



UNC-KCL Workshop in Philosophy May 30-31, 2024

All Workshop sessions will be in Room 213 in Caldwell (240 E Cameron Ave)

Session format: 90-minute sessions consisting of a 40-45 minute presentation, a 5-minute break, and 40-45 minutes of Q&A

Matt's cell: 919-448-8920

Thursday, May 30, 2024

9-9:30: Welcome and breakfast

9:30-11: Bill Brewer – The Role of Concepts in Perceptual Objectivity

Does our application of concepts in perception have a role in our understanding of the objectivity of what we perceive? I clarify a specific version of this question and present an argument for an affirmative answer: Conceptualism. I give an objection to the resulting position, offer an alternative Anti-Conceptualist account of perceptual objectivity, and explain where I think the argument for Conceptualism goes wrong.

11-11:15 Break

11:15-12:45: Cal Fawell – The Varieties of Infelicity

Some assertions are what philosophers call "infelicitous". For instance: an assertion of "it's raining, but I don't think it's raining". Those who think that certain norms govern assertion often argue for their views by pointing out that assertions which violate those norms are infelicitous. But on the most popular accounts of which norms govern assertion, it's unclear whether norm-violation is either necessary or sufficient for the assertion to be infelicitous. So why should the facts that (i) an assertion is infelicitous and (ii) it violates some norm give us any reason to think that norm obtains? In this paper, I investigate the different varieties of infelicity. Doing so lets me untangle different ways an infelicitous assertion can support the claim that a given norm governs assertion. This has two upshots: first, it helps adjudicate between different accounts of the norms governing assertion. Second, it tempers a popular

argument for KK: an argument that KK, combined with a knowledge norm on assertion, can explain why certain assertions are infelicitous.

12:45-2: Free time for lunch

2-3:30: Hugo Heagren: What counts as being seen? Assumption and attention in the visual prioritarianism debate

One aspect of human perception is visual experience of whole objects with features, such as being-red or being-shiny. Feature-prioritarians claim that, as a consequence of human psychology, in order to have visual experiences as of objects with features, it is necessary to have prior visual experiences of the features of that thing (this priority might be causal, or synchronous dependence, or something else). Object-prioritarianism is the converse: object experiences are prior to feature experiences. I argue for three claims. First, I distinguish *weak* from *strong* prioritarianism. On strong feature/object prioritarianism: for every experience as of an object with features, there is a prior experience of the same features/object. On weak feature/object prioritarianism: for every experience as of an object with features, there is a prior experience of /some/ object/features (not necessarily the same). Previous treatments have focused on strong prioritarianism. Next I show that two major assumptions drive the priority debate. Previous authors take themselves to be discussing visual experience in general. To establish a conclusion, their arguments' scope must include all visual experience of objects: tracking and individuation, of things in and out attention. I show that arguments actually given in the literature for feature- or object-priority focus on different aspects of experience (tracking and individuation respectively) and are all generally limited to objects under attention. Finally, I argue that these assumptions are false: individuating objects is a feature-prioritarian process, but tracking them as they move is object-prioritarian. This requires attention, and our experience of unattended objects is feature-prioritarian. This vindicates weak feature-priority, but pulls apart strong feature and object priority—both are true of different aspects of experience.

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-5:15: Marc Lange: Empiricism and the Non-Commutativity of Jeffrey Conditionalization

Jeffrey conditionalization (JC) generalizes Bayesian conditionalization to cases where an agent's empirical evidence cannot be captured by full belief in any proposition. JC is known to be "non-commutative": two experiential inputs, fed into JC in a different order, can yield different final degrees of confidence. Lange (2000) has given a widely accepted argument that JC's non-commutativity is appropriate. But Weisberg (2009) and Cassell (2020) have argued (following Carnap's objection to Jeffrey) that Lange's resolution highlights an irremediable defect in Jeffrey's framework: it requires a rule determining which inputs to JC an observer should make, but such a

rule is impossible to give. This paper argues that JC is not empty without such a rule. It is possible to explain, without any such rule, what makes some probabilities but not others appropriate as JC's input in a given case. This upholds Jeffrey's view that no empirical evidence is uncontaminated by priors.

