

Congress for Doctoral Researchers in Philosophy 21-23.10.2024, Tampere University

by Finnish doctoral training network in philosophy

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Abstract for the annual 2024 Congress for Doctoral Researchers in Philosophy, Mon 21 – Wed 23 October 2024 at Tampere University.

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Anarchism, Radical Realist Political Theory and Ethics

Realist political theory has become one of the main strands of contemporary political philosophy. Since heeding the call by Bernard Williams to focus on what is achievable instead of utopian, political theorists have moulded their approach away from ideal aspirations and Rawlsian thought experiments. This has led to further ostracism of radically different takes on political thinking and practice, especially those on the radical left, such as anarchism, and reiterating the hegemony of liberalism both in political reality and political philosophy. However, the likes of Raymond Geuss and Paul Raekstad amongst others, have bucked the trend and aimed to show it is possible, contra Williams, to be both realist and radical. One central aspect of realist political theory is criticising the moral-first approach to politics often attributed to ideal theorists of political philosophy. This is shared broadly with radical realists as well. When defending anarchism in this way, certain problems arise. One of the most significant of these is that, since anarchism and anarchists have often emphasised the ethical aspect of their ideology, contra especially to Marxists, minimising the ethics in the political realm, broadly construed, puts the radical realist defence of anarchism in danger of taking away something central from the anarchist political theory. My goal in this paper is to inquire about the tensions between radical realism and anarchism and carve room for radical realist theory that does not fall into moralism, yet takes seriously the ethical underpinning needed for collective action that is crucial to anarchist political philosophy.

Miskawayh on Happiness

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Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb Miskawayh (d. 1030 CE) was a prominent philosopher in the Arab-Islamic intellectual milieu throughout the tenth and early eleventh centuries. He wrote *The Refinement of Character* (*Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) and *The Order of Happiness* (*Tartīb al-sa‘āda*), two influential ethical treatises built on the theory of virtue rooted in Greek philosophy and Islamic civilization. Like in the case of Aristotle, happiness is an extremely important topic in Miskawayh’s philosophical theory.

It is argued that for Miskawayh, happiness is the highest good in relation to its possessor and is perfection to him. The perfection that is particular to the rationality of humans is twofold, one of which is cognitive (*al-juz’ al-naẓarī*) and the other practical (*al-juz’ al-‘amalī*). The first, or theoretical, perfection is with respect to the other, or practical, perfection as form is to matter. Neither can be complete without the other, for knowledge is a beginning and action an end. A beginning without an end is wasted, while an end without a beginning is unfeasible. Philosophy is divided into two parts: the theoretical part and the practical part. When a man masters both parts, he gains complete happiness. A completely happy man cannot progress until he has acquired a sound knowledge of all the parts of philosophy and mastered them gradually. Man’s happiness may be different from that of a horse, and the happiness of all things lies in their particular completion and perfection. In Miskawayh’s view, the completion and perfection of animals are obtained without intention, deliberation, or will. What animals obtain from their food, drink, and relaxation should be referred to as luck or chance rather than happiness.

This paper aims to investigate Miskawayh’s thought of human happiness, which can be achieved by performing reason through a number of sciences that must be mastered, and apprehend the various forms of non-human happiness. According to him, philosophy is the path to happiness that anyone can attain. Philosophy enables man to realize the completeness of happiness, both theoretical knowledge and moral perfection, within themselves.

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Abstract for the 2024 Congress for Doctoral Researchers in Philosophy

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COUNTER-STRUGGLES OF RECOGNITION

In my paper, I propose that understanding contemporary social struggles as struggles for recognition can be enhanced by adding concept "counter-struggle of recognition" to their treatment. By counter-struggles I mean opposition to demands for recognition that should be understood as making a competing claim for recognition. Especially current conflicts about acceptance of "new" collective identities often involve an element of counter-struggle.

I use demands for accepting gender diversity and opposition to them as an example of the dynamics. I explain how counter-struggles of recognition stem from incompatibility of identities and the perceived threat to one's own identity from others seeking acceptance to ways of identification that seem incompatible with it. Since counter-struggles are formed to defend ways of identification that are currently more or less accepted in society, some of their features differ from other kinds of recognition struggles. There are differences in the way struggles are motivated by experiences of (non)recognition and in the process of interpreting who the struggle is for, which I examine. The idea of counter-struggles of recognition will help to shed light on difficulty of social progress and to explain why claims made in defence of hegemonic identities differ from those made from minority positions.

