DAY 1

Prof. Nebojsa Kujundzic (University of Prince Edward Island)
How to do things with touch.

I propose to address what I term "the explanatory gap" when it comes to the phenomenon of touch in ethics and philosophy. On the one hand, touch can be reassuring, threatening, inviting, flirtatious, forbidding, calming, surprising, and many other things. On the other hand, from a philosophical point of view, touch is notoriously difficult to individuate and define. How is it that we can do so much with something that we don't seem to understand?

Panel A: Ethics and Technology (10:00 – 12:00)

Zachary Goldberg (Trilateral Research)
What Can Aristotle Teach Us About Ethical AI?

Despite an abundance of scholarly work that considers the possibility of AI achieving the cognitive ability to act ethically, or to deserve moral standing, this reality appears to be decades away. Hence, when we speak of current matters in "ethical AI", we mean the ethical design, development and use of AI tools. Since designers, developers and users of AI tools are humans, "ethical AI" refers to relevant ethical values, ethical questions, and the ethically relevant decisions that we all must make in creating and using AI tools.

The sheer number and diversity of AI ethics guidance documents that have appeared over the last half-decade reflect the complexity of two principal aspects of ethical AI—identifying AI-relevant ethical values in particular contexts of use and teaching or guiding designers, developers, and users of AI to reflect on ethical values and make ethically good decisions. Indeed, the number of well-known examples in which designers, developers, and users have made ethically poor decisions illustrates the degree of this complexity as well as the significance of ethical AI to individual and societal wellbeing, human rights and a sustainable environment. Although navigating this complexity can be daunting, Aristotle provides practical, usable insight to achieve the goals of ethical AI. In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle writes that sound moral character must be acquired through habit and conditioning at an early age. Because it results from habituation not instruction, it cannot be learned at a later age after one's character is well-formed; in short, virtue cannot be taught. This conclusion raises an important question about the very possibility of teaching ethics to designers, developers, and users of AI who may be unfamiliar with ethical values. If Aristotle, with support from recent and contemporary empirical moral psychologists, e.g. Piaget (1932), Kohlberg (1984), Schwitzgabel (2016), is correct that virtue cannot be taught after one's formative years, achieving the goals of ethical AI presents us with a serious challenge. Aristotle provides an answer to this challenge via his distinction between moral and intellectual virtue. Although a person's moral virtue may need to be cultivated at an early age, the development of one's intellectual virtue is not so constrained. Intellectual virtues including logical reasoning, the avoidance of formal and informal fallacies, adherence to the principle of parsimony, distinguishing between causation and correlation, use of the imagination, etc. can all help achieve the values—non-discrimination, justice, human agency, explainability, transparency, privacy—that constitute ethical AI. To the extent that intellectual virtue sharpens cognitive skills, imagination, memory, analysis, and synthesis, it can make us better thinkers. To the extent that it deepens our sensibilities, intellectual virtue can take us beyond a limited view of ourselves and increase our awareness of the world of which we are a part—a world in which AI tools impact human wellbeing often in clandestine or unexpected ways. Motivated by Aristotle's insights concerning moral and intellectual virtue, I shall end the presentation with concrete suggestions for how AI ethicists can design exercises to help cultivate intellectual virtue to achieve the objectives of ethical AI.

Evangelos Koumparoudis (Sofia University)
Ethics of AI and Robotics in Medical Care from a non Anthroporphical and non Zoomorphical Perspective

AI from automated and semi automated processes of diagnostics, up to Electoronic Health Records and the bioinformatics of omic revolution, reformulated the current medical practice. From the other part robotics, are used in a greater extent in telemedicine, as well as in the care of elder and disabled people, even for sexual pleasure (Bendel 2014). In this talk, we would like to strive the attention not only to the practical ethical issues of privacy, consent and possible quantification of the self, concerning the medical AI, but to seek and explore how ethical theories form ''top down'' models (utilitarian and deontological ethics) to ''bottom up'' (case-base reasoning) and mixed were established on a basis of an anthropomorphism (Van Rysewyk and Pontier 2014, Sallers et.al. 2020). The basic assumption is that either AI or robotics through their technological traits could imitate human cognition, speech even emotions, therefore could act as moral agents when they interact with human, even more crucially when we speak about medical interventions and care (Hartman,Siegert,Prylipko 2014). This kind of anthropomorphism in a manner equates human and non human entities on an ontological level and leaves no place for a possible alterity. New theories on robo ethics, mainly belonging to the phenomenological tradition pose the issue of a possible vulnerability of AI and robotics, trying to relocate the ethical debate form the human to machine ethics, in a context of co-existence openness and dwelling (Toivakainen 2015, Liberati and Nagataki 2018). Furthermore, after Donna Harraway's Cyborg Manifesto, there is a great concern about the fusion of human and machine but this conceptualization starts from the relation between human and domestic animals and is expanded to robots. Parviainen and Turja 2021, in order to break out with this prevailing biotism and the ethics based in this relation; propose the novel concept of abiozoomorphism, showing that the distinction between living and non living entities is still valid. To sum up, ethics of AI and robo ethics in medical care, could be seen from a more broad perspective which does not start from an anthropomorphic and zoomorphic view, but gives place to a more holistic and asymmetrical ethics of mutual co-existing.

Christopher Fenech (University of Malta Alumni)
Ethical considerations in relation to Transhumanism

Transhumanism is a cultural movement that began towards the end of the 20 th century, and an emerging field of study. This paper will focus on the different ideas of proponents of transhumanism, ask whether it can be said that there is a singular transhumanist project, and whether it is simplistic to create an across-the-board ethics for transhumanism. Considering that, in a broader sense, the majority of human beings are taking part in or are impacted by transhumanist issues, it would make sense to give careful thought to ethical issues that are bound to arise. Can a set of across-the-board ethical coordinates for the transhumanist project ever be proposed?

Ana Dhamo (University of Durres)
The Ethics of protecting personal and private data in information society

The digital revolution of the 21st century has deeply affected the concept of fundamental rights. Consequently, the revolution has opened new perspectives for the exercise of fundamental rights recognized by the constitutions of democratic countries. New basic rights and also new restrictions related to them have come to light. A step forward are the countries of Latin America which, in their new Constitutions, have created chapters specifically dedicated to the protection of personal data from possible attacks against them in the era of digitalization. In some European countries, such as Italy, the creation of a "constitution for the Internet" has been considered. One of the topics affected is that of the ethics in handling and processing information which is categorized a personal and private (privacy), meaning the guarantee of the right to control digital identity, security and access. This is difficult to deal with because if information becomes a "commodity", then it is more provocative, more popular and sells more. The challenge is the realization of the "constitution for the Internet" in order not to leave the wealth of the 21st century in the hands of the "tyrants" of the web: Information.

Panel B: Ethics, Self and Other (10:00 – 12:00)

Felipe León (University of Copenhagen)
Partiality, the self-other distinction, and the we

The "puzzle of partiality" (Keller, 2013) in moral philosophy arises from attempts to reconcile the preferential treatment of intimates in the context of close personal relationships with the universalist and impartial moral theories that many endorse nowadays. There have been three basic proposals for trying to locate the source of reasons of partiality, and thereby address the tension between, on the one hand, the idea that all persons are equally valuable and deserve equal treatment, and, on the other hand, that we have reasons to treat our intimates in a special way (Feltham & Cottingham, 2010; Wallace, 2012). Some authors hold that reasons of partiality arise from other-regarding concerns, about the importance of those significant others with whom we have intimate relationships (Keller, 2013). Other authors maintain that reasons of partiality arise from self-regarding concerns about the role that significant others have in one's own life projects (Williams, 1981). Finally, some authors seek locate the source of reasons of partiality in the value of relationships themselves (Kolodny, 2003). Um has recently suggested that the first two proposals fail to appreciate that "[t[he boundary between self and other is blurred in such [intimate] relationships, which is why any account of partiality that focuses excessively on either the agent or her intimate as individuals are likely to fail" (2021, p. 21). He also suggests that the third proposal is unconvincing, insofar as relationships in the abstract are not what typically motivate us when we act on reasons of partiality. While I agree with Um's diagnosis, I propose to take his line of argument one step further. The reason why traditional approaches have a hard time with the puzzle of partiality is that they fail to appreciate the extent to which close personal relationships, which are had from a first-person plural or we-perspective, are constitutive of self-identity.

Clive Zammit (University of Malta)
Infinitely Mindful of the Other: Does Mindful-Walking reveal new possibilities for an Ethics of Infinite Responsibility?

Mindfulness entered Western consciousness around half a century ago, mainly on the wave of increased cross-cultural exposure between East and West, which intensified in the second half of the 20th century, partly due to the increase of international travel but also, sadly, as a result of geopolitical tragedies such as the annexation of Tibet and the Vietnam war. By the 1990's, home grown experts and their 'westernised' developments such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) or Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), permeated a broad range of fields, from clinical psychology to sports performance, business management and most aspects related to corporate culture. Closer to the original Buddhist core of the practice of mindfulness is the aspiration of attaining inner peace and the nurturing of a spirit of compassion, which would lead to social growth and harmony.

As is expected with the arrival of any prodigious new kid on the block, the West's welcoming reception of Mindfulness gradually also led to increasingly sceptical criticism, which may also be considered as a defensive backlash to what was also characterised as the Bhuddification of Western values and culture. The most salient points of the more level-headed critical reactions to Mindfulness centre around the concern that the inward-looking focus of most mindful and mediative practices contribute to disengagement and passivity rather than compassion or ethical engagement. Put more bluntly, the worry is that such practices will rob the much-needed potential social activists and reformers of their will or energy to engage, reducing them to glassy-eyed, smiling sitters in the centre of a whirlwind of social chaos and global mayhem. In this paper I will draw on insights from my personal practice of Mindful-Walking to make comparisons between the experience of the "now" revealed by such practice, and the role played by the "now", or the present moment, in Levinas' ethical discourse, especially in the moment of encounter with the Other. I will start by describing how, at first glance, the relation and approach to the "now" which is central to the practice of mindfulness seems to go directly in the opposite direction of the demands of the ethical relationship in Levinasian thought, which is based on an "instantaneous" or 'infinite' accepting of the Other. For Levinas, the ethical encounter demands a receptive stance which 'melts' the hold of 'the Now' and grants both the ethical self and the questioning Other the possibility of the flow of time, and subsequently, the possibility of a genuine future. I will argue that a more thorough engagement with mindfulness may reveal similarities between the appropriation of temporality in Mindfulness and in Levinasian ethics. In conclusion I will suggest that following these similarities, one may also argue that the practice of mindfulness offers new potential for the ethical subject to approach the Other in a stance of Infinite Responsibility, an ethical demand which is often regarded as impossible in traditional ethical thought.

