



# Fourth PhiGS Colloquium

20–21 June 2022

University of Kent (Canterbury). Cornwallis East SR2

## Book of Abstracts

### Contents

<b>Taymaz Azimi Sadjadi</b> University of Kent <i>The Sense of Kinds of Being: Putting the Theory of Degrees of Being to Work</i>	1
<b>Mark Garron</b> University of Kent <i>The Enduring Self between Manifest and Scientific Image</i>	1
<b>Mariano Martín-Villuendas</b> University of Salamanca <i>Veritism and the Problem of Scientific Understanding</i>	2
<b>Joel Yalland</b> University of Kent <i>Agreement and Disagreement: Conditions or Family Relations?</i>	3
<b>Patrick Skeels</b> University of California, Davis <i>Disagreeing about 'Might'</i>	3
<b>Tanuj Milind Raut</b> University of California, Irvine <i>Are Prejudices like Hinges?</i>	4
<b>Atus Mariqueo-Russell</b> University of Southampton <i>Desire Theories of Wellbeing and the Harm of Depression</i>	5
<b>Elliot Porter</b> University of Kent <i>Manic Perspective and Mystic Perspective</i>	6
<b>Lada Muraveva</b> École Pratique des Hautes Études <i>Disease of the Body or Disease of the Soul? The Definition of Mental Disorders in Medieval Medical and Philosophical Works</i>	6
<b>Sofia Melendez Gutierrez</b> University of Cambridge <i>Ante Rem Structuralism and the Semantics of Instantial Terms</i>	7
<b>Jason A. DeWitt</b> Ohio State University <i>A Problem for Global Pragmatism</i>	8
<b>Gavin Thomson</b> University of Kent <i>Making More Explicit: Extending Logical Expressivism to Mathematics</i>	8

**Taymaz Azimi Sadjadi** University of Kent

*The Sense of Kinds of Being: Putting the Theory of Degrees of Being to Work*

‘There are many senses in which a thing may be said to “be”’, so says Aristotle (1003a33). Nonetheless, Aristotle believed these senses to be related to a central point, traditionally known as focal meaning (πρὸς ἓν/*pros hen*). The famous passage from which this quotation is extracted has underpinned an ontological debate for centuries: The proponents of the view known as the *equivocality of being* (Plotinus, Avicenna, Aquinas, Descartes, Stebbing, Heidegger, etc.) are on one side, claiming that things exist in a variety of ways, while on the other side of the debate the defenders of the *univocality of being* (Duns Scotus, McTaggart, Quine, Van Inwagen, etc.) claim that things exist only in one sense. The former dominated the Western discourse before the 20th Century, the latter is now the dominant view among the philosophers of the analytic tradition.

There is, however, no reason to believe that these views are exclusive of one another. Following Gareth Matthews (1972) I argue in this paper that the clash between the two views is resulted from confusing *senses of being with kinds of being*. After showing how these two notions differ, I claim that being has only one sense but many different kinds and that these different kinds do not need specific senses of being to correspond with them. I then offer a view, inspired by Avicenna’s Neo-Platonist take on Aristotle as well as recent works by Kris McDaniel (2009, 2013, 2017), that if we take the sole sense of being to come in degrees then different kinds of being could correspond to different degrees rather than different senses of being. This view, I argue, could reduce the gap between the two opposing camps about the nature of existence, while providing us with a meta-ontological basis to explain the hierarchical structure of reality.

**Mark Garron** University of Kent

*The Enduring Self between Manifest and Scientific Image*

Since Wilfred Sellars, there have been two distinct ways of viewing time. The first is the manifest image (Sellars 1962). **The manifest image** is a description of how time typically presents itself in ordinary experience. It is a description that comes out of our anthropocentric perspective. It derives from and describes time through the lens of humans in the world. The key distinction is that the manifest image places normativity and reasons at centre stage.

**The scientific image**, the image we use to do physics is conceptually stingy. Coherence is nice but any posited concept in a scientific theory must bring to the table explanatory power. The problem is that much of the belief centric normative aspect of time fails to meet this standard at the physical level. Therefore, the scientific image becomes so deflated that it hardly counts as time anymore. At issue is the sort of normative demands that the scientific image implicitly makes. If the scientific image is argued to be closest to the truth, then the normative claim is ‘that is what you should believe’.