Keywords: recognition, identities, social struggles, gender, polarization

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Fluid concepts: A view of concepts as discontinuous and unenduring

In this paper I challenge the conventional understanding of concepts in contemporary philosophy of mind and language as stable, enduring, and shared entities. I argue that concepts do not exist as such. Instead, concepts are transient and subjective patterns of family resemblance among distinct mental events, with no stable or shared components, even within the same individual over time. This view aligns with internalist semantics, asserting that meaning and reference are entirely subjective and reducible to internal mental states. I also discuss criticisms of the related view of semantic internalism and explore neurobiological evidence supporting the idea that conceptual representations change over time and context. I conclude that, while concepts are not stable or intersubjectively shared, communication and understanding are still possible through subjective pattern recognition, though always "lossy" rather than complete.

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Towards context-sensitive normative theories of borders

Pauline Ochoa Espejo argues that borders are justified only if they enable the functioning of local contexts of cooperation and the restoration of natural environments that support these local schemes of cooperation. In this presentation, I explore and extend her theory by systematically considering the ways in which specific contexts affect both the justification and creation of borders. Sensitivity to specific places is a useful basis for examining the rationale for the creation and future of borders. However, I argue that Ochoa Espejo's critique of critical border studies and her disregard for the impact of culture and identities on the creation and maintenance of borders limits the relevance of her theory. By neglecting the role of culture and identity in border-making, I claim that she relies on an overly functional understanding of political communities. Understanding the role of culture and identity in border-making is particularly important if we are to understand how borders and their functions can be transformed to treat the people subject to them more justly.

I will outline how context-sensitive normative theories of borders might proceed so as to more systematically reveal the diverse experiences and meanings attached to particular borders, both locally and globally. Understanding borders as both local and global, and also material and cultural, institutions reveals how borders are "overdetermined" by global divisions and contradictions, as Étienne Balibar's has argued. Thus, the democratization of borders requires both structural transformations of the global order and learning processes towards inclusive identities and cultures. The democratization of borders must then draw on both a conjectural analysis of global power relations and on local experiences and meanings of borders and their functions. Such an analysis is more likely to identify both the wrongs that particular borders produce and the agents capable of democratizing border's functions.

Abstract

The 2024 Congress for Doctoral Researchers in Philosophy in Tampere University.

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The Lucky and the Ambiguous: the unsalvageable Gettier cases

Ever since the esteemed Gettier-cases aimed to refute the tripartite analysis of knowledge, the Justified True Belief analysis has been widely considered to be insufficient in some instances. Thus far it has been the consensus that the Gettier-cases remain unsolvable, and that the tripartite analysis of knowledge falls short of proper knowledge. In this paper I argue that the Gettier cases are largely misconstrued. I offer that the best explanation for the seeming persistence of the Gettier cases is that they are largely based on problems that are not epistemic in nature.

I argue in the light of the recent philosophical research that many of the so-called Gettier cases can be shown to be cases of semantic failure, whereby they involve semantic ambiguity, that is a failure of reference, which renders the Gettier cases seemingly possible. By eliminating this semantic ambiguity, the Gettier cases which rely on what is called an 'ambiguous designator' seem to dissipate. Furthermore, I argue that those Gettier cases which might not be based on semantic ambiguity are problematic in their own sense, that is they are not cases of justified true belief, since they involve what is called 'veritic luck' that is incompatible with a belief that is justified (de Grefte, 2023). I argue that whenever any given (gettiered) case of knowledge appears to be so due to some significant degree of luck, the belief however true cannot be justified. From this it follows plausibly that in all instances the three conditions of the JTB-analysis are sufficient to knowledge.

Consequently, I argue that the Gettier cases are either cases of semantic failure, that is a failure of reference, and/or cases which are not knowledge due to not being justified true beliefs. I conclude that the Gettier cases are therefore unsalvageable as counterexamples to the tripartite analysis of knowledge and pose no threat to the Justified True Belief Analysis. Finally, I promote the view that the JTB-analysis – while not perfect – is at least a sustainable analysis of knowledge with few to none major problems, and therefore a very commendable as a definition and analysis of knowledge. This is already a lot, given the concurrent culture of epistemological research concerning the definition of knowledge, which could be described as being in a state of epistemic crisis.