Kurt Borg (University of Malta)
Caught in the Middle of a Fall: On Judith Butler's Ethics of Touch and Breath

This paper explores some ideas on ethics from Judith Butler's more recent work. It first looks at what prompted Butler's more explicit 'turn' to ethics in their work from the 2000s, centering on notions such as precariousness, grievability and relationality. Then, this paper turns to more recent work, such as *The Force of Non-Violence* (2020) and their most recent monograph *What World is This?* (2022), to show how Butler further develops a robust ethical framework. More specifically, this paper engages with Butler's reflections on the pandemic, in which they dwell on touching and breathing as probes for thinking about ethical relationality and constitutive interdependency. Apart from being central to their notion of subjectivity, Butler's ideas on ethics are intimately tied to their diagnoses of some of the most vexing political problems of contemporary times, namely economic inequalities, systemic racism and sexism, and climate catastrophe. Thus, Butler's investigation of ethics necessarily leads to a socio-political reflection. Ultimately, this paper concludes that the conception of ethics that animates Butler's work has and is motivated by a strong political dimension which amounts to a commitment to the radical equality of lives.

Robert Govus (Junior College, Malta)
Iris Murdoch & The Ethics of Unselfing

"Love is the extreme realization that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of that reality". It is for this reason that Iris Murdoch also writes elsewhere: "We need a moral philosophy, in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central". Love, for her, is nothing but 'unselfing'. In this paper, what I will be looking at is how Murdoch manages to connect love with a transcendent Good together with an orientation for the particular. Her moral project consists of learning how to attend to other people, learning how to look at them "justly and lovingly". In order to do this, one needs to 'unself', one needs to divest of one's own ego and try to see others and the world around them as they are rather than as one thinks that they are or should be, which of course, is not very different from Plato's trajectory as to how one comes to know the Forms. For Murdoch, this journey is love's own very essence. She writes that our task in life is to fight "the fat relentless ego". This task is deceptively easy because it is challenging even though not impossible. We tend to look at the world in a way that:
• Enables us to protect ourselves
• Enables us to flatter ourselves
• We make light of other people's suffering
• We dilute criticism
• We enhance what affirms our judgement, reputation and abilities [strong attachment to self]

One needs to reverse all this to be able to realize that "something other than oneself is real". Moreover, what needs to be stressed is also the difference between 'understanding people' and 'being understanding'. Despite the fact that the former is a good thing, the latter is a 'virtue' or a reflection of a virtuous agent. For example, a psychologist is trained and paid to 'understand' others but they still have to remain cold and distant in order to actually help their clients. This is not the Murdochian moral vision, as hers is centered more on how we 'approach' people rather than merely 'meeting' them. It is about:
• How accepting of others, we are
• How emphatic we are
• How helpful we are [of course, a phycologist can be both good and virtuous but not necessarily so as it is not required of them]

This can only be brought about if one 'unselfs' enough to see people for what and at where they are. This action is an instance of truly loving people. Murdoch likens this experience with the learning of a new language, in her case, Russian. Once again, the stress is not in projecting ourselves unto others, but emptying ourselves in order to make more room for others. Just like the Russian language, the person is there, in front of us, embedded in their reality, and our one moral task is to 'see' them and this can only happen through 'unselfing'.

Panel A: Ethics and Education (13:00 – 15:00)

Julia Alegre Mouslim (University of Malta)
The Non-Performativity of Criticality

What does a commitment to criticality in academic spaces do? What happens when academics or academic institutions have critical self-identities? In this paper I reflect on the performative and non-performative character of commitments in academic spaces. A commitment is an engagement toward action that has a performative character. Uttering a commitment, such as 'We commit to gender equality', 'we value diversity' or 'We are committed to criticality', means promising to take action, to do something. But, what happens when commitments are made without doing something, without taking the action promised in the commitment? Is this a failure of intent or circumstance? Or is the failure of action intentional? More specifically, I will use John Austin's speech act theory, Sara Ahmed's analysis of institutional commitments to diversity, antiracism and gender equality and my own experience as an academic doing activist research, as a departure to examine whether institutional commitments to criticality actually do what they are committing to do. I will argue that these utterances risk committing to something in order to not take any action. Instead, these utterances are non-performatives. Criticality can be used in order to not be critical. Using criticality in a non-performative way, means failing to see how academics and academic institutions can be complicit in reproducing inequalities. By using 'criticality' as a protective shield, it becomes self-congratulatory and self-serving, only bringing about personal gain and privilege.

Ekaterina Strati (University of Durres)
Ethical Considerations in Students Evaluation of Teachers (SETs)

Universities put efforts in trying to choose the most ethical and appropriate method for the evolution of the academic staff. The reliability, efficiently and ethics of students "judging" their professors at university is considered as a controversial and political issue. It dates back to the late 1920s when this practice was first introduced by Herman H. Remmers (Purdue University). SET instruments are used by universities to "rate" teachers and teaching. But, are such instruments adequate? To what degree? What are the limitations? Is there any bias interpretation in the responses of the students? The way that students perceive teaching can be seen as positive on one side, aiming to improve the quality of teaching but also offer students "a voice to be heard". Also, it serves as valuable data to the university management for import decision making regarding professor. On the other side, studies judge the validity of SETs since they can be seen as biased. Students evaluation of teachers and ethics cross when it comes to the correlation between SET results and student grades, gender, type of course, etc. In this article we address some of the issues concerning evaluation of teachers by students at the university of Durres, Albania, such as the direct relation between grading and positive evaluation, gender of professors, etc. In order to collect data, a quantitative methodology is used, collecting information from both questionnaire with teachers and students, but also collection data from SETs records and students' overall grades. Finally, we make recommendations for better, more effective SETs instruments which limit ethical implications in this process.

Suzana Gjata (University of Durres)
Ethical Considerations in the Assessment of Students in Albania

According Palomba and Banta (1999) the term "assessment" means "*a synthetic collection, Review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development*". The main aim of this paper is to present an ethical perspective of the assessment policies, considering ethical issues and educational value. Such a research aims to contribute to the continuous efforts made to ensure high quality of assessment in the Albanian schools. The importance of the assessment criteria, the tendency towards the use of Alternative versus Traditional Assessment, language of instruction in the classroom and the appropriate language in designing tests are some of the key issue for discussion. Furthermore, we will have a general perspective on the assessment methodology used in teaching English as a second language in our educational institutions. To add, the role of teachers in the effectiveness of a certain methodology in assessing students, and the ethical implications in this role shall be further argued in the given research paper. All in all, this is a qualitative research study aiming to provide a specific perspective of the overlapping issues between ethics and assessment.

Panel B: Ethics, Politics and Communication (13:00 – 15:00)

Keith Pisani (University of Malta)
The Communicative Dimension of Personal Autonomy

A glance at the literature on personal autonomy reveals that different theories tend to highlight and emphasise certain usages and senses of the term over others. Given the constructionist nature of the notion of personal autonomy, such diversity of theories might suggest that there is more than one notion of personal autonomy. Suzy Killmister argues against this multi-conceptualisation, claiming that it is both "undesirable and unnecessary."[1] On the one hand, she considers it to be unnecessary because she believes it is possible to work out a theory of personal autonomy that does justice to the different usages and senses. On the other hand, she considers it to be undesirable because such divisions tend to conceal important connections between the different senses and usages.[2] Instead, she proposes that the various usages and senses of personal autonomy – both in everyday and philosophical contexts – are best made sense of by treating personal autonomy as multi-dimensional.

I consider Killmister's suggestion to be intuitively appealing. Whether a multi-dimensional theory that actually satisfies the different conceptual and normative needs the different theories of personal autonomy seek to satisfy, remains to be seen. Killmister develops such a multi-dimensional framework in her work. In this paper I will not be assessing Killmister's theory but will instead, in line with her view of a multi-dimensional conception of autonomy, seek to develop what I consider to be one of the most important dimensions of personal autonomy, a dimension that is not developed by Killmister in her work. I will refer to this dimension as the communicative dimension of personal autonomy, which in common parlance is roughly captured by such idiomatic phrases as 'standing up for oneself,' 'speaking for oneself,' and 'speaking one's mind.' In this dimension, the person who is not autonomous fails to make herself present in the communicative space generated by linguistic communication, or, if she makes herself present, easily retreats to invisibility and retracts – not out of conviction

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[1] Suzy Killmister, *Taking the Measure of Autonomy: A Four-Dimensional Theory of Self-Governance* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 5.
[2] Killmister, *Taking the Measure of Autonomy*, 5.

– her claims when faced with criticism. Moreover, I will also show how this dimension connects to other dimensions of personal autonomy through what I refer to as relations of sustainment. I will do this by drawing from the work of Jürgen Habermas, Maeve Cooke, and Paul Benson.

In the first part of the presentation, I will discuss and critically analyse Cooke's Habermasian inspired theory of personal autonomy as rational accountability. Following this, in the second part, I will then discuss and critically analyse Benson's theory of personal autonomy as claiming authority and taking ownership. In the third part, by bringing together the various conclusions I reach in parts 1 and 2, I will then propose a conceptual framework intended to explain what it means to be autonomous in this communicative dimension. Finally, in the fourth part, I will briefly show how this dimension connects to other dimensions of personal autonomy through the relations of sustainment.

