

University of Nebraska

Omaha Workshop In the Philosophy of Emotion

Friday, April 21 and Saturday, April 22

Milo Bail Student Center

Chancellor's Room

omahaphilosophy@gmail.com

All talks are free and open to the public.

Friday, April 21

Emotions in General

9:00 - 9:10

Introduction

9:10 - 10:15

Emotion Regulation in Moral Expertise Training

Maria Doulatova

10:30 - 11:35

Confucian Cultural Transmission,
Parent-Offspring Conflict, & The Story of Filial Piety

Ryan Nichols

11:35 - 1:00

Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:05

Once More with Feeling:
Appreciating Mood, Emotional Contagion,
and the Interaction of Affect and Cognition

Amy Coplan

2:25 - 3:20

Emotion Cultivation: Implications for Agency & Virtue

Charlie Kurth

3:30 - 4:35

Natural Emotions as a Psychological Kind

Justin D'Arms

4:35 - 5:00

Closing Discussion

Saturday, April 22

Emotions in Particular

9:00 - 9:10

Introduction

9:10 - 10:15

Is There Such a Thing as Genuinely Moral Disgust?

Mara Bollard

10:30 - 11:35

The Nature and Depth of Hope

Michael Milona

11:35 - 1:00

Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:05

Imagining Bad:
Television Antiheroes, Empathy, and the Aesthetic Value
of Imaginative Resistance in Degrees

Will Kidder

2:25 - 3:20

Practical Advantages of Pride and the Risks of Humility:
The Defense of Pride in David Hume and Jane Austen

Eva M. Dadlez

3:30 - 4:35

Why Don't Dogs Feel Envy?

Dan Farrell

4:35 - 5:00

Closing Discussion



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Friday, April 21

Emotion in General

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Emotion Regulation in Moral Expertise Training

Maria Doulatova - Graduate Student in Philosophy, Neuroscience, Psychology, *Washington University in St Louis*

In order to gain practical moral expertise, one must be able to fluently engage in two forms of emotion regulation. First, one must be able to *differentiate emotions* to guard against *morally irrelevant* emotions. Second, one must be able to engage in *cognitive reappraisal* to enhance or prompt *morally relevant* emotions motivating moral action. I outline neuroscience evidence and introspective considerations to argue that while emotion differentiation requires *enhancement of self-awareness*, cognitive reappraisal requires its *suppression*. While both tiers of emotion regulation are required for training and enactment of expert moral action, neuroscientific evidence suggests that they cannot be jointly implemented.

10:30 - 11:35

Confucian Cultural Transmission, Parent-Offspring Conflict, & The Story of Filial Piety

Ryan Nichols - Associate Professor of Philosophy, *California State University, Fullerton*

How do cultural practices passed from generation to generation enable a group of people to push back against evolutionary norms? No culture has done more to alter our species evolutionary psychological norms than Confucian Heritage culture. 'Parent-offspring conflict' refers to the conflict due to genetic differences between parents and their children, and is common to sexually reproducing species, humans included. East Asians today experience the lowest rate of parent-offspring conflict in the world. This lecture explains how this came to be, discusses features of Confucian morality, especially filial piety, and presents some of the speaker's recent findings in experiments about the transformation of self-interest within the East Asian family.

11:35 - 1:00

Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:05

Once More with Feeling: Appreciating Mood, Emotional Contagion, and the Interaction of Affect and Cognition

Amy Coplan - Associate Professor of Philosophy, *California State University, Fullerton*

In this paper, I consider the importance of non-cognitive affects, such as mood and affective responses triggered by emotional contagion. I argue that non-cognitive affect is far more important than has typically been understood in philosophy of emotion, which has a tendency to privilege the role of cognition and over intellectualize the experience of emotion.

