



ARETAI CENTER ON VIRTUES
8th annual conference

ETHOS AND VIRTUE:
Theoretical and practical perspectives

UNIVERSITY OF BARI, ITALY
SEPTEMBER 25-27 2024

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Aretai Center on Virtues 8th Annual Conference – University of Bari (Italy)

Ethos and virtues: Theoretical and practical perspectives

DESCRIPTION. The conference aims to bring together moral, legal and political philosophers to reflect on the social impact of character and the virtues on public and private life. Virtuous conduct is never just a matter of individual achievement: the ethos of a political community represents a necessary counterpart. 'Ethos' as the distinguishing character, sentiment, or guiding beliefs of a society may rely on the character and virtues of the groups or institutions which play the main social roles. Professional virtues, such as those of legal or business groups, have a special role in the flourishing of a political community. Professional virtues are both role-specific (e.g. 'impartiality' for the judge) and general (e.g. 'courage' for both lawyers and businessmen). A special interest must be focused on *phronesis* or practical wisdom, and related meta-virtues (e.g. reasonableness, responsibility, respect, resilience) because of the particular shape they can take in the course of professional exercise. Although 'ethos' is originally a descriptive concept, we believe that a normative bent is possible. It is, for example, through education to *phronesis* and the classical virtues of the Aristotelian tradition that a 'civic ethos' may be enhanced, while a 'democratic ethos' should be encouraged through education to values such as equality, freedom and individuality.



8TH ARETAI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“Ethos and virtue: theoretical and practical perspectives”

25-27 September 2024

University of Bari, Aula Contento of the Law School, P.za Battisti No 1, Bari

PROGRAM

Wednesday, September 25

Room 1 (Aula Contento)

13.00-14.00

Registration

14.00-14.15

Welcome address

Michele Mangini – Andrea Lovato (Law Dept. Director) – Paolo Ponzio (DIRIUM Director)

AMALIA AMAYA - Director of Center for Legal Theory, Edinburgh Law School
Virtue, Law and Futurity

14.15-15.30

Chair: Michele Mangini

15.30-16.00

Coffee Break

	Room 1 (Aula Contento)	Room 2 (Aula IX)
	Chair: Matilde Liberti	Chair: Pierre-Thomas Eckert
16.00-16.30	Kristján Kristjánsson: <i>Measuring Virtues: Lessons from the work of the Jubilee Centre 2012-2024</i>	Emma Cohen De Lara: <i>The primacy of phronesis in civic life: a narrative example</i>
16.30-17.00	Juan Andrés Mercado - Pia Valenzuela: <i>Wisdom and phronesis in the university ethos</i>	Paolo Monti: <i>On becoming a citizen: from everyday ethos to civic phronesis (and back)</i>
17.00-17.15	Break	Break
17.15-17.45	Linda Priano - Maria Silvia Vaccarezza: <i>Moral exemplars and moral influencers as counterspeakers</i>	Corinna Mieth - Martin Sticker: <i>Kantian Cosmopolitanism, Hostility and Disrespect</i>
17.45-18.15	Claudia Navarini - Elena Ricci: <i>Cyber Wisdom: A Fundamental Virtue for Influencers and Users</i>	Matthew Post: <i>Socrates's Public Practical Wisdom of Forgiveness, Compromise, and Renewal</i>
18.15-18.45	Patrick Plaisance Lee - Martina Piantoni: <i>The Virtue of Humility as Curative Response to Digital Media Toxicity</i>	Luca Quinto: <i>Negotiable virtues: the sympathetic dialogue between personal character and ethos</i>

18.45

Free time – Walk in the Old Town of Bari

20.00

Dinner at [Ristorante Le travi, Largo Chiurlia 70122 Bari BA](#)