Richard Halley (Johannes Gutenberg University)
Developing Principles for Listening Ethically

Communication, and specifically listening, is the key for negotiating the principles and the practice of both social relationships in the microsphere and of society in general. Based on a model of listening as a complex process driven by the intention of the listener (Halley, 2018), it is feasible to identify those key moments in the process when listeners must and can make a decision as to how they process the message: Where to direct one's attention, what to select, how to handle and how to control emotions, how to identify noise and bias in the process of assigning meaning to what one hears, how to become aware of the automatized processes which let established attitudes and preconceived concepts taint what listeners make of what is said? How do listeners ascertain that what they think they understood is what a speaker wanted to express? In a nutshell: The process of taking in a multi-source message, assigning meaning, and responding implies a number of issues that listeners run into. The sum of the decisions made in the process of listening can be critically reviewed against the backdrop of listening ethics.

As listening is conceptualized as a controlled process that the listener can actively control, the result of a listening process depends on the decision-making competences of the listener who can do more or less justice to the person and the communication intention of the speaker. Ethical decisions allow for a safe space for the speaker and the communication, and a lack thereof creates vulnerability and distress. So, the question is how can we practice listening in a way that listening behavior and intentions are ethically honorable?

We will present a set of principles of listening ethics and offer critical analysis of them (Halley & Catt, 2020). Based on Halley's model of listening (2018), we will offer a rationale for the ethics of listening principles and briefly describe some of the principles that we propose. The principles have been developed based on the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology with the understanding that the intentions of the listener must be honorable and respectful of the other, and, in addition, first and foremost focused on trying one's very best to open and to understand the meaning spaces of the speaker. The principles are written as an ideal that listeners strive to meet, so that listening ethically is a goal that drives listening behavior.

We want to discuss the philosophical foundation and the practical feasibility of these principles and look into the prerequisites that it takes to follow the principles. The goal of the presentation is to discuss and validate the idea of ethical listening and to explore what ethical listening could be within and across cultures, and how the ethics of listening could be put into ethical practice.

Luke Buhagiar (University of Malta)
Implicit Ecological Projects in Liminal Texts

Writers such as Emil Cioran and Lev Shestov have been characterized as engaging in "antiphilosophy" (e.g., Groys, 2012), that is, in a literary style that consistently foregrounds action, living and organicity over cerebral activity. This paper proceeds from the observation that what tends to accompany antiphilosophical stances is an unmistakable sense of the liminal, as initially defined by Van Gennep in The Rites of Passage (1909), who characterized the liminal phase as a transitional phase between a prior position in society (the pre-liminal) which has been lost, and a social position that is yet to be achieved once the liminal phase is over (the post-liminal). Liminal processes have been variously described as involving the grotesque, the ambiguous, the undefined, and various forms of thought that can be adequately captured by the popular term 'analysis paralysis'. These characteristics infuse the writings of antiphilosophical authors, particularly Emil Cioran. Liminality can be also seen in both the writings of authors such as Cioran and Shestov, and also in their lives, evincing their working axiom that text and thought are epiphenomena accompanying the body and its doings. Having made the case that the antiphilosophical is characterized by a liminal quality, this paper then proceeds to argue that such liminal writing implies an implicit project that is yet to surface. Accordingly, I reference fragments in the writings of Cioran (e.g., On the Heights of Despair; 1934) and Shestov (e.g., The Apotheosis of Groundlessness; 1905), making the case that, together with a liminal atmosphere, antiphilosophical writing tends to exhibit a deep ecological meta-ethic. This meta-ethic is generally left untapped or unexplored, or else is not taken to its logical conclusion or appropriated by the authors in question. I arrive to this conclusion through a corroborative and abductive selection of texts in both authors, whereby I argue that the metaphors they employ to depict the natural world, animals or other unmediated human experiences betrays a deep sense of longing for the ecological, that is, for an interrelation with unmediated contexts. Rather than the authors themselves, the main interest of this paper is the meta-ethical project that emerges when the co-occurring metaphors infusing antiphilosophical writing are taken seriously. If the antiphilosophical is the body's quintessential articulation of a liminal experience, and if the liminal tends to be accompanied by a poeticization of the non-human ecological realm, then such writings leave space for the construction of a deep ecological project - one which privileges organic experience with unmediated contexts, chief amongst them being the natural environment prior to human interference.

Jonathan Floyd (University of Bristol)
Public Political Philosophy: Between radical critique and conservative impact

Political philosophers are increasingly expected to become more 'engaged' with the 'real world'. Sometimes this expectation comes via formal funding or assessment exercises, and sometimes intellectual discourse, but either way, the 'calls' are growing for us to become, say, more 'applied', 'impactful', or even 'political' (Finlayson, 2015; Waldron, 2016; UKRI, 2021). Much of this is to be welcomed, and of course encouraged, but even so, there are at least two dangers here that are easily missed. On the one hand, in order to maximise audience, and the likely adoption of our ideas, we could become too conservative, simply telling the public and politicians what they already want to hear. On the other, sticking to our principles, and usual ways of arguing, we could become too critical, demanding radical ideals of a kind that get quickly ignored by all those beyond our 'ivory towers'. How then are we to avoid these fates? The suggestion here is to start thinking more carefully about the 'methods' of engagement we adopt when pursuing what I will call here 'public political philosophy'. These

range from humour, to analogies, to thought experiments, to the way in which we use contemporary events and institutions as 'evidence' in our arguments. Each of these needs to be individually thought through in detail, with all of them collectively problematizing the line we normally draw, at least tacitly, between 'reason' and 'rhetoric' in our professional and public contributions.

Panel A: Ethics and Metaphysics (15:20 – 16:50)

Piotr Sawczynski (Jesuit University Ignatianum, Krakow)
Against Kenosis: Toward a Non-Sacrificial Religious Ethics

The aim of my paper is to test a non-sacrificial potential of the religious ethical model of generosity by offering (to use Harold Bloom's phrase) a "strong misreading" of the Judaic concept of tsimtsum, already present in statu nascendi in some early Midrashic texts but most powerfully expounded in the modern kabbalah of Isaac Luria and his disciples. This ambiguous term, which in Hebrew stands for "contraction" or "shrinking", in Lurianism refers to the original gesture of God who, prior to the act of creation, is said to have withdrawn himself from the primordial pleroma to "create" nothingness: an empty void (kenoma) out of which all finite beings were going to be created. Tsimtsum has primarily been explicated either as a dramatic self-empowering manoeuvre of the godhead whose aim was to "make room" for its absolute divine potency and thus constitute God the sovereign (e.g. in the Christian kabbalah of Jacob Boehme) or, quite the opposite (and in a Gnostic fashion), as the founding act of a great cosmic catastrophe which results in a deplorable isolation and imperfection of the finite world brought to existence by the weakened God.

In my paper I choose to follow neither of these well-paved paths and propose instead a humble affirmative speculation (inspired by some quasi-Lurianic passages from Gershom Scholem, Emmanuel Lévinas and Jacques Derrida) in which tsimtsum is not a necessary moment of negativity within the godhead but a voluntary and selfless act of divine benevolence: God retreats and reduces himself to make room for the existence of non-divine beings, to create the Other of the world. I thereby emphasize the positivity of the passage from the infinite to the finite which, I argue, might be compared to natality (or "birth pangs" in Scholem's words). In this reading, the regression and separation are not something to be deplored and then messianically mended but rather something to be affirmed as the necessary condition of a true creation; the creation which endows the world with ontological autonomy.

Even more importantly, I argue, tsimtsum might be read as a Jewish equivalent of the Christian notion of kenosis, God's sacrifice for the sake of mankind. Here, the novelty of Luria's invention is twofold. First, it consists in shifting the kenotic aspect of the deity into the domain of creation to differentiate it from the Christian framework wherein kenosis belongs only to the sphere of revelation and redemption, creation usually being an expression of God's sovereign power, the very height of heights from which the kenotic Christ must then fall. Second, and more importantly, whereas in Christianity the self-humbling of the incarnate God and his radical sacrifice, sacrifice of life, puts on human beings some irremovable burden of remorse and makes their finite life hopelessly guilt-ridden, the Judaic sacrifice of tsimtsum, unmarked by the outrageous blood tribute, is freed from these repentant connotations and rather stands for a welcome move of God who depletes his sovereign power to literally "make some room" for finitude. As such, I argue, it may serve as a non-humiliating arch-model of ethical generosity for the sake of the Other, worth meditating on and perhaps following.

Zuzana Svobodová (Charles University, Prague)
From Comenius to Patočka: Open soul and ethics

In this paper, I will explain the ethics of the two thinkers, who were born at different times, but both in the place of today's Czech Republic, John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) and Jan Patočka (1907-1977). Firstly, I will present the vision of ethics illustrated and explained by Comenius in his Latin coursebook Orbis sensualium pictus (The Visible World in Pictures). Secondly, I will explain key aspects of the article Comenius and the open soul, written by Jan Patočka and published in 1970. I will analyze two types of souls: closed and open souls, termed by Patočka as two main approaches to human life. Mainly, what is necessary to do for living with an open soul, both in personal and social life, will be described. Patočka wrote about the epoch of the closed soul that thinkers such as René Descartes and Francis Bacon started. However, their contemporary thinker, John Amos Comenius, belonged to the era of an open soul, according to Jan Patočka. Christianity is not the only possibility of living with an open soul, wrote Patočka. Which opportunities have the man of the current days to find a way of life with an open soul? What can we all do to prepare for a change (Greek metanoia) on more occasions? Is there some profession more duty than others? Do teachers and educators have more responsibility than others? Who is the true educator or teacher, and how can this teacher educate us better? These will be the main questions asked in the paper, and I will try to suggest some answers to them as well.

