

THUMOS GRADUATE DAYS

8th-9th March 2022, University of Geneva
Campus Biotech H8.01.F

Tuesday 8th

13h45-15h00 : **Agnès Baehni**

In Defense of Self-Forgiveness

For some authors, like Griswold, self-forgiveness must be considered a flawed form of forgiveness. Indeed, according to his view, self-forgiveness is to be understood as an imperfect form of the general attitude, one that fails to meet the criteria set for interpersonal forgiveness. This is especially true of the common “victim-only” requirement. In this paper, I try to show that self-forgiveness is worthy of being analyzed as an independent phenomenon and argue that it should not be judged by its ability to meet the criteria imposed on interpersonal forgiveness. In order to reach this conclusion, I try to make salient some important misconceptions concerning the link between the two attitudes as well as some negative and unfounded assumptions about self-forgiveness. I also provide two arguments in favor of the idea that self-forgiveness is an independent, if not distinct, attitude: the “Different commitment” argument, and the “Self-knowledge” argument.

15h15-16h30 : **Antoine Rebourg**

Why be strong-willed?

Strength of will is traditionally defined as the capacity to act as we judge best or intend in the face of contrary motivation. On this conception, the value of this capacity is typically regarded as entirely derivative from the value of the motives from which it enables us to act.

In this talk, I argue that this characterization of strength of will and its value is incomplete. In many endeavours, I suggest, we manifest strength of will in acting from motives we are unsure of, with a view to bring them into focus and get clearer on what is best to do. Hence the value of strength of will is also crucially heuristic or epistemic: it enables us to further inquire, in a practical fashion, into whether the ends we pursue are worth pursuing.

16h45-18h00 : **Elodie Boissard**

Towards a dimensional theory of moods

My aim is to defend the adequacy of a dimensional model of affective states for a theory of moods. My thesis is that moods are psychological episodes that can be fully characterized by a two-dimensional feeling that is a feeling with a degree of arousal (varying between low and high) and a valence which is a hedonic value (varying between pleasant and unpleasant). So I'm applying Russell's circumplex model of affect to moods (Russell, 1980). My argumentation has three steps : firstly I defend the two-dimensional model of affect as necessary and sufficient to describe the phenomenology of moods ; secondly I argue that, despite some appearances, no existing theory would allow unfelt moods, so that moods always have a phenomenology ; thirdly I reject the possibility of characterizing moods sufficiently by something else than their phenomenology. I conclude that the best conception of moods is as feelings with arousal and valence.

Wednesday 9th

13h45-15h00 : **Mathilde Cappelli**

The paradox of tragedy consists in this question: how to explain the fact that we intentionally expose ourselves to fictional situations that we take to be likely to elicit in us emotions such as fear, sadness or pity that we (generally) do not want nor like to live when they are reality-directed rather than fiction-directed? The idea that such emotions are intrinsically negative, contrary to joy or satisfaction for instance, makes this fact particularly intriguing.

In this talk, I shall argue that there are strong reasons to reject the idea that these emotions are intrinsically negative—or negatively valenced—whatever the context in which they occur. I shall argue in particular that when fear, sadness, or pity are fiction-directed, they do not give rise to the behavioral and psychological reactions typical of emotions we experience negatively.

I shall then explain why fiction-directed fear, sadness, or pity are not so experienced, contrary to their reality-directed counterparts. Basically, I shall argue that the former, contrary to the latter, are not psychologically associated with actual or potential harms for some real living beings.

Eventually, I shall argue that it is not just that fear, sadness, or pity are not negative when fiction-directed, but that they even possess hedonic value. Smut's Rich Experience Theory holds that such emotions can enrich the value of our lives by delivering us, through their being experienced, certain insights about the human condition. I shall rather argue that such emotions are hedonically valuable 1) by enabling us to live fictional situations that would otherwise be simply known to us, 2)

by not being psychologically associated with actual or potential harms, which enables us to enjoy them as emotions.

15h15-16h30 : **Radu Bumbacea**

Imagining emotions

We often imagine the emotions of other people, of fictional characters, and arguably even of our selves in the past. In this talk, I give an account of the mental phenomenon of imagining an emotion.

To put forward my theory, I start with a distinction. I call a representation *thin* if the represented object is pointed at by a symbol, such as a word, and *thick* if the represented object is *apprehended in* the representation. For instance, a realist painting would be a thick representation, as we can see the represented objects in the painting. Given this distinction, I want to claim that imagining an emotion is forming a *thick* representation of that emotion, in which the emotion is apprehended. Since the imagined emotion is itself a representation, the imagining of this emotion is a thick meta-representation.

16h45-18h00 : **Robert Pál-Wallin**

A Sense-Making View of Emotional Fittingness

Representationalism with respect to the emotions is roughly the view that emotions somehow represent their objects as instantiating an evaluative property. For advocates of representationalism, the fittingness of emotions is commonly understood as an assessment of accurate representation of their objects. However, representationalism is incompatible with sentimentalist versions of the fitting attitude (FA) analysis of value, according to which sentimental values (or response-dependent properties) are to be analyzed in terms of fitting emotional responses. For those who reject representationalism and endorse sentimentalist versions of the FA analysis, explaining the fittingness of emotions can seem like a tricky endeavor. In this talk I aim to outline a view of emotional fittingness which doesn't presuppose representationalism nor the prior existence of values. In essence, I will argue that an instance of an emotion type E towards X is fitting if and only if, and because there are facts which makes it the case that it makes sense for the emoting agent to be engaged in E-characteristic ways towards X. Put differently, I want to argue that response-dependent properties are essentially relational properties which take as their relata both natural features of the object of emotion and natural features of the emoting agent, i.e., features of the agent's evaluative orientation.