However, we can't seem to live with this deflated picture of time. People think and do things for reasons, and this comes with temporal baggage of the manifest image. Brian Greene describes this problem very well. If asked whether time has a fundamental quality that the science of physics is unable to grasp or whether the human mind imposes those qualities Greene thinks it depends on the time of day. 'If you were to ask me this question during the working day, I'd side with the latter perspective, but by nightfall, when critical thought eases into the ordinary routines of life it's hard to maintain full resistance to the former viewpoint' (Callender 2017, 180). Can we live with this contradiction, and should we live with this contradiction? If not, then can one fully embrace the scientific image full time? There is some empirical evidence to suggest that certain people, namely the clinically depressed have beliefs that closely resemble the scientific image of time. They don't go home and live in the manifest image as Greene describes. They live with the scientific image all the time. This supports what is known as the depressed realism hypothesis. The depressed realists say they have an unbiased view of time and as importantly an unbiased view of self. I argue against the depressed realist hypothesis.

The reason why the manifest image is amenable to normativity and reasons is because the enduring self seems to depend on many of the qualities of manifest time. This should be the basis for a reconciliation between the manifest image the scientific image of time.

**Mariano Martín-Villuendas** University of Salamanca

### *Veritism and the Problem of Scientific Understanding*

Veritism, the idea that truth is the sole condition of epistemic acceptance, is a widely supported position amongst contemporary epistemologists and philosophers of science (Kelp 2021; Khalifa 2017; Rice 2021). Leaving aside the case of epistemology, it is easy to note to what extent this view has exerted a profound influence on the main debates that have articulated – and still articulate – the research landscape in the philosophy of science: realism vs. antirealism, scientific modelling, scientific representation, or scientific understanding – the case in point.

The question that has revolved around the recent literature in the philosophy of science is whether veritism allows us to successfully address far-reaching philosophical problems such as those mentioned above. And more specifically, with the case at hand, whether it allows us to answer the question of what scientific understanding is and whether it allows us to understand its role in scientific practice. Several authors (De Regt 2017; Elgin 2017) have responded negatively to both questions raising several shortcomings that call into question the scope and validity of veritistic analyses.

The aim of this communication is to deepen these criticisms, as well as to show why it is necessary to adopt a genuinely pragmatist and non-factive stance towards the question of how we should think about scientific understanding. The communication will be organized as follows. First, I show the main features of veritism regarding the problem of scientific understanding. To do so, I disentangle the complex theses that underlie it. Second, I address the approach of the so-called non-literalists, a group of veritistic authors who have tried to explain one of the main objections

raised against veritism: the use of holistically distorted models. I explore to what extent this position fails in disassociating itself from the problems of standard literalist veritism. Third, I outline two global arguments against the ontological and epistemological presuppositions that ground the veritistic approach regarding scientific understanding. I conclude by suggesting the need to abandon truth as the standard by which to think about scientific understanding.

**Joel Yalland** University of Kent

### *Agreement and Disagreement: Conditions or Family Relations?*

There is a question that remains relatively unanswered in the literature on agreement and disagreement concerning ‘what *do* agreement and disagreement involve?’ We might think of agreement and disagreement in very simple terms of *shared* or *denied* semantic or assertoric content. That is, that disagreement occurs when one party or agent asserts that ‘p’ and another denies it or asserts that ‘not-p’, and that agreement occurs when both parties assert that ‘p’.

On the one hand, such models seem to be overly narrow. There are ways of establishing agreement or disagreement that don’t involve shared or related semantic contents, and indeed there are many vague interactions that might fall between the characterizations of agreement and disagreement. On the other hand, because agreement and disagreement are so complex and deeply layered, trying to reduce them to a small set of necessary and/or sufficient conditions or a single uniform account may (at least) *appear* near-impossible.

Even if we think of them more as familial relations, as different characterizations of a particular kind or species of exchange, there are questions as to what many underlying notions might mean or refer to. Consider, if agreement involves some kind of *likeness* or *similarity*, and disagreement some kind of *disparity* or *difference*, how might we cash these notions out?