Amrit Mishra (University Hyderabad) and Ms Tamanna Priya (Banaras Hindu University)
Reconfiguring an Authentic Dalit Ethics

The paper is interested in the ethics of the dalit experience, which has to be re-evaluated in the contemporary age. The dalits are in need of support from both within and outside their limited group. This requires the rise of a collective consciousness. It is this collective self consciousness that the paper aims to chart out. There is a need for what the authors call an 'ethics of authenticity' which can give a solution for this problem. To reach such a dalit ethics the paper makes use of dalit art, music, culture, folklores and more. This dalit ethics is an ethics of liberation, of freedom from the drudgery of the day to day mocking and the insult that the dalits have to face. The remapping of dalit ethics will offer an alternate political strategy. Another aim of the paper is to look at the experiential dimension of reality. It is very important to look at the dynamics of the dalit experience from the perspective of popular art and cultural consumption to chart out a dalit aesthetics. The paper looks at dalit aesthetics in a new light. It is not limited to the rhetoric of subalternity and attempts to develop a micro rather than a macro approach to deal with the problems of the dalits. There is a generational change in the experience of dalit discrimination- the tropes of discrimination have changed- the discrimination has persisted. An introspective look at the problem would make us understand that at the core of this problem is a un/aware complicitness in atrocities against the lower castes. The paper aims to offer strategies implementable in day to day life so that potential perpetrators and suffering dalits both can keep a watch. The paper also looks at the issue of the internationalisation of caste so that such an issue that can have a drastically existential impact on is taken care of by the international community.

DAY 2

Prof. Sophie Loidolt (Technical University Darmstadt)
Hannah Arendt's Ethics of Plurality

With her key concept of plurality, Hannah Arendt has not only made an important contribution to political theory, but has in fact rethought the philosophical tradition she came from. Although Arendt never spelled this out systematically, plurality is a paradigm that introduces the political into philosophical and phenomenological thought—just as the paradigm of alterity has provoked an ethical turn in phenomenology epitomized by the work of Emmanuel Levinas.
But actualizing plurality is not per se acting morally. To the contrary, Arendt's explicit reservations against moral philosophy instead indicate a certain opposition between the logic of plurality and the nature of moral principles. This has made her political theory vulnerable to criticisms concerning its lack of "moral foundations" (Benhabib) or its risk of an aestheticization of politics. In my talk, I want to confront allegations like these by proposing a different approach to the problem of "moral foundations": By a phenomenological take on the issue of plurality, I would like to show that ethical elements themselves are inherent within Arendt's conception of the political qua actualized plurality.

In the second part of my talk, I would like to present this "intrinsic ethics" in relation to the ethical demands that other domains confront us with: life, truth, and practical rationality. I will focus on the demands of life that seem to clash with plurality. This clash has especially problematic implications if it is interpreted as calling for the complete exclusion of social matters from the political sphere. To counter this approach, I will argue that the value of individual life can only be experienced within the horizon of plurality and that, therefore, we have to shift our perspective from a mutual exclusion to an interplay of these two basic human conditions and their ethical challenges.

Panel A: Ethics and Postmodernism (9:40 – 11:40)

Niki Young (University of Malta)
An Indexicalist and Différantial Ethics: On Bensusan and Derrida

As the title of his book suggests, Hilan Bensusan's recently published Indexicalism: Realism and the Metaphysics of Paradox (2021) argues for a paradoxico-metaphysical position he dubs "indexicalism." I hold that his position is primarily driven by two underlying theses which I propose to call the "Indexicalist Thesis" (IT) and the "Thesis of Perception" (TP). The former maintains that reality – or the "Great Outdoors" – is composed indexicals rather than nouns. The latter in turn argues for a ubiquitous theory of perception characterised as an act of hospitality, in that it provides an opening towards an exterior composed entirely of others. In this paper, I shall analyse each of these theses in light of my generalised realist reading of Derridean "différance," in order to tease out the ethical implications which emerge out of this cross-fertilisation of ideas.

Natasha Galea (University of Malta)
Simone de Beauvoir's Ethics: A Departure from Jean-Paul Sartre

Sartre's main premise that 'existence precedes essence', implies that the essential feature of human beings is that they are born free, free to make choices and give meaning to the world. A consequence of this ontological freedom is that we are 'thrown' into the world and are fully responsible for our actions and choices, which led Sartre to say that 'we are condemned to be free'. The main problem with the idea of ontological freedom is that value is a human creation and thus always relative. Consequently, an ethical system would not be possible. In addition, this has led many to interpret existentialism as a pessimistic and tragic philosophy.

Beauvoir was against this view of existentialism and through her concept of moral freedom, she provides her own version of an existentialist ethics. Arp (2001) argues that through this idea of moral freedom, Beauvoir avoids the problems faced by Sartre. Like other existentialists, Beauvoir believed that freedom was central to human existence. She argues that ontological freedom is a given of the human condition and although we may choose not to exercise our freedom, we will still be free. On the other hand, we are not always morally free. Moral freedom for Beauvoir is the result of how one responds to their ontological freedom. In The Ethics of Ambiguity, she claims that "[t]o will oneself moral and to will oneself free are one and the same decision" (Beauvoir, 2018). To will oneself free is to accept our freedom and the responsibility it entails. We are not thrown into the world but throw ourselves by choosing and pursuing our own projects.

Another key difference between Sartre and Beauvoir is that Beauvoir believes that moral freedom can only be achieved if others are free as well. While Sartre viewed the other as a threat to one's freedom, for Beauvoir, every individual has an ethical responsibility towards himself but also to others: "to will oneself free is also to will others free" (Beauvoir, 2018). To be morally free means that one develops their ontological freedom for themselves and for others. Thus, the role of the other is necessary for one's freedom because without others, our actions are useless and meaningless.

In this paper I will be exploring how Beauvoir introduces the idea of 'moral freedom' which sets her work apart from Sartre's. Currently in its preliminary stage, the aim of this research is to show that it is through this idea that Beauvoir succeeds in establishing her own existentialist ethics with an emphasis on the freedom of others.

Oliver Norman (Université de Poitiers)
The (Im)Possibility of Ethics : Derrida, Levinas, Kierkegaard

If ethics is the attention we give to the Call of the Other, the injunction the face of the Other imposes upon us, is it even possible ? Is ethics not founded upon in-ethics or unethical situations ? Does an individualised vision of ethics not lead us to an impasse from which there is no escape but to recognize that ethics is fundamentally impossible ? These questions all span from a reading of Derrida's Donner la mort, Levinas's Otherwise than Being and Kierkegaard's Stages on Life's Way.

This presentation will attempt to show that in order for an ethical relationship to the Other to be possible from an individualistic standpoint, it is necessary to acquiesce to unethical conduct. In responding to the Call of an-other, of one Other, I necessarily do not respond to the call of every other Other who surrounds me. Both Levinas and Derrida confront the reality of the Third in the final years (Derrida in Donner la mort & Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas, Levinas in Otherwise than being), a third who requires me just as much as the Other.

I will attempt to show that there is a problem concerning the historical reception of Kierkegaard's work within this very problem. Both philosophers analyse the case of Abraham and Isaac from a Kierkegaardian standpoint (Derrida in a positive light, Levinas in a negative one) and consider Abraham as ethically significant in his transgression of morality (or societal norms) in his obedience to God. To relate to the absolute Other of God, Abraham must sacrifice his son; to relate authentically to his son through his faith in God, Abraham must sacrifice the company of Sara and Eliezer… Ethics is a constant sacrifice. This joins the definition Kierkegaard gives in Either Or by placing ethics under the determination of choice and therefore the sacrifice of possibilities in favour of a commitment to one person, to one value, to one norm. But Derrida acts as if Kierkegaard's account of Abraham were paradigmatic of ethics, which it is not. Abraham is a knight of faith. As such we should nuance his place in the theory of ethics.

Instead of looking to Abraham as the incarnation of the sacrifices needed to be ethical, the fundamental impossibility of relating ethically to the Other without relating unethically to the Third. We must keep in mind that ethics for Kierkegaard is the general, a relation to society. Ethics sees this necessary sacrifice but mediates it through social institutions. And this is the solution to the problem of the Third proposed by Levinas at the end of Otherwise than Being: for us to relate ethically beyond individualistic binaries, we must call upon a social institution to weigh the claims of all the injunctions that weigh on me – this institution is Justice. Levinas returns to a Kierkegaardian understanding of ethics. But justice encounters its own problem: how do you weigh equal claims? Our presentation must bring about this question…

Jojo Joseph Varakukalayil, (Jnana Deepa, Institute of Philosophy and Theology)
Here I am. On incarnating responsibility ethics in Levinas

Responsibility, traditionally, means accountability for one's deeds as the originating cause (arche), and modern rationality gives priority to freedom over responsibility, and thus a subordination of the ethical to the rational. Responsibility, in Levinas, is initially a responsibility for one's being as hypostatic subject; eventually he redefines its sociological content of the inter-human in the epiphany of the face whereby one's condition is an uncondition of response to the radical alterity of the Other in her face. This is the unchosen commitment incumbent upon one's being implying that the answer does not primarily refer to something that has been said and done, but rather to something which has to be said and to be done. Thus, it does not point to the traditional idea of self-responsibility, on the other hand being invited for a responsibility prior to freedom i.e., responsibility as substitution, being-for-the-other in the mode of despite oneself as dis-inter-estedness and radical passivity. Being responsible for the other is not a choice of oneself, for Levinas, rather it is being hostage and innocently accused as bearing the other on one's skin, a sensibility, as a condition for the ethical. To the proximity of the Other, the self is already as "here I am", literally meaning 'here see me in my body' to the other, a moment the good beyond my being-for-itself as estedness that inscribes in the corporeal gesture of nurturing with life and limb. This is being present to the other through one's corporeality to the vulnerability of the other revealed in one's face. Being-for-and-to-the-other, incarnating responsibility, remains the unchosen vocation of the human for the being of the other in one's material form, in one's bodiliness over against the estedness of the conatus

essendi. The responsibility ethics remains asymmetrical and radially passive. Radical passivity argues for a responsibility prior to freedom of choice and one's accountability. One is innocently accused from within as being affected without intentional content. No reason could argue for the reasons for one's responsibility in and through oneself. The flesh as one's corporeal sensibility utters me voici that becomes a word, i.e., spoken to the needy and dying other as response of 'mad goodness' the divinely human and humane in the humanity of the humans.