Thursday, September 26

	Room 1 (Aula Contento)	Room 2 (Aula IX)
9.30-10.00	Chair: Federico Bina	Chair: Elena Ricci
	Alessandro Lattuada: <i>Political Emerson: the Concept of Character as the Foundation of Individuals' roles in Society</i>	Jos Kole: “It takes a hospital to raise a physician”. On the neglected importance of the ethos of healthcare organisations for the virtue and character education of future healthcare professionals
10.00-10.30	Manuel Marsico: <i>Ethos, shared agency, and changes</i>	Maxence Carsana: <i>The therapeutic alliance as a quest: How virtues can help combat meaninglessness and improve mental health</i>
10.30-11.00	Mónica Codina: <i>Journalism practice and democracy in a crisis of cultural ethos: Proposing a paradigm shift in the pre-political foundations</i>	Pleuntje Versteegen: <i>Virtue formation during training: an empirical turn</i>
	Room 3 (Aula VIII)	
	Chair: Sofia Bonicalzi	
9.30-10.00	Pawel Pijas: <i>Genealogy vindicating the ethos</i>	
10.00-10.30	Piero Tarantino: <i>The Fictitious Construction of Virtue: An Investigation into Bentham’s Linguistic and Utilitarian Approach</i>	
10.30-11.00	Simone Grigoletto: “Winning isn’t everything: it’s the only thing” <i>Reflections on the moral role of professional athletes</i>	
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break	

Room 1 (Aula Contento)	
11.30-12.45	<p>IRIS VANDOMSELAAR – Full Professor of Legal Philosophy and Legal Ethics, Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam</p> <p><i>Large-Scale Miscarriages of Justice: Lessons from and for Virtue Theory</i></p> <p>Chair: Mario De Caro</p>
12.45-14.15	Lunch

	Room 1 (Aula Contento)	Room 2 (Aula IX)
	Chair: Michele Mangini	Chair: Manuel Marsico
14.15-14.45	Natasza Szutta: <i>What is moral depth? Is it indispensable for being a morally wise person</i>	Antonio Lizzadri: <i>Epistemology of Sustainability. Model-Based Reasoning in Civic Education</i>
14.45-15.15	Silvia Corradi: <i>The rule of law between formalism and substantialism: some implications for legal reasoning</i>	Pedro António Monteiro Franco: <i>Liberal ideology, modern life, and human virtues</i>
15.15-15.30	Break	Break
15.30-16.00	Nancy Snow: <i>Democratic Political Consciousness and the Possibility of Hope</i>	Igor Larionov: <i>How could we use the Ethics of Virtues for Solving the Moral Dilemmas?</i>
16.00-16.30	Angelo Campodonico: <i>The role of wisdom in fostering a common ethos between intellectuals and the people</i>	Celso Vieira: <i>Noisy Dispositions: Virtue Ethics and the research on Noise in Decision-Making</i>
16.30-17.00	Edward Brooks: <i>A European Character Project: A proposal to strengthen the EU's democratic</i>	Artur Szutta: <i>Moral E-Daimonion. On the possibility of an AI moral mentor</i>
17.00-17.15	Coffee Break	

Room 1 (Aula Contento)	
17.15-18.30	<p>JENNIFER FREY – Dean of the Honors College at the University of Tulsa, Professor of philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Religion</p> <p><i>The Virtues of Liberal Learning</i></p> <p>Conferral of the first Aretai Prize to Prof. Kristjan Kristjansson</p> <p>Chair: Michel Croce</p>

18.45 'Concert' Flute (Antonio Dambra) and Guitar (Paolo Battista)