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Title: Phenomenological Playfulness of Questions and the Genesis of Philosophical Activity

Problems are part and parcel of games. There are puzzles, riddles, quizzes, mysteries – you name it. A peculiar structure of problems, or questions, seem to occupy the flow of play-activities – concerning not only problem-solving itself but also moments that precede and enable acts of decision-making. Broadly speaking, the phenomenon of ‘questions’ has a close affinity with the phenomena of games and play-activities. How close, exactly? What allows this curious unity between the playful and the problematic, and in what manner they coincide in our sense-making experiences?

In this paper, I argue that playfulness belongs to the phenomenological structure of questions – a structure by which questions are constitutive of meanings in our lived experiences. By playfulness I mean a specific kind of attitude or feature by which objects and states of affairs are meant in an ontologically neutral sense. As an attitude, it i) suspends beliefs concerning both existence and non-existence, while, at the same time, ii) allowing us to openly (i.e., without existential commitments) entertain and explore possibilities – e.g., in imagination, contemplation or immersive engagements with fictive worlds. In other words, the phenomenological concept of playfulness refers to sense-making experiences that are by no means limited to spheres of leisure and games. This generality of playfulness will be demonstrated by a phenomenological analysis of questions.

“Playfulness”, as it is posed in the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl, is an often-neglected aspect of his philosophical project – despite its foundational, methodological role in phenomenological reductions. After all, these methods rely directly on the previously mentioned aspects of playfulness, such as abstention from metaphysical stance-takings (in transcendental reduction) and free play of imaginative variation (in eidetic reduction). I will argue that questions operate with the very same, simple principles.

Conclusions and findings of my paper are not only relevant to phenomenologists but also to all philosophers and scientists alike. They provide a novel account in and of Husserlian phenomenology – a school of thought that is often misunderstood as overly intellectualistic. However, these same results reveal surprising insights about the practice of philosophers and scientists by highlighting the conditions of possibility of philosophical and scientific investigations.

Lastly, the findings provide conceptual tools for multidisciplinary contributions. The linkage between playfulness and questions helps to explain both emancipatory and exploitative roles of questions in the realm of politics. It also helps to explain the importance of playful, imaginative explorations in learning-processes. Finally, it allows one to analyze experiential features of clinical phenomena in a novel light: e.g., the role of inspiration and playful experimentation in various processes of recovery and in renewing one’s sense of value and meaning in the experiences of depression. All in all, it is the awakening of the question that moves all of us to examine possibilities – whether we are seasoned philosophers or curious, venturesome children.

Keywords: phenomenology, playfulness, imagination, questions, logic, philosophy of science, aesthetics

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Residual Power and Employer Prerogative: a Conceptual Analysis

Abstract: Most workplaces are hierarchical. For the political theory of the firm this simple fact begs the question: Why? Why employers favour hierarchy over egalitarian organization, and through which mechanisms is this hierarchy retained? In neo-republican political philosophy these questions are often captured and answered through the concept of *residual authority*. As the concept implicates, managers of firms are given the authority to order workers around *in residue* of employment contracts, collective agreements, and employment laws. The problem with this understanding of the authority within the workplaces becomes clear if one tries to apply the concept of the residual power to platform-based work, where the employers' power persists in the absence of employment contracts. Furthermore, residual authority as a concept focuses on the micro-institutional level of manager-worker relationships. Thus, residual authority seems to be insufficient in capturing the broader questions of how and why the managers and the owners of a typical hierarchical firm reproduce the power relations inherent in it. In this paper I offer a new concept in order to further the neo-republican discussion of employers' authority in firms: *employer prerogative*. Employer prerogative is utilized not only by managers, but also owners of the firm. It encompasses the questions of who gets to design work processes, and how the power in the meso-level of the firm is wielded. Employer prerogative may also prove useful in exploring the motivations of employers. The analysis starts with an investigation of the institutional and the transaction-schools of micro-economic thought, which inform the development of the concept of employer prerogative. The second part of the paper takes a more philosophical look at the concepts of residual authority and employer prerogative. The paper is linked with neo-republican workplace democracy framework, in which residual authority has garnered a lively conversation. In the conclusion I briefly explore how the underlying themes of efficiency and the curtailment of uncertainty motivating the constitution of residual authority and employer prerogative may construe, if not a hard limit, at least a hard question for the democratization of work.