Panel B: Ethics and Society (9:40 – 11:40)

Claudia Bartolo Tabone (University of Malta)
Medical Decision-making in the Care of Intersex Children: Autonomy and Best Interests, or Paternalism?

Medical decision-making is frequently a case of balancing the patient's right to autonomy with the doctor's duty to care. The need to show beneficence, however, often drives the medical professional to unwittingly coerce people into making decisions which follow their 'expert' advice. This ultimately manifests in a form of paternalism which is driven by the authority acquired through professional status rather than by superior knowledge. Such practice is even more rife when minors, specifically intersex minors, are involved.

Several decisions, some of which may leave permanent negative effects on the child born with an intersex variation, must be taken soon after birth. The family's social and cultural background tend to influence decisions but most commonly, the decision-making process is hindered by the lack of knowledge on intersex issues. Parents therefore usually rely on doctors' advice because they are often ill-equipped to make certain decisions on their own. When the child is born with atypical genitalia, they find choosing the sex of rearing, amongst other things, particularly problematic. They also find it hard to decide whether to tell others, including other family members, that their child is 'different'. Most importantly, they may have to decide whether to consent to 'normalizing' or 'corrective' surgery when the child is still too young to participate in the decision-making process. For fear of making wrong decisions for their children, parents may be more inclined to follow the doctors' opinions, but these frequently push towards 'acting' rather than 'letting be', lest they be accused of omission or failure to care. This gives little to no consideration to the true best interests of the child and the future adult, and most often the decision ends up being the one which favours the best medical interests rather than those of the child.

While having been banned in Malta, genital 'normalizing' surgeries which are solely meant to reinforce the sex of rearing chosen at birth, are still legal in most countries in the world. These surgeries leave an indelible mark on the child and the future adult because they do not allow them an open future, sterilizing them and making their genitalia insensate in the process. It is therefore essential for a balance to be struck between the child's autonomy, that is, the right to participate in their own medical decision-making, and the medical professionals' paternalism, which is often an expression of their need to act beneficently towards their patients. The creation of an interdisciplinary team may better assist the parents and the doctors in making decisions for these children by shifting the focus on the individual child's best interests rather than those of the parents or the medical team.

Luke Hinchy (University of Malta Alumni)

You won't believe how much you could earn working abroad! Ethical considerations on the integration of the migrant workforce in increasingly cosmopolitan societies.

The modernisation of our societies is leading towards a greater dependency on migrant workforces. Migrant workforces are being sought because they are perceived to be cheaper, more likely to carry out burdensome duties and more expendable. Walzer's analysis of the practice highlights key aspects in play where the migrant workers form part of an underclass, regulated in their everyday activities and constantly threatened by deportation. The migrant workers becomes more coerced than the local citizen through the instruments of modern nation-states that intrude on the migrant workers' lives. The modern nation-states take on authoritarian personas with its oppressed migrant residents, while maintaining more democratic personas with their citizens. Thus, our societies still linger under models inherited from colonials, where slaves have been replaced by second class residents. In essence, the migrant worker becomes treated as other.

However, the increase in globalised connections within our world is opening up the competition for such migrant workers. The migrant workforce is being offered choices, with more communities beginning to depend on them. In turn, an amelioration of the experiences of the migrant worker is occurring, as communities seek to retain them and others seek to attract them. Therefore, it becomes necessary to reinterpret the conditions of the migrant workforce in a world that is increasingly cosmopolitan and reconfigure our ethical understandings of the practice.

The reaction to the presence of the migrant workforce and then the improvement of their conditions is coinciding with a returning rise of extreme right parties. There is a pressure between sustaining economic activities and the notions of "Heim/Heimat" (observed by Arendt as key motivator for the rejection of the Other). The concerns articulated through the racist and discriminatory rhetoric of the extreme right emphasise certain tensions within modern societies that merit further investigation.

The presence and dependence on migrant workforce raises concerns about the duty of care towards migrant workers but also the citizens whose employability could be affected by the arrival of the migrant workers, akin to anxieties linked to the robotisation of labour. Following Brown's thought, this duty of care can be further explored in contrast to a distinction between a personal ethic of tolerance (individual) and a governmentality of tolerance (institutional).

The extent of a welfare state in a globalised world must also be analysed in terms of feasibility and from wherein stems the argument that welfare provided to residents should be more limited than those "earned" by citizens by nature of their citizenship. Through Derrida, we can explore the discord of hostility and hospitality experienced by the migrant workforce. As members of a globalised community, we bear the moral responsibility to counterbalance personally the hostility faced by the migrant workforce and also to counterbalance the effects on our radicalised racist neighbour. That is to say, that hospitality must be afforded to both the migrant worker and the racist neighbour.

Brikena Buda Dhuli (University of Durres)
Discrimination and Ethics: Gender equality at work

In this paper, the main focus is the discrimination of the female gender and ethics in work relations. We live in a society where masculinism continues to dominate, despite the fact that the gap of the level of education between men and women is not the same as it used to be. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania, expressly in its article 18, sanctions the principle of equality before the law, while in recent years we see a positive trend of women's engagement in public, political and managerial life. Indeed, in Albania there is a positive development regarding the engagement of the figure of women, but, as our legislation needs the implementation of women's protection mechanisms, also the implementation of ethics in the workplace is a necessity in achieving gender equality. Treating men and women in the same way does not mean guaranteeing equal opportunities. For this reason, the implementation of measures that ensure ethics and gender equality are important.

Irene Olivero (Polytechnic University of Milan)
Better Off Without Parents? Migrating children and family reunification: norms and ethical concerns

A general ethical principle commends that the child's best interest shall be a primary concern. Several laws and regulations are in place to preserve this tenet. Or at least they are, in principle, formulated to do so. This talk aims to correlate and analyze two contexts from an ethical point of view: children's migration and family reunification. In these contexts, specific (albeit considered generally and a priori) regulations in force to preserve the above principle seem to fail to do so. In the context of children's migration, specific laws in place lead to unjustified unequal treatment of accompanied vis-à-vis unaccompanied refugee children (cf. Dufner and Hillmann 2019), with the latter having access to more advantages. These regulations even seem to lead to the ethically challenging, indirect consequence that refugee minors are better off without their parents since being unaccompanied gives them access to additional support and advantages (including, e.g., the one of not being sent back to the country of origin). Moreover, an undesired side effect of these laws is that migrating parents might feel somewhat incentivized to deny a relationship with their children (cf. Dufner and Hillmann 2019). Ethical concerns also apply to family reunification, where the regulations in place lead to unequal treatment of children DNA-related to their parents versus minors not biologically tied to their families. In several countries, the right to family reunification is granted only upon DNA testing to ascertain the biological relationship of parents and children (cf. Lee and Voigt 2020), frequently even in the presence of legal documents proving family ties (cf. Heinemann and Lemke 2014). I aim to argue that the considered regulations carry on further critical ethical concerns, particularly if the two contexts are evaluated jointly. The laws at stake in the two examined contexts involuntarily and indirectly put refugee minors who do not share biological relationships with their family members in lose-lose situations. If they migrate as accompanied minors, they cannot benefit from the same rights and privileges granted to their peers, possibly also risking being later expelled from the country together with their accompanists. If, on the other hand, these refugee minors try and benefit from the advantages contracted for unaccompanied minors, they risk later not getting approved for family reunification. By contrast, their peers who can prove biological kinship with their family are in a slightly more privileged position. If they were to deny family boundaries to get the most benefit from migration laws, in most cases, they could ask later to be reunited with their parents or siblings. Given these considerations, the chapter concludes that the regulations at stake ought to be revisited to effectively preserve the best interest of all the children involved.

Panel C: Ethics and Transcendence (9:40 – 11:40)

Gaetano Iaia (University of Naples, Federico II)
A philosophical approach on "responsibility" in environmental education, based on Hans Jonas' "Ethics of responsibility"

The concept of responsibility goes beyond a "simple" individual inner responsibility or in interpersonal relationships. It implies a broad responsibility between societies, and not just between individuals, between present and future humans, and not just between contemporary humans, between humans and non-humans. Particularly environmental problems, a negative result of technologies developed in order to facilitate human activities, are urging more serious responsibility. The effects and consequences of environmental problems are very multifaceted, and now it is difficult to solve them only with the development of science and technology or with the provision of new social control measures: the current environmental problem can only be solved thinking and talking about responsibility. For this reason, in modern society, environmental education is assuming more and more importance, which aims to assume an ever clearer responsibility towards the environment. However, even if various programs relating to environmental education have been created, in many cases the philosophical logic of environmental education is not reflected and only the scientific elements are emphasized. In this presentation I would like to propose - posing as a "conceptual background" the perspective of Hans Jonas - a philosophical basis for a new idea of responsibility, expanding the concept with respect to how it has been understood up to now.

John Portelli & Soudeh Oladi (University of Toronto, OISE)
Toward an ethics of relationality: Insights from Freire's 'Universal Human Ethic'

This paper focuses on the old tension in ethical theory between subjectivist and objectivist understandings of the moral domain and its resolutions. Traditionally most philosophers have argued for either one of the two positions. More specifically, this paper focuses on the work of Paulo Freire who, in our view, developed a justifiable ethical position based on his understanding of the dialectic. For Freire, the intrinsic relativism prevalent in postmodern intellectual circles was a form of hypocritical moralism. At the same time, he also harshly criticized absolutist moralism on the grounds that is based on outright authoritarianism. In response to both central positions, the ethical position adopted by Freire rejects renouncing truth altogether while highlighting the dangers of objectivism, and instead encourages us to engage in truth-seeking via a relational paradigm even in the moral domain.