Friday, May 30, 2024

9-9:30 Coffee and breakfast

9:30-11: Meredith Sheeks: The Guilt of the Moral Minimalist

Many of us claim to experience guilt from time to time for not performing paradigmatically supererogatory actions. While it would be *morally better* for us to perform these actions than to refrain, we admit that we are *not* morally *required* to perform them—these are morally better but optional acts. Yet if we believe that we haven't done anything *wrong* in refraining from going above and beyond the call of duty, then why do we feel *guilty*? Or, is the feeling we experience actually guilt? After all, the received account of guilt maintains that one must perceive oneself to have done something morally wrong to experience the moral emotion of guilt. I argue that these experiences of feeling guilty for not going the second mile offer us reason to reject not only the received account of guilt, but also a common assumption about moral responsibility.

11-11:15 Break

11:15-12:45: James Stazicker: Metacognition, informative identity, and related ways of underestimating consciousness

Discrimination and informative identity, construed as someone's coming to know that things are distinct or identical, are standard scientific and philosophical measures of conscious perception and the thoughts it makes possible. These measures conflate the identity of experiences or thoughts with knowledge about identity. As a result, I argue, these measures systematically underestimate consciousness, lending false support to the influential contemporary view that much of human perception and action occur non-consciously. In both the science of consciousness and the philosophy of perception-based thought, conflating psychological identity with knowledge about identity forces theorists to adopt metacognitive measures: measures that depend on subjects' capacity to discriminate their own psychology. By distinguishing the identity of perceptual experiences and of perception-based thoughts from knowledge about identity, I show that these metacognitive measures are gratuitously demanding, and I sketch how to defend the view that human action on perceived stimuli is an essentially conscious achievement.

12:45-2: Free time for lunch

2-3:30: Juuso Rantanen: Intrinsic properties as relational appearances

In her influential interpretation of Kant, Lucy Allais (2015) contends that we should read Kant as a content externalist. According to her reading, intuitions are essentially relational – through intuitions we are perceptually related to external objects, i.e., appearances. In arguing for the relational nature of intuitions, Allais borrows from John Campbell's (1993, 2002) relationalist theoretical framework. However, this presents a *prima facie* incongruity for her interpretation.

Allais, given the constraints of transcendental idealism, argues that we only ever perceive appearances which exclusively have relational properties, such as phenomenal colour, and thereby relegates intrinsic properties, e.g., the categorical grounds of phenomenal colour, to the transcendental realm. In contrast, Campbell's theoretical framework explicitly seeks to find room for both relational qualities and categorical grounds of those relational qualities, without needing to relegate the latter to the transcendental realm.

In this paper I interrogate the feasibility of Allais' proposal given the two seemingly incongruent theoretical frameworks that she attempts to bring together, concluding that Campbell's theoretical framework is not well-suited to support her interpretation of transcendental idealism. In doing so I explicate the structural parallel between Campbell's framework with that of G.W.F Hegel's argument at the start of the *Science of Logic* (2010, [1816]). I suggest that Hegel's argument concerning the development of being-in-itself into being-for-itself can be read as arguing for the unity of intrinsic and relational properties. I claim that both Hegel and Campbell agree in thinking that intrinsic properties can and do present themselves as relational properties to conscious minds.

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-5:15: Yifan Li: Phenomenal Representation of Spatial Features: A Trope-Based Approach

Russellianism about experience is the view that the phenomenal content of our experience consists in properties. By contrast, Fregeanism is the view that phenomenal content consists not in properties, but the "mode of presentation" of properties. In (Thompson 2010) and (Chalmers 2011, 2019), Brad Thompson and David Chalmers have produced a series of arguments against Russellianism by arguing that phenomenal content concerning spatial features such as shape, size, and length cannot be Russellian. In response, David Bennett (2012) and Peter Epstein (2018) make a similar move: they suggest that Russellians should take phenomenal content of spatial features to be subject-relative or "indexical" in nature.

In this paper, my first goal is to critically examine Bennett and Epstein's response to Thompson and Chalmers. The conclusion of my examination is that

depending on how exactly we understand indexicality or subject-relativity, Bennett and Epstein's proposals either collapse into a form of Fregeanism, or are unable to account for the phenomenal character of our experience of shapes. After pointing out the problem with Bennett and Epstein's response, I proceed to propose a new response to Thompson and Chalmers's arguments, which rests on the idea that we phenomenally represent spatial features as tropes. Besides arguing that this view provides a better Russellian response to Thompson and Chalmers's arguments, I will also suggest that it provides us with a new perspective on the relationship between the content of our experience and the content of our physical theories, which is the implicit main theme behind Thompson and Chalmers's arguments.

7:00 Workshop Dinner at Tallulah's, 456 W Franklin St.