Dwelling and the sense of life: remarks on the phenomenology of home

The concept of dwelling is used frequently in the philosophical and social scientific literature concerning home. Many researchers use this concept in its everyday sense, but there are also more technical ways of using this term. When “dwelling” is used as a technical term, researchers tend to draw either from Martin Heidegger’s or Emmanuel Levinas’ phenomenological works, or lean to later developments, which are nevertheless heavily influenced by the classic works of phenomenologists.

Although Heidegger’s and Levinas’ concepts are highly illuminative, they are firmly embedded in complex philosophical backgrounds, constituted by the key-ideas and arguments of these philosophers. Because of this, these concepts are marked by significant theoretical weight, and it is not easy to come up with a short explanation of what these thinkers actually mean by “dwelling”. For this reason, I believe that it is worthwhile to take a fresh look at this foundational activity.

The objective of my presentation is to introduce a novel account of “*dwelling*”, which draws resources from Husserlian phenomenology. According to my account, dwelling is a drive-based activity, which is targeted in fulfilment of the person’s constantly renewing basic needs. As such, dwelling revolves around our constantly renewing basic needs and most pressing interests, which demand our attention. but which also grows into a more comprehensive and existential activity of making sense of one’s life and personal future. As such, dwelling is not “fuelled” only by the needs of the individual but also by their “transcendence”, the movement of freedom, which forces the individual towards the future and opens up a space of existential possibilities. Thus, dwelling is simultaneously a practical project of self-preservation, and an existential act of striving to understanding one’s current situation and future. Despite its internal duality, dwelling has a more or less coherent overall structure, which manifests itself in its constitutional product, “*the sense of life*”.

The term “sense of life” refers to the person’s intuitive understanding of their own existential situation, which arises as a natural *byproduct* of dwelling. We literally construct our “lives” by dwelling. The sense of life is a formation of meaning and value, which define the limits, contents, and direction of the person’s life. Thus, this concept captures a relatively narrow and idiosyncratic dimension of a person’s *total* situation, which can be understood in terms of Heideggerian “being-in-the-world”, Husserlian “monad”, or Sartrean “situation”. The sense of life *excludes* all activities, places, objects, and people, which are not recognized as practically, socially, or personally relevant by the dweller, and is not necessarily a good description of what is *actually* going on in the person’s surroundings. Moreover, it has nothing to do with the so-called “meaning of life”: the sense of life can be utterly disappointing and devoid of any deeper meaning. It is nothing more than the dweller’s current perception of how their life looks and feels like – an experiential overview of the core factors of one’s situation.

This presentation provides phenomenological analyses of the activity of dwelling and the sense of life. I describe these phenomena both statically and genetically and point out the main differences between my account and those that have been proposed by Heidegger’s and Levinas’. After this, I will explain how these terms are related to the phenomenon of *home*. In order to do this, I introduce the metaphors of “core” and “ground”: home is a structural “core” and a functional “ground” of the person’s sense of life. This means that home occupies a structurally “central” position in the dweller’s life and serves the practical and existential aims of dwelling by helping the dweller to cope with their everyday practices and to build a life that they view as personally satisfying and worth living for.

The effects of hermeneutical category invalidation on the conferralist framework of social categories

In this paper, my aim is to investigate how category invalidation affects epistemic resources that in turn can guide the subject matter and the scope of metaphysical inquiry concerning gender categorization of marginalized genders, such as nonbinary identities. This paper focuses on the social position-based conferralist framework of social categories by Ásta (2018). I examine how this account of social construction of categories is affected by epistemic category invalidation and how the epistemic bias could be countered in order to better the framework's ability to capture and describe the diverse effects of gendered oppression that people with marginalized gender identities face. The paper also comments on how employing the concept of category invalidation can inform questions of the metaphysics of marginalized gender identities.

The metaphysical account investigated is the conferralist framework (Ásta 2018). The conferralist framework is a highly context-dependent framework on how different social properties, and thus category memberships such as gender, are conferred onto people by tracking assumed base properties. Therefore, one can be conferred as a woman by tracking her feminine features in one context, but a man in other, if the relevant base property in that context is a prominent Adam's apple.