19.30 Social dinner at Restaurant «Terranima», via Putignano No 213

Friday, September 27

Room 1 (Aula Contento)		
9.00-10.15	MICHELE MANGINI – Full Professor of Philosophy of Law, Law School, University of Bari <i>The Idea of Reasonable Flourishing: a Role for a Conservative Ethos?</i> Chair: Maria Silvia Vaccarezza	
10.15-10.45	Coffee Break	
	Room 1 (Aula Contento)	Room 2 (IX)
	Chair: Silvia Corradi	Chair: Martina Piantoni
10.45-11.15	Roberto Luppi: <i>A More Individualistic Approach to Civic Virtues? The Judge as Example</i>	Consuelo Martínez Priego - Ana Romero-Iribas: <i>Ways to reach a meta-ethos that enables coexistence in emotionist societies</i>
11.15-11.45	Sandra Borden - Mónica Codina: <i>Newtime Rituals: Cultivating Civic Reverence for Journalism</i>	Gabriele Laffranchi: <i>A Virtuous Education for Society: Rehabilitating the Subject-World Relationship</i>
11.45-12.00	Break	Break
12.00-12.30	Matilde Liberti: <i>Smash The Wall! On the disruptive potential of a Virtue Ethical account of moral change</i>	Pierre-Thomas Eckert: <i>Phronesis, civic virtue, collective phronesis</i>
12.30-13.00	Giulio Leopoldo Bellocchio: <i>The Rule of Saint Benedict: elements of anthropology, ethics and politics</i>	Adrian Zaorski: <i>Two Ideals of a Judge: Hercules and Phronimos</i>
Room 1 (Aula Contento)		
13.00-13.30	Closing remarks	

The conference is part of the Research Project of Relevant National Interest (PRIN) “The Virtues of the Rule of Law as an Institutional Ethos” and of the Research Project of Relevant National Interest (PRIN) “New challenges for applied ethics. The moral impact of scientific and technological advances”

Keynote Speakers

Aula Contento

Wednesday 25th September 2024 – 14.15

Chair: Prof. Michele Mangini (University of Bari, Italy)

Amalia Amaya

(Edinburgh Law School, Scotland)

Virtue, Law and Futurity

Abstract: This talk explores ways in which the law may help us flourish in uncertain and challenging times. More specifically, it argues that law can enhance our capacity to thrive in the future by shaping personality and polity. The talk is divided in three parts. In the first part, I discuss key traits of individual and community character that are critical for creating, anticipating, and navigating the future(s), i.e., creativity, foresight, resilience, hope, flexibility, and the virtues of fraternity. Secondly, I investigate three main venues through which the law may contribute to inculcating these character traits, thereby leaving an imprint on citizens' character and social ethos, namely, educational policy, institutional design, and cultural intervention. Last, I conclude by examining the extent to which the claim that law is a critical tool for crafting personality and polity in ways that foster human flourishing in futurity calls into question central tenets of contemporary liberal legal orders.

Thursday 26th September 2024 – 11.30 AM

Chair: Prof. Mario De Caro (University of Roma Tre, Italy – Tufts University, USA)

Iris Van Domselaar

(University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Large-Scale Miscarriages of Justice: Lessons from and for Virtue Theory

Abstract: A central feature of virtue-ethical approaches to law and legal practice is that they assign a central role to the virtues of legal professionals in their account of the ethical quality of legal practices and the legal order. The quality of these practices depends on the extent to which legal professionals are ‘good’, that is, possess the relevant professional virtues such as justice, practical wisdom, courage, temperance, and more specific legal role-dependent virtues such as loyalty, independence, and impartiality. Also, and relatedly, a virtue-ethical approach assigns a central role to the formative practices in which these virtues are to be developed.

It is noteworthy that these virtue-ethical approaches to law and legal practice largely focus on the positive dimension of legal practice. For example, by focusing on virtues rather than vices. However, recent large-scale miscarriages of justice in liberal democracies, such as the Child-Care Benefit scandal in the Netherlands, the Post Office scandal in the United Kingdom and the Robodebt scandal in Australia, point to the need to also make sense of the ‘darker side’ of law and legal practice. A defining feature of these scandals is that they have caused enormous suffering to thousands of citizens, and that legal professionals have been largely involved in causing or facilitating devastating legal outcomes.

Starting from the premise that it is important to avoid similar miscarriages of justice in the future, the central question addressed in this paper is what lessons can be learned from virtue theory, and vice versa: what lessons do these miscarriages of justice have for virtue theory if it is to provide an account of law and legal practice that can help prevent similar miscarriages of justice in the future? In addressing these questions, this paper will take an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from behavioural (legal) ethics and organisational ethics.

