, perhaps, non-scientific) theories. The second one is the concrete and measurable multiplicity, resulting from the coordination of the single points according to determinate laws (Cassirer, 1921). On the grounds of Cassirer's transcendental epistemology it will be argued that Four-Dimensionalism is not incompatible with an anti-realist view of time, given that the conception of our universe as a four-dimensional manifold does not conflict with the pure concept of time, in as much as the latter is a formal principle, a determinate form of relation and coordination of different contents.

**Anton Markoč**

## **Intentions and Overdetermined Wrongdoing**

Most of us believe that good intentions, such as the intention to bring a good or to prevent a harm, do not make otherwise impermissible actions permissible (though they might make blameworthy ones less blameworthy). Tadros (2011, 2014) has argued that that belief is false as good intentions non-derivatively affect permissibility in some cases of overdetermination. Tadros defends the view that an action which, together with other actions, (otherwise impermissibly) overdetermines a wrong is permissible just when and because it is done with a good intention. I shall argue that that view is mistaken and that we ought to accept the view that, roughly, such an action is permissible when and because it would not be performed if the other actions had not been performed. Our common belief, therefore, remains unshattered.

## **Garrett Mindt**

### **Integrated Information Theory and the Hard Problem of Consciousness**

The hard problem of consciousness is the issue of explaining how and where our phenomenal experience comes from, given it does not appear to be entailed by the physical facts of our neurobiology. For those who accept the hard problem as a legitimate problem (there are of course those who deny it) its solution provides a litmus test for a complete theory of consciousness – to pass is to have a complete theory of consciousness, to fail is to miss the mark. The theory I propose to examine is known as Integrated Information Theory (IIT), whose originator Giulio Tononi has suggested may be able to explain how a collection of seemingly unconscious neurons and connections can give rise to the vivid array of experiences which pervade our waking moments. Tononi claims that IIT is capable of capturing both the quality and the quantity of consciousness present in a system. The questions of importance for this presentation are: does such an account of consciousness have any possibility of explaining the hard problem of consciousness? And, if it does, to what extent does it answer the hard problem? For the purposes of this presentation, a short introduction to the hard problem of consciousness and the basic theoretical framework of IIT will be necessary. Once this has been done, a brief examination of IIT's ability to account for the hard problem of consciousness will be the focus of the second half of the presentation.

## **Attila Mraz**

### **Electoral Disenfranchisement and Capacity-Building**

Certain cases of incompetence justify exclusion from the electorate: children and the mentally disabled are typically considered unfit to exercise the right to vote. Jason Brennan (2011) argues, further, that at least some mentally healthy adults should also be disenfranchised due to their incompetence. This raises the following question: should we help members of (some of) these groups to acquire the competence necessary for enfranchisement? I assume that we do not have a uniform answer for all of the incompetent groups above: intuitively, helping healthy adults and children in the acquisition of the competence is pro tanto required, but not helping the severely mentally disabled. Why don't we have the same intuitions in all cases of competence-based electoral exclusion? In this paper, I defend a unified justification for these diverging moral intuitions.

First, I reconstruct and criticize what I will call the Actualize Potentials! account (see, e.g., Nussbaum 2009). This account assumes that it is common to children and healthy adults, but not the mentally severely disabled, that it is possible for them to acquire competence. And everyone

who can acquire voting competence should be helped in doing so. However, the account is unsound: it is possible that some mentally severely disabled individuals may acquire the competence necessary for voting. So the account only justifies intuitions regarding children and healthy adults. Further, the account has counterintuitive consequences: e.g., if gorillas could acquire the relevant competence, we should help them do so.

Second, I reconstruct and defend the No Interest account. On this account, not everyone who can acquire competence should be helped to acquire voting competence. The presence of some mental capacities grounds certain special interests of individuals (cf. Christiano 2014). The right to vote is justified by promoting these interests, and thus justifies help in the acquisition of further competence only for those who have these initial capacities (cf. Christiano 2008). Even if the relevant capacities themselves can be acquired, the justification of the right to vote does not provide any reason to help anyone acquire them. This justifies the intuition regarding the mentally disabled and healthy adults. However, it does not seem to justify intuitions concerning young children. Neither the mentally disabled nor children have the requisite capacities, and yet we should help the latter, but not the former, to acquire the requisite competence.

I defend the No Interest account by rebutting the objection concerning children. I argue that the children should, depending on their age, be simply treated either as mentally disabled or as healthy but incompetent adults for the purpose of determining our duties to build their voting competence. We may have reasons to help young children acquire the capacities which ground an interest in voting, but these reasons themselves are not grounded in the justification of the right to vote. Once children do have the requisite capacities, we should help them acquire voting competence, for reasons grounded in the justification of the franchise.

Finally, I fend off the objection that capacities are gradual, and therefore, if anyone has the relevant capacities to a minimal degree-- including the mentally disabled and children -- , we should help them acquire voting competence according to the No Interest account.

**Işık Sarihan**

## **Philosophical Progress and the Structure of Academia: Adventures in Applied Metaphilosophy**

In this talk I will be dealing with the question of why there doesn't seem to be much progress in philosophy regarding the solution of philosophical puzzles. Philosophers who reflect on the issue of progress in philosophy usually tend to investigate the nature of philosophy, the analytic methods we are using, and the nature of knowledge. Not much attention is given to the practical, social, professional and organizational side of the issue. I will propose that the cause for the lack of progress in philosophy might be that we do not have the right kind of academic structures within the profession, structures that would lead to more fruitful research by establishing a division of labour and organizing the knowledge produced. Most philosophers spend most of their working time not reflecting on philosophical questions per se, but with other academic burdens, and the social exchange between philosophers are done in a way that is too slow and much less systematic than it can ideally be. To demonstrate the point, I will present a thought experiment which involves a large group of imaginary philosophers who conduct their professional work in a manner very different than how it is conducted in the actual world today. I will also talk of some prospects of putting this thought experiment in actual practice.

**Ehsan Shafiee**

## **Is there anything it is like to be an agent?**

To be an animal agent is to have the ability to move and to refrain from moving one's body in a range of ways, usually in order to achieve goals which go beyond the position and movements of one's body. In our case, this ability goes hand in hand with the ability to tell the position of our limbs and the ability to tell whether they are moving and whether we are the agents behind their movements. For instance, we can tell in normal circumstances whether we ourselves raised our hand or whether it was raised by someone else or rose on its own. Is there, then, anything it is like for an agent to be an agent? I shall argue that the question, as it is commonly posed in philosophical contexts, could not be answered. Not that it is very difficult to answer, it just makes no sense.

**Katsiaryna Suryna**

## **Between a felt self and a constructed self**

I argue that a seeming gap between experience-based approaches to selfhood, which define self as implied by certain features of consciousness, and narrative approaches, which take it as a recurrent character of the narratives one tells about oneself, is not determined by the issue of temporality, but is, in fact, the result of misconception. Specifically, I show that the features of experience, which proponents of experienced-based approaches regard as making up selfhood, are conceptual extrapolations onto phenomenology, motivated by the commitment to a certain understanding of consciousness. In addition, I appeal to the theory of existential feelings to show that any informative theory of selfhood, which targets certain aspects of our experience, inevitably faces narrativity.