In Porkkala (forthcoming), I argue for category invalidation as a distinct form of hermeneutical injustice. Category invalidation is form of epistemic injustice that consists of (usually) dominantly positioned knowers not being willing to employ categorizations created by marginally situated knowers. Knowers that act in willful ignorance by refusing to adopt and utilize marginalized epistemic resources and categorizations can engage in category invalidation, where claims to marginalized identities are not only dismissed and not affirmed, but the existence of the category that is being claimed is also invalidated or outright denied.

The harms of category invalidation follow the harms recognized by Fricker (2007) in the general account of epistemic injustice – there are personal, interpersonal, and structural harms that result from category invalidation. I argue that due to the highly context-dependent nature of social categories in the conferralist framework, the interpersonal and structural harms caused category invalidation can be carried over to the metaphysical account of social categories, especially in cases of non-established categories such as nonbinary gender identities. In these cases, this can lead to the framework not being sensitive to marginalized or contested social categories. If there is no room for contested metaphysical categories, the framework can end up replicating the original interpersonal and structural harms of category invalidation on a metaphysical level.

Cicero's Layers

Elias Puustinen (TAU)

The philosophical works of the Roman statesman and philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero present challenges for his readers. Cicero seems to want to limit philosophy in such a way that, regarding the philosophy of religion, one should adhere to the customs of our ancestors, while simultaneously showing support for Stoic philosophy and rejecting altogether the philosophy's ability to give any answer to the question about the existence of the gods. In another work, Cicero uses skeptical philosophy to demonstrate the invalidity of all forms of prediction — while at the same time defending it and considering it a crucial activity for the stability of the state.

The contradictions in Cicero's texts can be explained by the fact that, as a practical Roman, he does not engage in philosophy merely for philosophy's sake. Cicero does not simply repeat the thoughts of his time; rather, he actively contributes to the construction of Roman philosophy and its relationship with the state and Roman identity in general.

I suggest that Cicero wears multiple hats simultaneously: as a philosopher, he is a skeptical academic, but when he needs positive beliefs, he shifts to Stoicism, especially when it aligns with his role as a statesman and educator for future generations in the right idea of Roman identity. As a philosopher, Cicero contains multiple layers. These layers need sometimes different responses that might be contractionary. The internal contradictions in his texts may be attributed to differing aims and perspectives that are necessary for different roles that Cicero had. By understanding these various roles, or "layers," one can avoid major pitfalls when reading this exceptional Roman philosopher.

Abstract title: Socio-historical transformation of ideology in light of Adorno's posthumously released literature.

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Abstract:

My presentation examines Theodor W. Adorno's understanding of the socio-historical changes of ideology considering new posthumously published literature from the collections called *Nachgelassene Schriften* and *Frankfurter Seminare*. I will focus on the lecture series "Philosophie und Soziologie" and two seminars held by Adorno, titled "Begriff der Ideologie" and "Zeitgenössische Ideologien". In my presentation, I will read these texts vis-à-vis Adorno's other writings to shed new light on Adorno's approach to ideology-theory.

In "Philosophie und Soziologie" Adorno develops his ideas concerning the transformations of ideologies and alternating functions in different social contexts in a critical dialogue with other ideology-theories by for example Karl Marx, Vilfred Pareto and Max Scheler. In these lectures Adorno introduces his preliminary "typology of ideologies" which helps to arrange different ideologies analysed by him for example liberalism, fundamental ontology, and national socialism. He also expounds his understanding of the material transformation of ideology which can be interpreted through concepts like fetishism and reification. The above-mentioned seminars present seminar-proceedings on the discussions between Adorno and his students on the history of ideology and different conceptions of ideologies, especially by Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Adorno's posthumous literature is significant to study for several reasons. First, research on Adorno's conception of ideology has not thoroughly examined this literature. Second, these posthumous works both reveal a stylistically different Adorno and allow us to trace how Adorno developed the ideas presented in his written works in his teaching. Third, these texts consider ideas or concepts which Adorno does not address consistently in his published works. For example, the "Philosophie und Soziologie" series contains more text on the concept of ideology than any other publication by Adorno. With the help of this new literature, it is possible to assess more clearly Adorno's thought and its relevance for Marxist thought today.

Keywords: Frankfurt School, Theodor W. Adorno, ideology, false consciousness, illusion, philosophy, sociology, totality, far-right, liberalism, fetishism, reification.