While Freire undoubtedly argues for a social constructivist epistemological stance, in his remarks on ethics, he identifies and argues for what he termed as "a universal human ethic. At face value, based on traditional philosophical polarities, these two positions seem to be oxymoronic and inconsistent with one another. Freire proposed the idea of a universal human ethic in juxtaposition to what he called market ethics. Freire's antithetical stance toward the immobilizing and delirious fatalism embraced in the face of dehumanizing injustice advanced by market ethics was informed by the possibility of struggle undertaken in the name of ethics. The universal ethical ideal is borne out of Freire's attempt to reinterpret the notion of humanization. For Freire, ethics as a political and moral question, is a universal moral imperative.

Some have critiqued Freire's conception of universal human ethic on the grounds that it is incommensurable with his stated epistemology. Freire has been accused of being an idealist and at best a critical modernist who had a brief alliance with some aspects of postmodernism. Freire, of course, was very aware of the tensions in the history of philosophy between the two major ethical stances (with different epistemological assumptions and beliefs).

We argue that Freire's understanding of universal human ethic, while not congruent with a traditionalist and objectivist understanding of ethics, also challenges a purely relativist stance. For Freire, the universal human ethic arises from the existential human predicament based on a specific context, and yet, given his understanding of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, it demands a universal obligation to act against oppressive conditions. Our argument is also based on Freire's understanding of "unfinishdness" which will be critically examined in this presentation.

Jean Gove (University of St Andrews)
Unburdening Burdened Virtues

Within the literature on feminist ethics, Lisa Tessman (2005) utilises a virtue ethics framework to introduce the notion of 'burdened virtues.' She adopts a pessimistic position wherein she states that moral agents who form part of social groups suffering oppression – such as women, or racial minorities – are inherently hindered from achieving human flourishing precisely due to burdened virtues. Whereas virtuous acts are generally considered as being conducive to one's flourishing, burdened virtues supposedly do not follow this schema. This is because, according to Tessman, oppressed moral agents frequently find themselves in situations where the virtuous, morally praiseworthy thing to do does not in fact lead to their own flourishing, but rather impedes it. However, this necessarily implies the breaking of the link between virtuous action and flourishing that is essential to any virtue ethics framework. Furthering on work already done by Koggel (2008) and Harvey (2018), this essay seeks to question to what extent can burdened virtues be truly considered as 'virtues' or as 'burdened' in the sense given by Tessman. This is important given that this notion has been further taken up and employed in subsequent literature (e.g.: Alfano & Robinson, 2017; Wolfe, 2017).

Like Tessman, the argument presented in this article is based within an Aristotelean framework. I argue that any theory wishing to assert that oppression is morally deplorable can only do so by postulating a universal conception of human flourishing and, consequently, a universal conception of human nature; that is to say, conceptions which are applicable to all moral agents within society. My first objection to Tessman's argument is that she refrains from doing just this. Furthermore, as a result of asserting a universal view of human flourishing, I show how it cannot come to be that the (oppressed) moral agent's pursuit of their own flourishing can ever be at odds with the flourishing of the social collective. Consequently, in the virtuous activity of a moral agent (be they oppressed, or not) to combat any oppression or injustice, they are, at once, pursuing their own flourishing, the flourishing of the oppressed group, and even that of society as a whole. While it seems to be the case that one's flourishing is contingent upon many factors (one of them being the practice of virtues), I shall seek to show how any and every virtuous act contributes towards, and never hinders, one's flourishing. As a result, the notion of burdened virtue should be discarded altogether; the virtuous struggle of oppressed moral agents to liberate themselves is thus not at odds with their striving for flourishing.

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Agim Leka (Aleksandër Xhuvani University of Elbasan)
Integral Education, Morality and Religion in the Postmodern Era

The aim is how to form the new generation through knowledge, skills, attitudes and values synthesized in wisdom[*]. The context is integral education and integral thinking of the social being. The integration and differentiation have accompanied the transition of human thought and language from Aristotle. In our postmodern era, can be considered as a return to identity, as the integral human being himself, with critical and reflective integral thinking.
Young people need to be able to adapt to rapid and unpredictable changes, such as crises, pandemics, natural disasters, etc. Differentiation, modern rationalism, and the scientific and technological revolution deepened the "divorce" between the fields of knowledge, and even brought about fierce opposition. Secularism equates with atheism, morality in hedonism as opposed to professionalism, and truth equates with media falsity. In the field of thought, the post-totalitarian transition put societies on the difficult path of transition from ideology to critical and reflective thought. "Opening the mind" has begun with reconceptualizing knowledge and building competence during the scientific process of education. The revival of the integrated curriculum is a necessary alternative to the challenges of the twentieth cent. XXI. The philosophy, transitology and pedagogy of integrated teaching and learning focus on the student, needs, abilities and individual preferences, through understanding the content and not memorizing (M. Ismailov, 2021). The purpose of the research is the modest contribution to the illumination of the vision to prepare the global man. Theories and methods of research are based on the transitology[**] of thought and language.

Panel A: Ethics and the Individual (13:00 – 15:00)

Karl Baldacchino (Goldsmiths, University of London)
Indifference as resistance: From Baudrillard's critique of critique to Foucault's ethics

In the context of the decomposition of Marxism, as well as the revival of Nietzsche, among French intellectuals in the long aftermath of May '68, where many strived to better understand power, as well as articulate new ways of resistance, this paper notes the emergence of both the explicit and implicit theme of indifference as a source of resistance in theory. Consequently, through an analysis of a key moment in this period, the paper foregrounds the significance that the notion of indifference plays in articulating novel modes of resistance, which radically contrast traditional modes of engagement, confrontation and ideas of emancipation. More specifically, it is noted how following his 1976 critique of Foucault's historical analysis of power – in 'Forget Foucault' (1977) – Jean Baudrillard urges critical thought to seriously consider indifference as a mode of resistance – in 'In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities' (1978). Nevertheless, it is noted that what Buadrillard proposes is an ambivalent indifference as resistance to power, since the 'silent masses' both choose to be as such and at the same time render themselves passive to the point of perpetually assimilating the spectacle. The discussion then turns to an analysis of Michel Foucault's work in the same period (1976-178), to show how in the context of his reorientation from an analysis of power to an analysis of the forms of relations to oneself, despite Baudrillard's critique and in contrast to his articulation of an ambivalent indifference as resistance, one is able to discern an implicit use of the theme of indifference as resistance to power that is highly emancipatory in nature. This is particularly the case in the two lectures Foucault gave at the Collège de France – 'Society, Territory, Population' – and the Société Française de Philosophie – 'What is Critique?' – in 1978, where via the notions of 'counter-conduct' and 'critical attitude' he rethinks the problem of resistance. Accordingly, it is preliminarily concluded that in this context a 'critical attitude' is what instills an attitude of indifference as resistance towards power, which is in turn internalised and transformed into a practice of the self that might elicit new ways of being governed.

David Vella (University of Malta)
That still small voice that makes me impotent

A major concern of our times involves our authenticity. The mass media, the market, and lifestyle gurus continuously hammer home the idea that fulfilment in life depends on discovering who we really are deep inside. The journey to authenticity, however, is often interpreted *as* the cultivation of personal wellbeing. Popular culture seems to *confuse* our truest self with an individualist experience of contentment.[1] All manner of practices such as yoga, couples therapy, past-life regression, spontaneous travel, inner-child work, and strict fitness programs are promoted strictly for this end.

In narrowing down all attention on our self, the mainstream definition of authenticity tends to exclude the reality of other people along with society and its political institutions. Perhaps a more meaningful and realistic way of defining authenticity is in terms of *conscience*. Simon Critchley's phenomenology of conscience is arguably one of the most well-known and influential on the subject. Conscience, he claims, is our receptivity to a call that comes from us and yet beyond us, demanding an unconditional fidelity that we cannot provide. It reveals our perpetual failure at meeting the call's solicitations. In this manner, we are inflicted by a *recognition* of our impotence. For Critchley, our authenticity is precisely the anguished knowledge that we are *inauthentic*, at heart, ethical failures. Through this powerlessness or weakness, however, a sense of ethical power or strength is discovered.[2]

This paper will show that Critchley's account of conscience is incomplete in granting an undue emphasis on its condition of impotence at the expense of an equal focus on *how* this translates to potency. Critchley, in other words, fails to give a satisfactory explanation of the passage from one state to another. At times, he even seems to settle for an idea of conscience as strictly delimited to a tragic or tragicomic *acceptance* of our failure, which can verge on a species of indulgent passion for such a failure. This can easily lead to an interpretation of conscience as an impasse, marked by a self-paralysis that inhibits any form of knowledge and action to develop. In this regard, the suffering of conscience is not much different in structure from other nonethical types of suffering, whether physical, psychological, or emotional.

On account of the ethical dimension of conscience, this paper will thus *distinguish* its suffering from others. The anguish of conscience is a *virtuous* anguish, induced by certain virtues that are perhaps native to our character. What these virtues aspire for in answer to the call is a utopian futurity that can only be defined, via Aristotle and Paul Ricoeur, as 'the "good life" with and for others, in just institutions'.[3] It will also be argued that our faith in a *self-narrative of conscience* could be significant in aiming to increase our sensitivity as well as help provoke the *empowering* aspect of our actual experience of conscience. Without the possibility of such a self-story, it is certainly easier to deny, suppress, or escape from its call, or even endure it but remain passive to its effects. Conscience as an expression of our authenticity can expand the scope of our life in motivating us to welcome what is *other* in people and experiences and in so doing open us to unprecedented perspectives that have the potential to transform us and guide us toward the construction of a better world for everyone.