Thursday 26th September 2024 – 17.15

Chair: Prof. Michel Croce (University of Genoa, Italy)

Jennifer Frey

(University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA)

The Virtues of Liberal Learning

Abstract: In this talk, I will connect the “ethos” of the university, an institution that is essentially dedicated to the pursuit of truth, with the virtues of liberal learning. Following Aristotle, I define liberal learning as a liberal arts education, which has as its aim human flourishing. I will name the virtues of liberal learning, connect them to practical wisdom, and describe how they reflect the ethos of the university in general.

Friday 27th September 2024 – 9:00

Chair: Prof. Maria Silvia Vaccarezza (University of Genoa, Italy)

Michele Mangini

(University of Bari, Italy)

The Idea of Reasonable Flourishing: A Role for a Conservative Ethos?

Abstract: In a society dominated by conceptions of instrumental and formal rationality the idea of reasonableness can play an important role in deliberation by opening the way to a virtue based idea of flourishing in opposition to well-being as preference satisfaction. This idea of reasonableness takes us toward a richer and more complex conception of flourishing which encompasses not only the practise of the virtues but also the capacity of deliberating according to the biocentric outlook to preserve what is intrinsically good within the environment. Insofar as the social context of reasonable deliberation must be an ethos which gives continuity and substance to the agents' choices, this model can be described as politically conservative in a qualified sense. Among different layers of social ethos crafts and professions, and particularly the legal profession – and the legal ethos it expresses – have a special role in shaping our society both at the public and at the private level. Relying on the rule of law the legal ethos has a conservative thrust in preserving the political goods of our liberal democracy.

Abstracts

Parallel Session 1

Wednesday 25th September 2024, 16.00 – 18.45

Aula Contento

Kristján Kristjánsson: **Measuring Virtues: Lessons from the work of the Jubilee Centre 2012-2024**

Abstract: Most moral philosophers are unsympathetic to the idea of measuring virtues/character. However, if you work within practically oriented virtue ethics, esp. of the neo-Aristotelian kind, there is no alternative to taking this work on. This is both because of what Aristotle says and what his ethical methodological naturalism implies, and because ‘selling’ an idea of character development to a school (as a character-educational intervention) or a university (as a virtue-based professional ethical curriculum for doctors, teachers, nurses, etc.) without offering any suggestions about pre-and-post tests is as clueless as offering a patient a cure for condition x without any possibility of evaluating progress. According to Aristotle’s naturalism, all ethical theorising must be answerable to empirical research: ‘We must therefore survey what we have already said, bringing it to the test of the facts of life, and if it harmonises with the facts we must accept it, but if it clashes with them we must suppose it to be mere theory’ (NE 1179a20-23). Also Aristotle makes frequent references to eliciting the views of ‘the many’, not only ‘the wise’, and to some ethical questions having to be shelved until they have been solved by the ‘natural scientists’ (himself with another hat on?!). Recently two books have appeared that tackle this issue head-on: Wright, J., Warren, M., & Snow, N. (2021). *Understanding virtue: Theory and measurement*. Oxford University Press; Fowers, B. J., Cokelet, B., & Leonhardt, N. D. (2024). *The science of virtue: A framework for research*. Cambridge University Press. What these two books have in common is that they are:

- Co-written by philosophers and psychologists.
- Mostly optimistic about the possibility of measuring virtues (with various caveats).
- Both cite work from the Jubilee Centre as an inspiration (the first our work on a *Phronesis* Measure and the second our work on the Multi-Component Gratitude Measure, MCGM).

In this presentation, I discuss the pros and cons of crossover work between philosophy and psychology on measuring virtues, and explain the potential of the two instruments we have created: the MCGM and the *Phronesis* Measure (both the long and short versions). My conclusion is that:

- Rapprochement between philosophy and psychology in studying (and measuring) virtues can be a fruitful enterprise.
- Alone, philosophical analyses risk being trivial (or Procrustean) and psychological ones superficial (one-dimensional).