Structural vs. Conceptual Form: Two Strands of Logical Hylomorphism in the 14th Century

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Abstract:

Logical hylomorphism is the view that an argument is a compound of form and matter. Catarina Dutilh Novaes construes the early history of logical hylomorphism as follows. First, Aristotle mentioned that the premises of an argument are “matter for” its conclusion. Commentators of Aristotle’s syllogistic then identified the form of a syllogism with its *figure* or its *mood*. In the late Middle Ages, syllogistic was generalized into the theory of *consequence*, and the form of a consequence was identified by John Buridan with its *syncategorematic* terms and their arrangement.¹

I would like to continue the story by distinguishing two competing notions of form in the 14th century: *structural form* and *conceptual form*. I argue that both gave rise to a definition of formal consequence as one that is valid ‘in every matter’ of the same form. ‘Structural-formal’ consequence, which is found in Buridan, is reminiscent of our notion of logical consequence, whereas ‘conceptual-formal’ consequence, found in e.g. Paul of Venice, is closer to our almost forgotten idea of ‘analyticity’.

My main aim is to describe and analyse the two notions of form in detail, but I shall also examine the broader traditions to which they belong and propose some further changes to our account of them. I conclude by briefly addressing the question of why (contrary to our contemporary intuitions) conceptual form seems to have been more popular than structural form in the 14th century.

¹ Catarina Dutilh Novaes, ‘Form and Matter in Later Latin Medieval Logic: The Cases of *Suppositio* and *Consequentia*’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 50, no. 3 (2012): 339–64, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2012.0045>.

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Title of Paper: Meaning in Life in Buddha

In this paper I will investigate how the ultimate goal of Buddha's philosophy and meditation practice, nibbana, is related to the problem of meaning in life. While Buddhism is surprisingly often regarded in contemporary discussions of meaningful life, in many cases there has been the unfortunate tendency to acknowledge it through a lense of pan-Indian philosophical stereotypes. These would explain nibbana as a kind of merging or identification with the universe. These interpretations, however, are ill-fitting with how Buddha describes nibbana as a realization of non-identification, or the "not-self" (anatta in Pali).

I propose that by a closer reading of Buddha's philosophy, a more nuanced picture emerges. It's position on meaning in life depends on whether we discuss the life of practice or the life of one who has completed the practice and realized nibbana. In terms of the life of practice, Buddhism seems to be an exemplary case of the kind of goal-oriented activities, "projects", through which meaning in life is usually understood in contemporary Western philosophy. In terms of the life of one who has realized nibbana, the experience, according to Buddha, is one of bliss. Moreover, this state seems to be achieved after one has relinquished the attainment of personal projects, or by regarding them as "not-self". In a sense, then, the Buddhist goal of nibbana seems to be a blissful experience that is devoid of meaningful activities, or an experience of blissful meaninglessness.

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Existential Eucatastrophes and Existential Hope

This paper explores the concept of *Existential Eucatastrophe* (EE), which can be defined as an “event which brings about a large increase in expected value, comparable to or greater than the existing expected value of the future of humanity.” (Greaves 2024, 122). In other words, it is the inversion of existential catastrophe. This concept was initially introduced by Owen Cotton-Barratt and Toby Ord (2015). More recently it was briefly considered in a paper by Hilary Greaves (2024). Apart from that, the idea of EE and existential hope (the opposite of existential risk) has received relatively little attention in the literature. In this paper, I investigate the idea of EEs more closely: what constitutes an EE and what possible interventions there could be to increase existential hope?

The paper starts by rethinking the definition proposed by Greaves. The definition seems problematic since it is narrowed to the future of humanity solely. Indeed, Greaves (2024, 124) herself says that where “humanity” appears in a definition of existential (eu)catastrophe, it should be read as an abbreviation for “Earth originating intelligent sentient life.” This is certainly better but is it still too narrow? As there is moral uncertainty, perhaps it would be better to adopt a definition that allows more flexibility with regard to different views about value. Another issue is to clarify how the close conceptual cousins of trajectory change (see e.g., Ord 2020) and EE differ from each other. After careful conceptual engineering, this paper explores the taxonomy of eucatastrophes to better understand the notion and its ramifications. For example, as there are existential catastrophes that are natural as well as anthropogenic, are there similar categories for EEs? Or as there are risk factors that increase existential risks (cf. *ibid.*, 177), are there hope factors that increase the chance of eucatastrophes?