Lorenzo De Donato (University of Milano-Bicocca)
Desire and sacrifice: 'conversion' to an Ethics of Psychoanalysis

«But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners» (Matthew 9:13). Christian God doesn't want sacrifice, but only love. It is very often given a moralistic interpretation of God Will, oriented to the concept of sacrifice, but in our hermeneutical proposal the only really 'moral' interpretation of the Holy Text is oriented to the notion of desire. We use this word meaning not the sexual and carnal version of it, or in general its materialistic version, but the idea of desire connected to the concept of love and to the concept of donation, gift. If Christian God doesn't desire sacrifice, it could mean that it is possible to build a connection between the ancient religious Christian culture and the European philosophical XX Century culture, referring here to Lacanian idea of Desire. There is only one question really important answering in everyone's life - in the thought of the French psychoanalyst - the only really moral question to make to ourselves at the end of life: Did you act all-life-long according to your desire? Responding to this question not ignoring the biblical suggest towards mercy means attribute to a psychoanalytical theory (that is always a philosophical theory about human being) the power to have an influence in an ethical debate too. In this case we're giving an existential-psychoanalytical meaning to the concept of Ethics. Answering to Lacan's inquiry means calling into question another cultural and biblical-psychoanalytical important issue: the perception of Law. Interpreting in the correct way the Lacanian question should mean ignoring the Law imposed by external mechanisms - the type of Law that push us towards sacrifice - and joyfully self-impose a Law from the inner side, a Law that authorizes and - more - obliges us to act according to our desire. The present contribution aims to explore the meaning of Ethics of Psychoanalysis starting from a Lacanian point of view and to show the possibility of 'conversion' from an Ethics of sacrifice to an Ethics of desire.

Jade Nguyen (University College London, Institute of Education)
Caring, teaching and the role of recognition

Teachers and Teacher Trainers often state a commitment to caring (Matias & Zembylas, 2014), however at times their practice seems to run against ideals of social justice (Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Martin, 2021). This paper will discuss the significance that social justice, broadly construed, has within caring pedagogies. In turn, it will highlight the role the idea of Recognition (Taylor, 1992; Appiah, 1992) has in shaping a teacher's caring pedagogical responses, and the dangers of, at best, ignoring aspects of social identities and, at worst, denying these exist in the first place.

Panel B: Ethics and the Environment (9:40 – 11:40)

Roberto Debono (University of Malta)
The case for and the ethics of a global guardian to address the ecological crisis

It is universally agreed that addressing climate change and the global ecological crisis requires urgent coordinated global action. Thirty years after the milestone United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio, Brazil, in 1992, annual anthropogenic global greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows that current international efforts to curb greenhouse gases are insufficient to keep global warming within the 'safe' trajectory of 1.5oC. Similarly, biodiversity loss has reached unprecedented rates since the mass extinction event of the dinosaurs 66 million years ago. The ecological crisis poses serious implications to the well-being and the survival   of   Homo   sapiens.

Limitless economic growth has been shown to be ecologically unsustainable at least since 1972 with the publications of 'Limits to Growth: An Economy for a Finite Planet'. The economic growth imperative, widely acknowledged as a driver of climate change and the ecological crisis, is in part a geopolitical imperative. It stems from a perpetual geopolitical state of nations prioritizing national over global interests. National interests include national security, as well as the pursuit of military, economic and cultural hegemony in a competitive world order. The 'international anarchy' of sovereign nation states, characterized by the absence of a central coercive authority, is arguably unsuitable to address climate change and the global ecological crisis. If this is true, it will inevitably lead to Hardin's infamous tragedy of the global ecological commons.

Such a scenario constitutes a case for a coercive global political world order to address the climate crisis with the necessary urgency which characterizes such a challenge. This has implications for state sovereignty and, a prima facie, raises the fear of totalitarianism or a Hobbesian global Leviathan. This article discusses the necessary and sufficient conditions for a coercive global political order that strikes a balance between addressing the urgent challenge of global climate change while allowing for self-determination among nations and peoples worldwide. Some of the ethical implications of climate change will be explored.

Ermelinda Rodilosso (University of Rome Tor Vergata)
From Destruction to Care: An Environmental Virtue Ethics Perspective for an Anthropogenic Planet

We are facing a new epoch, namely "Anthropocene", in which humankind has acquired the power to irreversibly alter the environment. For the first time in our planet's history, even trivial and apparently insignificant actions may have a global impact with long-term effects that endanger biosphere's preservation. In such a context, a radical renewal in ethics is required: we need to identify new problems, reassess our ethical standards and, mostly, adopt different perspectives. As a matter of fact, consequentialist and deontological theories appear to be insufficient when dealing with environmental issues: both universal principles of broad generality and hedonistic calculi tend to over-emphasis on rules for conduct, that are ill-suited for large-scale problems with unclear limits and an enormous range of implications. Nonetheless, environmental virtue ethics provides a different perspective, which is worth investigating: the agent's capability to enhance or decrease certain dispositions regarding their relationship   with   the   environment.

The aim of my work is twofold: to offer a comprehensive presentation of environmental virtue ethics as an indispensable resource for environmental ethics as a whole; to show the potential of this approach in dealing with anthropogenic issues. The former idea driving this argumentation is that any ethics lacking a theory of virtue is bound to be incomplete or even misleading, while the latter is that environmental virtue ethics grants us further resources to understand and mitigate Anthropocene's phenomena.

I start my analysis with a close look at the characteristics of environmental virtue ethics, distinguishing its fundamental ramifications. The intersection of environmental ethics and virtue ethics presents many effective features, such as: the focus on the subject-agent; the adoption of a perspective which is neither strict nor legalistic; the concept of phronesis and the capability of moral refinement; the inclusion of identity and emotions within the ethical discourse; a solid motivational grounding for environmentally responsible behavior. This intersection might also be problematic, due to an alleged incompatibility between two aspects of these accounts: environmental ethics is by definition non-anthropocentric, while virtue ethics is usually considered anthropocentric. I give a closer look to this focal point in order to demonstrate that environmental virtue ethics is neither self-centered, nor egoistic, nor anthropocentric.

Finally, I emphasize the characteristics of environmental virtue ethics that make it highly suitable to manage the concept of Anthropocene. I primarily focus on the possibility to overturn the usual meaning of Anthropocene: from the capacity to alter the environment in a negative way, to modify it in a positive way. From destruction to care. My proposal doesn't seek to supplant other theories regarding the relationship between humanity and environment, but to develop a dynamic perspective that may work in synergy with action-centered and rule-centered accounts.

Zachary Vereb (University of Mississippi)
Confronting Climate Change: Sustainability and the Kantian Juridical State

Environmental ethics is a relatively new area of research in academic philosophy, developing its own independent character in the last few decades. Since its early development, commentators have remained skeptical of the philosophical canon, especially for normative prejudices associated with anthropocentrism. Along with René Descartes and Francis Bacon, Immanuel Kant remains a prime target in this critical pursuit, especially by environmental philosophers. With the worsening of climate change, climate ethics has splintered off as its own unique field of inquiry, drawing from the insights of environmental ethics as well as anthropocentric normative theories in the history of ethics. Despite Kant's massive influence for the latter, genuine Kantian accounts in climate ethics remain sparse. This is surprising, for in climate ethics anthropocentrism is not as much of a liability as it used to be. The climate crisis, after all, is a global problem confronting humans and non-humans alike.

Recent attempts by Kant scholars engage his legal and political philosophy to consider the extent to which Kant's views on legitimate political coercion have value in this regard. This is a fruitful avenue to pursue, and it opens up questions about the applied merit of Kantian and post-Kantian views for the Anthropocene, especially those of Hegel and Marx. There are now plenty of 'green' Marxian views, but few attempts at 'greening' Kant or Hegel. This is an oversight. The present paper intends to confront the climate crisis as both an ethical and legal-political issue. To do so, it develops ideas from Kant's juridical philosophy to showcase that his relative marginalization in the Anthropocene is a liability.

I begin by sketching important background on Kant's juridical philosophy developed in the Doctrine of Right. I differentiate various accounts of the juridical state for Kant as found in commentators such as Ripstein, Bird & Hruschka, and Williams. I suggest that the most plausible interpretation to draw from to showcase the applied value of Kant's legal philosophy sits with Ripstein's influential reading. Next, I assume for the sake of argument that Kant is correct that rights remain merely provisional in the state of nature. I also stipulate that Kant is correct that we have a moral duty to enter a juridical state to secure those rights. From these stipulations and the contention that climate change threatens long-term civilization collapse, I argue that it follows that the juridical state has duties to secure those rights and, in order to do so, it must implement sustainable policies. This argument hinges on the purpose of the juridical state for Kant, and its obligation to sustain itself in perpetuity so that humanity can continue to approximate perpetual peace. I conclude by illustrating two possible environmental public policy cases—domestic and foreign—that a Kantian sustainability ethic could justify.

Daniel Zimmer (Cornell University)
The Ethics of Existential Risk in the Earth System Anthropocene

This essay explores the ethical implications that arise from the anthropogenic existential risks associated with the 'Anthropocene.' The last decade has seen many scholars in the humanities take issue with this term, arguing that the inclusion of the 'Anthropos' in the title falsely implicates humankind as a whole for an ecological crisis that was caused by one relatively small subset of people and whose burdens fall disproportionately on another. While many scholars have dismissed the 'Anthropocene' in favor of others that better capture their preferred culprit (e.g. 'Capitalocene,' 'Plantationocene,' 'Manthropocene,' etc.), this essay instead attempts to recover the initial existential implications of the phrase as it was initially deployed by the atmospheric chemist and Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen. It finds that what at first seems like an extemporaneous outburst at a meeting of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program in Cuernavaca, Mexico in 2000 actually represents a rhetorical distillation of several basic premises of Earth System science developed during the 1970s and 1980s. It argues that the chief political challenges of the Anthropocene arise from developments: one, the discovery by scientists in the 1970s that they could not accurately model the functioning of most Earth systems without including the collective effect that human beings were exerting on planetary processes; two, the formative encounter with ozone depletion (1970-1987), nuclear winter (1981-1982), and global warming (1988-1997) as evidence that human beings had not only collectively become a 'planetary force,' but one capable of placing the whole of complex life in jeopardy. The essay argues that to dismiss the 'Anthropocene' on the grounds that the title falsely implicates humanity is to precisely miss the far more disturbing point long since realized by Earth systems scientists: that although not all people are by any means equally culpable, the collective survival of humankind as a whole has long since passed directly into human hands. Instead, the final third of the essay draws a series of parallels between the work of the biblical Apostle Paul and the contributions of the secular saint Paul Crutzen. I call attention to how both Pauls announce the existence of a "new humanity," the former in his letter to the Ephesians, the latter with his popularization of a new understanding of human totality comprehended in terms of "collective human activities" that has come to be adopted by Earth System science. In the original Greek, the Apostle Paul's "new humanity" is Kainos Anthropos (καινός άνθρωπος), the same two terms that stand at the etymological heart of Paul Crutzen's 'Anthropocene' (Anthropos + Kainos). I conclude the essay by arguing that it is past time that political and ethical thinkers stop recoiling from the figure of totality implied by the 'Anthropocene' and begin to explore the potential for new forms of planetary solidarity that arise within the agentic Kainos Anthropos of "collective human activities" that has been furnished by Earth System science against the backdrop of ongoing threats to collective human survival.