- Measures of virtues can be philosophically sophisticated and psychologically/educationally practical (as pre-and-post tests).
- Language does not need to ‘go on holiday’ (Wittgenstein) in such measures.
- Psychological measures can be used to confirm philosophical theses (e.g., about a link between *phronesis* and eudaimonia).

Juan Andrés Mercado – Pia Valenzuela: **Wisdom and *Phronesis* in the University Ethos**

Abstract: This paper delves into the essence of university teaching through the lens of *phronesis*, a virtue rooted in wisdom. Divided into two parts, it first explores the cognitive horizon of university teaching, emphasizing the necessity for universities to impart a wisdom-oriented education rather than solely focusing on specialized knowledge. Drawing on Aristotle’s distinction between sectorial knowledge and *sophia*, the paper argues for a teaching approach that integrates technical competence with ethical awareness, critical thinking, and culture cultivation. Furthermore, the paper elucidates the three levels of wisdom necessary for addressing academic challenges: discipline-specific, philosophical, and theological. It contends that a holistic understanding of human existence and reality fostered through philosophical and theological insights, is essential for transcending mere methodical epistemologies and enriching academic discourse. In the second part, the paper explores how *phronesis* informs effective teaching settings, goals and strategies. It advocates for a critical mentality grounded in service, emphasizing the importance of individualized attention to students’ intellectual and moral growth. Additionally, it underscores the transformative potential of university education, highlighting the role of teachers in shaping students’ thinking, feeling, and acting. Moreover, the paper discusses the significance of communication, service, and experiential learning in bridging the gap between the classroom and real-world applications. It suggests that collaborative projects and interdisciplinary connections contribute to a deeper understanding of academic subjects within a broader academic framework. Ultimately, the paper calls for reevaluating the aims and promises of higher education, urging educators to prioritize intellectual exploration, transformative experiences, and the appreciation of diversity. It advocates for a paradigm shift from a transactional view of education to one that fosters intellectual curiosity, personal growth, and societal responsibility, thereby redefining the role of universities as hubs of wisdom and intellectual inquiry.

Linda Priano – Maria Silvia Vaccarezza: **Moral Exemplars and Moral Influencers as Counterspeakers**

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, we aim at identifying whether a specific category of citizens can act as effective counterspeakers and possibly prove less prone to the traditional issues identified in the literature with respect to states and ordinary citizens. Second, we want to assess whether, once identified, such category has a special –albeit pro tanto –duty to counterspeak. Counterspeech is a form of communication aiming at counteracting the potential harms of other communication (Cepollaro et al. 2023, 2). Concerning specifically hate speech, counterspeech is an attempt to directly respond to the hate message, trying to undermine it, and can be exercised either by the citizens or by the state (Fumagalli 2021, 1021-1022). More specifically, some scholars argue that ordinary citizens have a duty of counterspeech (Lackey 2020; Howard 2021), while others that ordinary citizens have a responsibility to engage in it (Fumagalli 2021). Furthermore, others propose a non-coercive intervention by the state (Brettschneider 2012; Lepoutre 2017; 2021). Nonetheless, there are also scholars who recognize

the value of persuasion of both the state and ordinary citizens, thus, both agents should engage in counterspeech (Kulenović 2023). When it comes to ordinary citizens, the following issues might arise: (i) social pressure; (ii) deficit of authority; (iii) lack of skills; (iv) burdensomeness. First, due to the phenomenon of social pressure (Asch 1955) ordinary citizens might be reluctant to engage in counterspeech. Second, ordinary citizens might lack the authority to exercise counterspeech successfully and, therefore, be taken seriously by haters and intolerant citizens (See Langton 2018; Kukla 2014; Caponetto 2021). Third, ordinary citizens may lack the skills to properly engage in counterspeech. For example, there is a peculiar form of counterspeech, positive counterspeech, that requires specific competencies to be exercised correctly and successfully. Put it roughly, positive counterspeech requires. Finally, asking ordinary citizens to engage constantly in counterspeech may be too burdensome and unjustified. In our talk, we will consider the question whether moral exemplars (see Zagzebski 2017 for the label) are particularly capable of –and required to–exercising counterspeech, avoiding some of the problems that affect other ordinary citizens. Our answer will be only partially positive; by highlighting problems in taking moral exemplars as paradigmatic counterspeakers, we will be able to identify a more promising category of counterspeakers, who share in some features of moral exemplars but seem also capable of avoiding the problems the latter pose: namely, that of what we will call (following Croce, Liberti and Vaccarezza, 2024) moral influencers. By doing so, we aim also at extending the debate over exemplarism to issues traditionally left out of the neo-Aristotelian scholarship, and also at exploring the potentialities of non-conventional exemplars.