If we can’t settle on a single account of agreement and disagreement, then is it a fruitless effort to try and establish all the relevant factors? In this presentation, I’ll discuss some of the accounts of agreement and disagreement that have been presented, which considerations may play a role in determining how we envisage agreement and disagreement, and what our prospects are for trying to delineate accounts of agreement and disagreement. I’ll conclude by highlighting a notable gap in the literature, *viz.* a bridge between the epistemologies of testimony and disagreement.

**Patrick Skeels** University of California, Davis

### *Disagreeing about ‘Might’*

Contextualism about epistemic modals has it that sentences of the form ‘It might be that p’ are true just in case the relevant body of knowledge has not ruled out p. (Paradigm examples of the view can be found in Kratzer (1977) and Kratzer (1981).) The view faces two common criticisms, the first of which can be called the *disagreement challenge*. According to the disagreement challenge, a semantics for

epistemic modals should predict instances of disagreement between agents who are decided about the truth of some proposition and agents undecided about that proposition. For example, suppose Holmes believes that Moriarty is not the murderer, while Watson remains undecided, and believes both that Moriarty might be the murderer and that he might not be. Proponents of the challenge hold that Holmes disagrees with Watson and that contextualism fails to predict this disagreement since the two beliefs in question are consistent on the contextualist semantics. (See MacFarlane (2011), and MacFarlane (2014) for popular instances. See Khoo (2015) for a characterization of the challenge with respect to epistemic modals and Khoo (2017) for a more general version of the argument against contextualism at large.)

The second challenge concerns the subject matter of epistemic modal contents. The idea is that epistemic modal contents like ‘It might be that  $p$ ’ should have the same subject matter as their non-modalized counterparts like  $p$  and ‘It’s not the case that  $p$ .’ This is to say that each of the aforementioned contents should each be *about* the issue of whether or not  $p$  (henceforth, the issue of whether or not  $p$  will be denoted  $\mathbf{p}$ ). The associated objection, which we can call *the subject matter objection*, has it that the contextualist semantics for epistemic modals gets the subject matter wrong. It is argued that the contextualist semantics treats epistemic modal contents as about the limits of the contextually supplied body of knowledge. The objection demands that a semantics for epistemic modals should ensure that contents like ‘It might be that  $p$ ’ are about  $\mathbf{p}$ , and only about  $\mathbf{p}$ . (A prototypical version of this argument is made in Yalcin (2007). A later version that directly appeals to aboutness and subject matter can be found in Yablo (2011) and Yablo (2014).)

In the associated paper, I intend to demonstrate how arguments in favor of the disagreement challenge are in direct tension with arguments that defend the subject matter objection. This tension comes to a head when we ask ‘what do Holmes and Watson disagree about?’ Let  $m$  be the proposition that Moriarty is the murderer, and  $\mathbf{m}$  be the issue of whether or not Moriarty is the murderer. The proponent of both challenges is committed to the claim that Holmes and Watson disagree about  $\mathbf{m}$ . I conclude that, counterintuitively, this commitment undermines a motivating premise in support of the disagreement challenge. The result is that one of the two challenges that motivate various alternatives to contextualism should be discharged. After weighing the options, I argue, much more speculatively, that we should reject the subject matter objection, and develop an account of aboutness for epistemic modals where contents like ‘It might be that  $p$ ’ are about more than just  $\mathbf{p}$ .

**Tanuj Milind Raut** University of California, Irvine

### *Are Prejudices like Hinges?*

While we generally believe in others’ testimonies, when an identity-prejudice is present the speaker’s testimony fails to count as evidence for the hearer, because the hearer is malfunctioning ethically and/or psychologically. This is Miranda Fricker’s (2007) account of why negative identity-prejudice undermines testimonial exchange. In light of Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*, Anna Boncompagni (2021) offers a hinge account which clarifies the epistemic function of prejudice in the structure of testimonial justification. Hinges are norms which govern our epistemic practices.