Panel A Ethics and the Digital (15:20 – 16:50)

Jodie Bonnici (University of Malta Alumni)
Together in Digital Dreams

The pervasiveness of our ubiquitous technologies continues to change the way individuals in contemporary cybercultures are relating in the everyday. The third era of ubiquitous computing (Weiser, 1996), as a result of its transmediality and the unrestricted access to knowledge it appears to have, has altered the concept of reality itself due to the medium's amalgamation of 'real' and 'virtual' into a hybrid-space (de Souza e Silva, 2004). Consequently, ubiquitous computing has altered our access to objective reality and the structure of our relations to the world and others (Turkle, 2011, 2015; Eco, 2014).

Given that the way we relate has been altered, does this imply any alterations in the ways we ought to interact in contemporary societies? It can be argued that ubiquitous technologies have globalized our moral responsibilities, as we are being transformed from passive and unaware masses into active participants of the world to come, upheld by the technoelites. The hyperconnectivity brought about by ubiquitous computing (Weiser, 1996), has encouraged a move towards a state of being together which is similar to the collectivist nature of tribal times, with the difference that the bonds between individuals in this new culture transcend spatio-temporal limitations (de Kerckhove, 1993; Turkle, 2005). This view of the world as a Global Village (McLuhan, 1994, 2011) has a significant effect on our conception of the other, influencing our view of humanity in such a way that we may see it more as a whole, leading to global convergence. Global convergence results in the identification with people across the world, despite different cultures, on the basis of even one mutual interest or ideology. Furthermore, our cyberspaces are sustaining the development of a public sphere, as termed by Habermas (1962), that is transforming our societies into information societies.

However, given the massive amount of information, a trend emerges wherein algorithms may misdirect or focalise our moral outrages on the trivial or the nonsensical, obscuring our access to key information and therefore limiting our ability to act on our moral responsibilities. There are systemic concerns that can be underlined by the current systems behind ubiquitous computing. The simulacrum of the network, the connections, and the interactions replace the real society, conversation, and encounters. While the sense of solidarity created through digital participation is good, it sometimes serves to overshadow other events and can be easily manipulated to form part of a commodification of attention operation. These operations also serve to alienate us from the other and expose us to radical and decontextualized content from the other.

A conscientious approach to our encoding of hybrid-spaces is required to propagate critical thought and promote empathy and tolerance towards the other through the experiences of their user-participants

Guelfo Carbone (Independent Scholar)
Poverty and mortality under the dominance of technology

Relying on Heidegger's recently issued Black Notebooks, where the 'shepherd of being' qua 'mortal' is discussed as the 'future man,' the present paper tackles poverty and mortality, together with their mutual bond, in the frame of the tension established by Heidegger between Gestell and Ereignis, namely, between the global dominance of technology and the liberation of earth from the despotic dominion of humans being. First, the light is casted upon the dominance of technology, which 'distorts' the Ereignis of the world, which is yet to come, by precisely withholding its arrival. Second, the focus shifts on the philosophical meaning of poverty, which relies on mortality understood as radical dispossession. Since poverty is the essential feature of the 'future man,' the 'shepherd of being,' as well as the basis for a different take on our use of technological devices, the innermost link between poverty and technology is also addressed. This very link is addressed by the recent criticisms raised by Jorge Bergoglio in his writings authored as bishop of Rome and the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, in Pope Francis's encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, entitled Fratelli tutti, we are told that "we can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all" if we choose "the true path of peace," and that real peace is only possible "on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility in the whole human family" (§ 127). The desire expressed by the Pope is not a mere wish of a pastor of souls; rather, it is a concrete perspective based on a true political program of radical transformation, which has been clearly illustrated in the previous encyclical, Laudato si', whose key notion was 'integrality,' namely, the view on human being as a whole, and, consequently, the purported program for an "integral and shared development" (§ 50). In the Pope's humanistic view, the interplay between poverty and mortality is also at stake, and his concern is addressed to our present epoch, in which both poverty and mortality are willfully distorted and dressed up in the nastiest and gravest social injustices and disparity. So, the comparison of Heidegger's perspective in the Humanismusbrief with Pope Francis's two recent encyclical letters is established in the paper, in order to highlight the specific philosophical meaning conferred to poverty by Heidegger, especially with respect to our behavior toward technology.

Francois Zammit (University of Malta)
What happens in the Metaverse, stays in the Metaverse, or not

New technologies offer new possibilities, which in turn create new modes of behaviour. In real life, most people are peaceful individuals with no illusions of heroism or warmongering. However, many of these individuals will plug into their gaming consoles, mobiles, or computers to join in wanton destruction and violence in the setting of a world war, a dystopian future or a medieval fantasy. The proliferation and increasing popularity of video games, notably violent videogames, led to many discussions and even accusations on the negative role of these games on the real life behaviour of players. A similar discussion is arising around the use of Metaverse technologies. Accusations of unethical behaviour and even violence perpetrated on users' avatars are posing a challenge to our understanding of normative ethics. This paper will attempt to address these issues in the light of the nature of the metaverse and what ethical value should be bestowed upon users' avatars. The discussion will propose ways of possibly creating a normative framework that includes the safeguarding of users' avatars.

Panel B Ethics and Borders (15:20 – 16:50)

Iris Dhamo (University of Durres)
Freedom of movement and ethics in its restriction during the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the last two years, the need to face the emergency of the pandemic from COVID 19, has led to the restriction of many basic freedoms, now considered fully acquired, considering the need to protect the right to health, or better, to limit the spread of COVID 19. There are certain freedoms and rights which have been restricted such as the freedom of free movement. In fact, it has been the object of wide restrictions, although modulated both in the national and international dimensions. It is enough to think of the case of Italy, which divided the country into different "zones" with different colors, from red to green. This restriction came as a result of the restrictions imposed by various countries that are part of the European Union, which was forced to limit the freedom on which it has always been based, that of free movement. Different constitutions of the EU expressly guarantee the right to leave and to return to the country of origin, emphasized by Protocol 4 of the ECHR in Article 2 thereof. The discovery of a vaccine against the Corona virus and its spread among the member states bring the hope that the pandemic will become, as soon as possible, a nightmare of the past. The vaccine against COVID 19 has raised the question of whether countries should approve the so-called COVID passports, to subject the citizens of member countries to the exercise of some freedoms, in general, and the enjoyment of some services in particular, such as transport, meeting and above all movement free. As mentioned above, free movement is one of the four fundamental pillars on which the European Union is based, together with the movement of capital, services and goods, but in recent years this freedom has not been limited in its entirety, and also in its specifics.

Davide Saracino (Università degli Studi di Milano)
Why we should be panarchists: A consequentialist apology of trans territorial states

Panarchism is a political theory that advocates a system of voluntary trans-territorial states founded on explicit contracts between governments and citizens. In particular, it shows three main peculiarities with respect to other consent-based theories of political legitimacy: firstly, it aims to ground state institutions on voluntary and explicit contracts; secondly, it advocates the uncoupling of citizenship and residence; thirdly, it does not express any preference for a specific contract vis-à-vis another. In the academic literature, both common-sense and consequentialist arguments in favour of panarchism have been offered. In particular, panarchist theorists have either maintained the exclusive compatibility of panarchism with our most fundamental moral intuitions or emphasised the capacity of a panarchist society to produce more individual or social utility than the status quo. In this respect, I reckon that the intuitionist argument falls flat due to its inability to deny the special moral status of non-voluntary states. On the contrary, the consequentialist argument needs not make such a claim and is better suited to indicate the two most significant advantages of a panarchist society. In terms of individual utility, these advantages amount to the lowered opportunity costs to leave one's government and the increased chance for political experimentation. As for social utility, these same benefits can be framed as an optimal satisfaction of political preferences and an acceleration in the evolutionary process leading towards better states. In conclusion, I briefly consider the objection that panarchism would decrease the individual utility of two categories of people: monopolistic rulers and net gainers from monopolistic states. However, I argue that this claim is partially true but not morally troublesome in the case of monopolistic rulers and simply ungrounded in the case of net gainers from monopolistic states.

Kristina Novakovic (UNSW Canberra)
Political Whistleblowing and Harm to National Security: is it morally justified?

There is an often-cited argument against [political whistleblowing, i.e., that whistleblowing is wrong because it harms national security. In conceding that political whistleblowing could plausibly cause harm to national security in some instances and that this amounts to a pro tanto wrong, I demonstrate that we have a first-pass reason to not blow the whistle. Does it, however, make it a wrong all-things-considered? By critically evaluating the cogency of potential arguments that would deem political whistleblowing a wrong all-things-considered, I argue that we do not have a strong enough reason to believe that a risk of harm to national security is sufficient to rule out political whistleblowing altogether. Importantly, this invites the possibility that whistleblowing that might result in harm to national security could, nevertheless, be justified. This ultimately means that the national security argument is merely descriptive of some cases of whistleblowing and not constitutive of political whistleblowing more broadly; the national security argument cannot be used as a case to prohibit political whistleblowing on moral grounds.