Finally, the paper investigates the question of does the idea of EEs have any practical significance. That is, are there any possible effective interventions that we could do to increase the chance of an EE? Or is there merit in moderation (cf. Kokotajlo & Oprea 2020)? Candidates for EEs are at least exoplanetary seeding (see Sivula 2022), benevolent advanced AI, METI (see Vakoch 2016), establishment of self-sufficient space settlements, and revolutions in science and moral progress. After systematically examining potential EEs, this paper suggests that all of them face either the problem that the EE is shadowed by potential great downsides that make pursuing them less attractive (at least for now) or that we are too clueless of the long-term effects for the EE to be a credible goal. Thus, despite EE being a theoretically interesting concept it seems to lack practical potential as a strategy for doing good.

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Ethical Competence for Sustainability Transformation

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Abstract

It has been argued that ethical or normative competence is a key competence for dealing with the sustainability challenges (e.g., Wiek et al., 2011). In a sense, the need for ethical competence in sustainability transformation is obvious since sustainability challenges are value-laden and normatively complex phenomena. Ethical competence is needed for appropriately handling the normative dimension of sustainability (see Becker, 2012). The purpose of this research is, still, to further clarify reasons for intervening in unsustainability specifically through the development of ethical competence. Ethical competence enables responsible moral agency needed for right action, including sustainable action. Therefore, I argue that we should recognize ethical competence as an *inner sustainability goal*, that is, a sustainability goal regarding the recently introduced inner dimension of sustainability (on this dimension of sustainability, see e.g., Horlings, 2015; Ives et al., 2020). Ethical competence is a meta-level sustainability goal that supports the achieving of all other sustainability goals through contributing to responsible agency for sustainability. I argue that fostering citizens' ethical competence on a large scale, globally, should be a priority for the politics and policy of sustainability for diverse reasons: (1) epistemic advantages of democratizing ethical reasoning (the epistemic argument), (2) wellbeing benefits of responsible agency (the wellbeing argument), (3) enabling citizens' participation in valuable projects (the meaningful life argument), (4) enabling the co-creation of just socio-ecological systems through citizens' agency (the participation argument), (5) taking responsibility and holding other individuals responsible for unsustainability (the responsibility argument), (6) ethical competence functions as a deep leverage point for a just systemic transformation (the deep leverage point argument), and (7) sustaining just systemic relations requires ethically competent moral agents (the just institutions argument). Ethical competence has, therefore, instrumental values for promoting sustainability but we should arguably also recognize it as an intrinsically valuable part of sustainable life.

Keywords

ethical competence, deep leverage points, inner development goals, inner sustainability, moral progress, responsibility, sustainability ethics, sustainable development goals, sustainability transformation

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<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-011-0132-6>

Abstract for the 2024 Congress for Doctoral Researchers in Philosophy

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Title: Retrocausality and Perspectivism

Einstein called quantum entanglement “spooky action at a distance”, and entanglement is still one of the great mysteries in quantum mechanics. It looks like a measurement on one of the entangled particles affects the state of the other one instantaneously even when the particles are separated by a large distance. If the distance is spacelike, the effect seems to be faster than light, which is in contradiction with relativity. One attempt to solve this contradiction between quantum mechanics and relativity is to introduce the postulate of retrocausality. In retrocausality, causal effects work backwards in time. In the case of entangled particles this would explain why the particles have “knowledge” about each other’s state. The knowledge comes from the particles’ future interactions. A retrocausal explanation like this has been explored by Huw Price (see, for example, Price 1997, where he uses the term advanced action, or backward causation), although very recently, Price and Ken Wharton wrote an article where they propose a new way of reconciling nonlocality with relativity without the postulate of retrocausality (Price & Wharton 2024).

Price has also written on causal perspectivism (see, for example, Price 2005), and more recently, on (neo-)pragmatism (Price 2022), which he sees as a global theory, that includes causality. According to Price’s view, causality could be a perspectival or pragmatic notion. It means that the way humans, as temporally asymmetric creatures, see the world, might be different from what the world would look like from some other perspective.

What makes Price’s views on causality interesting is that for many people the idea of retrocausality is against their intuition, but at the same time “normal” forward causation seems intuitively obviously true. Price’s causal views seem to go against these common intuitions. My question is: what is the ontological status of causation, if it is at the same time both perspectival, and part of the explanation for quantum entanglement?

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