While hinges (eg. 'There is an external world') themselves are neither justified nor unjustified, they provide the justificatory grounds for empirical claims and determine whether something counts as evidence for our beliefs or not. According to Boncompagni, these two features suggest a useful parallel between hinges and prejudices – prejudices are like hinges. This (strictly epistemic) account addresses two related phenomena: (i) prejudice's resistance to counterevidence, and (ii) the overcoming of prejudicial belief. One problem for the hinge account is its inability to track the relevant difference between commonsense hinges and negative identity-based prejudices. That is, on this account there is no sharp boundary between commonsense (de facto) hinges like 'No one has ever been on the moon' – which are unchallenged at some time but could be challenged given new evidence – and negative identity-prejudices. For Boncompagni, this is a feature of the account rather than a defect. I show that there are worrying disanalogies between commonsense hinges and identity-prejudices in terms of their modal profiles, and relatedly, whether or not we can be held responsible for them. However, these are worries only if we think that prejudices are like hinges. I try to show that they are not. Negative identity prejudices, unlike hinges, have distinctively social functions and that a strictly epistemic account fails to make sense of them. I discuss the notion of ideological belief to explain what it means to say that prejudices have social functions. By understanding these social functions, not only are we able to have a broader view of why identity-prejudices are so difficult to overcome, but also track the relevant difference between negative identity-prejudices and commonsense hinges.

**Atus Mariqueo-Russell** University of Southampton

### *Desire Theories of Wellbeing and the Harm of Depression*

Desire theories of wellbeing claim that wellbeing is determined by the fulfilment and frustration of desires. According to these views, the fulfilment of your desires makes your life better for you, while their frustration makes it worse. Ian Tully has recently argued that desire theories of wellbeing entail that depression does not harm wellbeing. If he is right, then these theories should be rejected for failing to capture a paradigm intuition about states of harm. In this paper, I argue that these theories can capture the harm of depression by rejecting proportionalism about desire and motivation. This is the claim that desires always motivate proportionately to their strength. If we reject this view, then we can account for the harm of depression as arising from its suppression of the motivational force of desires. Consequently, depression harms us by making us less able to fulfil our desires and leads to more frustrated desires. This approach captures the harm of depression in the bulk of problem cases for desire theories of wellbeing. Nevertheless, it explains the harm of some residual cases of depression less well. In these cases, I argue that desire theories of wellbeing can capture the harm of depression by postulating desires to be badly off in some cases and by appealing to a deprivation account of the harm of depression in others. These three approaches can capture the harm of depression within the framework of a desire theory of wellbeing. This solves a problem for desire theories of wellbeing and provides an independently attractive characterisation of depression.

**Elliot Porter** University of Kent

*Manic Perspective and Mystic Perspective*

Paul Lodge (2020) highlights, as central to the trauma of exiting a manic episode, the question of how much store to put in the manic perspective. Whilst the manic perspective will not be recalled in a fully engaged way, it will be remembered as an experience of ‘successful insight’ and ‘an encounter with...something “sacred”’ (*ibid.*). I argue that the social pressures to put aside what remains of that perspective force an invidious choice, and threaten a kind of *affective injustice* (Srinivasan 2019). Developing Plato’s curt and cryptic discussion of divine, Dionysian, madness, I argue that manic perspectives can provide indispensable resources to people living with bipolar or related disorders, specifically useful when managing depressions. Independently of the role manic perspectives can play in self-management, I emphasise that people who experience mania have independent reasons to take at least somewhat seriously their manic perspectives. The first reason is to avoid disintegration of the agent’s self, which occurs when portions of our practical and experiential lives are cast as intrusions into the narrative rather than parts of it, deteriorating the agent’s relation with their self. The second reason is that mania can powerfully sensitise us to the value of some things, the value of which it is easy to elide over. This is the mystic virtue in Dionysian madness, and is valuable independently of its potential to make crashing depressions more survivable.

**Lada Muraveva** École Pratique des Hautes Études

*Disease of the Body or Disease of the Soul? The Definition of Mental Disorders in Medieval Medical and Philosophical Works*

Throughout the entire history medical practice was largely relying on disease classifications, and the ambiguous nature of mental disorders has always been one of the hardest to define. What is the predominant factor responsible for mental health: physiological, psychological, or social? And how did doctors in previous eras define a dysfunction that cannot be seen with the naked eye? In my presentation I wish to show how these questions were answered in Medieval Europe.