Claudia Navarini – Elena Ricci: **Cyber Wisdom: A Fundamental Virtue for Influencers and Users**

Abstract: In the contemporary digital landscape, characterized by the blending of online and offline realms, the concept of cyber wisdom emerges as a pivotal virtue for both influencers and users. Cyber wisdom, the ability to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape with discernment, integrity, and responsibility (Sando, 2019; Cohen, 2020; Selwyn, 2021; Harrison, 2022; Polizzi & Harrison, T, 2022), holds significant relevance today.

Our talk aims thus at exploring the multifaceted dimensions of cyber wisdom, particularly in the light of the Aretai model of practical wisdom, and its impact on shaping online presence for influencer and users alike. We also aim at showing the importance of establishing character education programmes. In this respect, helping influencers to develop cyber wisdom would help them on the one hand to (i) recognize the influence of their online presence and narrative on audiences and. Also (ii) it would leverage their online influence to facilitate constructive dialogue, cultivate empathy, disseminate knowledge, and eventually encourage users make ethical choices. For users, fostering cyber wisdom is essential for understanding the risks inherent in the online realm and adopting optimal strategies for engaging with social platforms, thereby fostering a safer and more inclusive digital environment while avoiding behaviors that may pose risks to themselves and others. (Livingstone, 2018). By empowering users to approach the online word critically, ethically, and empathetically, cyber wisdom would promote a safer and more enriching digital experience.

Patrick Plaisance Lee – Martina Piantoni: **The Virtue of Humility as Curative Response to Digital Media Toxicity**

Abstract: “[O]ur picture of ourselves has become too grand,” Iris Murdoch lamented in 1997.

“We have lost the vision of a reality separate from ourselves.” Today, humility is considered a vice in many corners of our proclamatory digital environment. Its opposite, hubris, is arguably the order of the day. Bold pronouncement of opinion, rather than honest inquiry, too often defines our digital lives. Yet this project argues that the virtue of humility will play a curative role in any effort to address our largely toxic world of online communication. We argue that a reassertion of the virtue of humility, and the cultivation of strategies to encourage a more honest sense of self, will be critical in the construction of a digital ethos. Humility, of course, was considered a pivotal virtue by classical Greek philosophers and further emphasized during the medieval age, especially within the Franciscan movement (Bellitto, 2023). We build on a recent resurgence of scholarship on humility (i.e., Narvaez, 2019). Other scholars (Snow, 1995; Wright, 2019) have sparked renewed interest in humility. Recent empirical studies have focused on measuring intellectual humility (i.e., Porter et al., 2011; Jayawickreme et al., 2023). Heightened self-awareness, perspective, and an attentiveness to others are among the key components of humility. It arguably serves to usher self-awareness and transcendence. This project will provide a survey of both its philosophical and psychological dimensions, with the aim of suggesting that any phronetic models should acknowledge its central role. We suggest the virtue of humility serves a constitutive function in the development and actualization of *phronesis* (i.e., Ratchford et al., 2024). We then apply our explication of this arguably underappreciated virtue to the decidedly hubris-saturated realm of digital media. We survey the architecture of social media and how its design militates against humble exchange. We examine rhetorical strategies common in digital communication – journalism, paid promotion, persuasive campaigns – that encourage and even valorize hubristic behavior. We then highlight counterbalancing strategies that can serve to encourage more empathic exchange, and model practices and postures of humility in the digital sphere.