2:25 - 3:20

Emotion Cultivation: Implications for Agency & Virtue

Charlie Kurth - Associate Professor of Philosophy, *Washington University in St Louis*

There is a tendency in philosophical discussions to presume that emotions share a common core and, thus, that there is a common strategy we can use to cultivate an emotion—be it anger, disgust, compassion, amusement, or whatever. This picture, common though it may be, is mistaken. When it comes to assessing claims about our ability to shape emotions, much depends on which emotion we're considering and what strategy we have in mind. Moreover, recognizing the variability in emotions' susceptibility to cultivation has significant implications for our understanding of agency and virtue.

3:30 - 4:35

Natural Emotions as a Psychological Kind

Justin D'Arms - Professor of Philosophy, *The Ohio State University*

This talk will explore the prospects for unifying many of the paradigmatic emotion kinds by treating them all as motivational states of a special sort. Some emotion theorists draw a sharp distinction between a limited number of "basic emotions" or "affect programs" (such as fear, anger, disgust), and more cognitively sophisticated states (such as guilt, envy and pride). The motivational approach finds a commonality among the differences. Time permitting, implications will be considered for the methodology of philosophical disagreements over the nature and contours of various specific emotions that philosophers like to disagree about.

4:35 - 5:00

Closing Discussion

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Saturday, April 22

Emotion in Particular

9:00 - 9:10

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9:10 - 10:15

Is There Such a Thing as Genuinely Moral Disgust?

Mara Bollard - Graduate Student in Philosophy, University of Michigan

In recent years, moral disgust has become a hotly-contested topic, but how precisely to interpret the disputes between moral disgust's advocates and its critics is a surprisingly complex matter. What does *not* seem to be at issue is the ontological question of whether there is, in fact, a distinctive psychological state of genuinely moral disgust. In this paper, I investigate the previously neglected ontological question, and argue that the case has not yet been made that there is such a thing as genuinely moral disgust.

10:30 - 11:35

The Nature and Depth of Hope

Michael Milona - Postdoctoral Fellow in the Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University

Hope is at the center of our personal and political lives. Yet what is hope? The primary aim of this paper is to defend a theory of the nature of hope. I then show how the theory helps us to answer practical questions about when it is wise to hope.

11:35 - 1:00

Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:05

Imagining Bad: Television Antiheroes, Empathy, and the Aesthetic Value of Imaginative Resistance in Degrees

Will Kidder - Graduate Student in Philosophy, State University of New York, University at Albany

The paper examines why we find antihero television characters so compelling, focusing on an explanation in terms of three factors: moral sentimentalism, the puzzle of imaginative resistance (i.e. our difficulty in imagining fictional worlds that we take to be morally deviant), and empathy. I examine examples from television series such as *Breaking Bad* and *Mad Men* in order to argue that a) nuanced character development allows us to empathize with the sentiments of characters engaged in morally deviant behavior and b) there is a particular sort of aesthetic merit in the antihero's ability to engage the viewer in moral reflection without imparting a normative moral lesson.

2:25 - 3:20

The Practical Advantages of Pride and the Risks of Humility:

The Defense of Pride Occasionally Found in the Work of

David Hume and Jane Austen

Eva M. Dadlez - Professor of Humanities and Philosophy, University of Central Oklahoma

While pride is frequently disparaged as a vice, such condemnation need not be and in fact has not been universal. Both David Hume and Jane Austen distinguish between proper and improper pride, of course, condemning improper pride and vanity roundly. However, each makes an effort to consider both the emotion (Hume would call it a passion) and the disposition that may be aligned with pride in terms of advantages as well as liabilities. The focus here, therefore, will be on the less usual treatment of an admitted and quite traditional vice, leavened with examples from both philosopher and novelist that illustrate particular cases.

3:30 - 4:35

Why Don't Dogs Feel Envy?

Dan Farrell - Professor of Philosophy (Emeritus), The Ohio State University

Every dog owner knows that dogs can feel jealousy. I'll give an analysis of jealousy that shows why. Then I'll give an analysis of envy that helps one understand why it seems implausible to imagine a dog feeling this emotion. (**Special bonus:** after this talk, you will be the only person on your block to understand the true and eternal difference between jealousy and envy.)

4:35 - 5:00

Closing Discussion