First of all, I would like to explore how the same diagnoses were described in different types of Medieval medical works. On one hand, the genre of *Practicae* (sort of ‘manuals’ for practicing physicians) followed a common structure, where the definition of each disorder focused on its physiological cause. The nosology was based on the ancient theory of **four bodily humors** and the galenic distinction of **imagination-cogitation-memory**, attributed to three brain ventricles. This initial physiological definition was complemented by behavioral signs of a disorder, focusing on patient’s emotional state (for instance, inappropriate laughter, cry, fear, etc.) and his interaction with the surroundings (aggressiveness, seeking of solitude, etc.). At first all these definitions seem to follow the same ancient and Arabic authors – Aristotle, Galen, Avicenna... – but on closer inspection many contradictory points appear. Which authority should a medieval physician rely on when ancient texts view the same disease differently? The definition of ‘madness’ and the body-soul relations was the topic of interest for many philosophers, who did not limit mental health

to a simple balance of four humors in the body. Thus, analyzing the place of mental disorders in **natural philosophy**, as well as the way they were described and understood in philosophical texts, will be another key point of my presentation.

Moreover, certain Medieval diagnoses have surpassed the interest of physicians alone and left a significant trace in theological and literary works: for example, love obsession (*amor heroes*), which is a common motif in *courtoise* poetry, or sleep paralyses (*incubus*), which raised discussions on its demonic nature. I would like to explore how the philosophical understanding of these disorders could affect the way they were presented in more practical-oriented medical works, and, on the contrary, to what extent their physiological definition was known outside of the medical field.

**Sofia Melendez Gutierrez** University of Cambridge

### *Ante Rem Structuralism and the Semantics of Instantial Terms*

*Ante rem* structures are universal entities exemplified by the members of equivalence classes under isomorphism. *Ante rem* structuralism is the theory mathematical entities are positions in *ante rem* structures (see e.g. Resnik 1997, and Shapiro 1997). On this view, the natural numbers, for instance, are the positions in an *ante rem* structure exemplified by the finite von Neumann ordinals, the finite Zermelo ordinals, and all isomorphic systems. The rationale behind *ante rem* structuralism is the desire to endow mathematical singular terms with referents on the face of Benacerraf's contention that numbers cannot be identified with set-theoretical objects (1965).

*Ante rem* structuralists characterise *ante rem* positions as bearing only structural properties – viz. properties that can be exhaustively defined in terms of the relations that exist amongst the positions of a given structure. This characterisation of *ante rem* positions commits *ante rem* structuralists to the existence of indiscernible entities. In particular, it commits them to the view that the two square roots of  $-1$  cannot be discerned.

Given that *ante rem* structuralism is meant to provide referents for the singular terms of mathematics, *ante rem* structuralists are strongly compelled to explain how '*i*' refers to one of the square roots of  $-1$  if they are indiscernible – and this is not at all an easy task (cf. Black 1952). These square roots are demonstratively inaccessible to us; and, since they are qualitatively identical, every description satisfied by one of them is satisfied by both. Hence, neither can be singled out in order to establish it as the referent of '*i*'.

In 2012, Shapiro argued that this referential indeterminacy problem may be solved by claiming that '*i*' is not a name, but an *instancial term* (2012, 399–401). However, in my paper, I discuss several competing hypotheses about the semantics of instancial terms, and argue that they are all untenable for the *ante rem* structuralist. First, I contend that Shapiro's own hypothesis (2012, 405–408) generates a vicious infinite regress that precludes instancial terms from ever acquiring a semantic value. Afterwards, I reconstruct King's hypothesis (1991), and show that it is frankly at odds with the core tenets of *ante rem* structuralism. Finally, I discuss Fine's (1985) and Breckenridge and Magidor's (2012) hypotheses, and contend that Shapiro may use them to explain how '*i*' refers to one of the square roots of  $-1$  – but only at the cost of admitting that the postulation of *ante rem* structures as the subject matter of mathematics is absolutely futile.