Aula IX

Emma Cohen De Lara: *The Primacy of Phronesis in Civic Life: A Narrative Example*

Abstract: Over the past decade, character education has been accused of a focus on the individual at the expense of civic and political considerations. Suissa (2015) writes about “the disappearance of the political”, arguing that character education casts social problems as individual problems. Boyd (2011) charges character education with an inherent yet implicit conservatism by failing to encompass a more radical political systems critique. One way out of these accusations is to highlight the primacy of *phronesis* in civic life (Peterson 2020; Arthur et al. 2021; Kristjánsson 2023). Aristotle regards *phronesis* as the virtue essential for rulers (Pol. 1277b26). My paper argues that the cultivation of *phronesis* is essential for reconciling public and private duties, maintaining integrity, and addressing questions of systemic injustice. *Phronesis* functions as a “virtue coordinator” (Oakley & Cocking 2002, 29) or “meta-virtue” (Kristjánsson 2020, 17), protecting the moral virtues against “virtue atomism” (De Caro et al. 2020, 30). *Phronesis* is essential in regulating the different demands made by public and private attachments, allowing for the coherence and integrity of the person, and uniting the different virtues such as justice, temperance, courage, patience, and hope for social change. My paper illustrates the coordinating and integrative function of *phronesis* by elaborating upon the deliberative choices made by Atticus Finch, the main character in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960). Atticus, a lawyer and widowed father of two young children, is called to defend African American Tom Robinson accused of raping a white woman. Atticus displays a succinct awareness of the injustice of a system

that regards a black man as guilty even when he has been proven innocent. By phronetically navigating his moral duties as father, public attorney, neighbor, and friend, Atticus manages to maintain his integrity and moral agency while displaying a cautious yet realistic approach to social change. Following the analysis of the narrative, my paper argues in conclusion that literature – such as Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* – is important for providing character education in preparation for civic life. Following Carr (2006; cf. Nussbaum 1990), who advocates engagement with “narrative sources of practical wisdom”, I argue that literature, philosophy, and the arts carry important civic educational potential, “granted that these avoid narrow agendas of local identity politics” (Carr 2006, 454). In addressing critics who discern a tension between individualistic character education and politically engaged civic education, my paper expands on Carr (2006) in arguing for a more universalistic virtue ethical conception of moral formation, with an emphasis on *phronesis*, which provides a shared foundation for both character education and civic education.

Paolo Monti: *On Becoming a Citizen: From Everyday Ethos to Civic Phronesis (and Back)*

Abstract: Contemporary democratic societies are subject to an increasing misalignment between the need for cooperation among diverse individuals and the erosion of communal civic experiences determined by the rise of epistemic echo chambers, populist politics, and exclusionary migration policies. As workers and consumers, we participate in everyday social practices (professional, educational, etc.) that rely on shared practical judgments and social virtues, but as citizens, we find ourselves in a fragmented political space inhabited by groups that reject the moral legitimacy of the interlocutors based on their nationalist or religious ethos. We are thus exposed to the double experience of relying on the specific ethos of each field of practice while also being mutually estranged by ethically charged identities that are brought into that same space. I argue that an excellent exercise of citizenship in such a context requires a form of public practical wisdom, a civic *phronesis* that is based on the reflexive acknowledgment that our practical co-implication with the ethos of other individuals and groups is normatively relevant for our own judgments. In particular, drawing on Hannah Arendt’s readings of Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, I suggest that her concepts of “worldliness” and “natality” (Arendt 1958) can contribute to (i) improving our understanding of the relationship between ordinary and civic *phronesis*; (ii) reconsidering our practices of civic education as experiences of reflexive civic friendship. (i) As recently acknowledged by Kristjánsson (2022), the gap between ordinary and civic *phronesis* is as well established in Aristotle’s work as it is underexplored in virtue ethics scholarship. I suggest that this gap can be characterized through the Arendtian notion of “worldliness”: the discontinuity between merely inhabiting the world together through our coordinated work and giving it human form through our communal political agency. Becoming an excellent citizen involves an integration of ordinary practical wisdom within the framework of publicity: civic *phronesis* guides us in the pursuit of the possibilities of our own ethos by acknowledging that these possibilities are transformed by the interaction with others and their own ethos within the structurally plural space in which our judgments are made. A democratic ethos is not a predetermined pool of values and virtues, but rather a specific style of phronetic judgment that we develop in pluralistic contexts of practice and that reshapes our own moral character. (ii) The concept of civic friendship is helpful in identifying the interdependence between civic benevolence and civil deliberation (Vaccarezza and Croce 2021). Arendt points out that, for Aristotle, friendship is prior to justice, since by seeking relationships outside of pre-established boundaries we learn how to escape the agonism that erodes the polis from within. Civic education in schools should reflexively build on the embodied experience of sharing the same space of practice with friends and peers, viewing reality through the lenses of their tentative phronetic judgments and acknowledging their exemplarity as