**Jason A. DeWitt** Ohio State University

*A Problem for Global Pragmatism*

Huw Price is known for two distinctive metaphilosophical views: subject naturalism and global pragmatism. Global pragmatism, with origins in Dewey and Rorty, denies that any discourse is purely representational and it also denies that ‘truth’ and ‘reference’ are theoretically useful semantic notions. Subject naturalism, sourced in Hume and Nietzsche, is Price’s pragmatist-inspired approach to the philosophy of science. The subject naturalist thinks that philosophy must begin with what science tells us about ourselves *qua* linguistic creatures. These two views go hand in hand in Price’s work. The subject naturalist’s investigations into language uncover reasons why we ought to be semantic minimalists and therefore go pragmatist globally and the global pragmatist requires subject naturalist investigations into the functional-genealogical origins of each of our discourses (since they want to go pragmatist with regards to them).

I’ll begin by discussing in detail what exactly subject naturalism and global pragmatism entail. I then explain what is called the ‘No Exit’ worry for a pragmatist view of some discourse. The No Exit worry says that our functional-genealogical stories must refrain from employing terms of the discourse we are trying to offer a functional explanation of. Simon Blackburn (2013) employs a version of the No Exit worry to show that Price’s global pragmatism is untenable. Thomasson (2019), Blackburn (2013), and Price (2013) offer promising answers to Blackburn’s No Exit challenge. However, there is a nearby challenge that I want to develop here: *No Exit\**. *No Exit\** asks: how can we avoid a problematic explanatory circle in offering the functional-genealogical story of pragmatic discourse, a discourse whose essential core elements include function-talk. In this paper, I argue that no foreseeable variant of Thomasson, Blackburn, or Price’s responses to No Exit work for my *No Exit\**. I conclude with some discussion of what options the pragmatically-inclined have in light of *No Exit\**.

**Gavin Thomson** University of Kent

*Making More Explicit: Extending Logical Expressivism to Mathematics*

Robert Brandom’s *logical expressivism* (Brandom 2000) is roughly the view that logical language exists to articulate or to *make explicit* the structure of the *game of giving and asking for reasons* – a fundamental and universal language-game in which speakers: make assertions; attribute to one another various commitments and entitlements as consequences of our assertions; and challenge the consistency or compatibility of our claims.

Like various other expressivist theories of meaning – for example, ethical quasi-realism (Blackburn 1998), or expressivism about probabilistic and modal language (Yalcin 2012) – logical expressivists are typically taken to owe a *semantic theory*. Such a theory should recapture the empirical adequacy of a ‘face-value’ semantics, which representationalists take to entail a domain of referents for the target vocabulary. Rather than offering a nominalistic paraphrase of that vocabulary into

some naturalistically acceptable realm of objects, the expressivist instead recasts the semantic theory in terms of *speaker attitudes*.

In this talk I assess the prospects for a *mathematical expressivism* which seeks to obviate reference to peculiarly mathematical entities in much the same way that ethical expressivists seek to obviate reference to metaphysically queer moral facts or universals. I begin with a brief and non-technical discussion of Shimamura's *first-order logical expressivism*. I then consider what additional work is needed to extend expressivism about logic to expressivism about mathematics proper. Here I draw on the neo-conventionalism of Warren (2020) who advances an inferentialist semantic theory for mathematical language based on natural-deduction style rules. I argue that the expressivist theory of meaning and Warren's are remarkably similar. Both take mathematical truth to be determined by 'syntactic' features of natural language; but where Warren takes those features to be *conventions* of language, the expressivist takes them to be *constitutive* of language or reasoning. Moreover, the expressivist is committed to the *conservativeness* of logical and mathematical language over natural language, that is a form of *harmony constraint* – the neo-conventionalist instead endorses a Carnapian 'unrestricted inferentialism'.

I conclude with an assessment of the virtues of the mathematical expressivist thesis that has been sketched, in relation to the inferentialist-conventionalist thesis. I include here some remarks on expressivist consequences for *pluralism* and *mathematical structuralism*.

*Copyright in these abstracts is retained by their respective authors.*