they draw from their own ethos to find resources for communal understanding and action. By embracing the “natality” of students’ agency, the unexpected that interrupts the automaticity of judgments and the routine of activities, schools can create a public space that “can serve as an exemplar for future action” (den Heyer and van Kessel 2015).

Corinna Mieth – Martin Sticker: **Kantian Cosmopolitanism, Hostility and Disrespect**

Abstract: In this paper we argue against two common prejudices against Kantian ethics.

(1) Instrumentalization is the paradigm of severe wrongdoing and of rights-violations.

(2) Duties of beneficence are the most important duties of virtue towards others.

In combination, these two prejudices perpetuate an overly narrow picture of Kant’s conception of doing wrong and acting well. We examine these prejudices in the context of Kant’s cosmopolitan right of a foreigner “not to be treated with hostility because he has arrived on the land of another” (TPP 8:357f.). Kant states explicitly that it is not a matter of beneficence but of right. Against (1) we draw attention to Kant’s condemnation of the attitudes of the enemy of humanity and hatred of human beings as vicious in the Doctrine of Virtue, and on the condemnation of the “vices of open and secret hostility against those who are alien to us” in the Religion (VI:26). Envy, Schadenfreude and malice are vices of hatred and hostility since they have other’s misery and distress as their aim. Hatred of humanity in general or hostility towards specific human beings is not a form of instrumentalization, which seeks to extract instrumental use from others by means of coercion or deception. Hostile attitudes against others are vicious since they are rooted in evil principles that aim at harming others, not at using them. Instrumentalization is thus not the only kind of severe wrongdoing, treating others with hatred and hostility does not ascribe them any instrumental value but rather instrumental or other disvalue and can even lead to their expulsion, marginalization and murder. Against (2) we explain how, according to Kant, human beings have an ethical right to respect. Duties of respect towards others in order to not treat them with arrogance or hostility are narrow duties of virtue. They are owed and others have a claim that we do not treat them with disrespect. Yet, these duties are ethical and cannot be legally enforced. Therefore human beings have an ethical (not a juridical) right to respect. Beneficence, by contrast, is of wide obligation, meaning there is no corresponding ethical right to beneficence. This shows that duties of beneficence are not the most significant duties of virtue in terms of stringency. Moreover, attitudes of hostility are vicious which is contrary to virtuous attitudes of benevolence, whereas actions that are legal but not virtuous, egoistic within the limits of legality, are neither vicious nor virtuous. We argue that taking up an egoist’s attitude would suffice not to obstruct the cosmopolitan right of foreigners and migrants for commercial exchange and interaction, whereas a vicious attitude undermines the ability to exercise this right. Kant’s conception of wrongdoing is broader than the famous prohibition against treating as a mere means/instrumentalization suggests. His conception of acting well is more sophisticated than (Consequentialist inspired) theories and readings of Kant that give prime or sole significance to beneficence (amongst our duties of virtue) assume.

Matthew Post: **Socrates’s Public Practical Wisdom of Forgiveness, Compromise, and Renewal**

Abstract: In the Republic (1991), Socrates proposes an (even today) novel understanding of practical wisdom. For him, practical wisdom entails a choice between different modes of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and acting. One mode he terms “the genetic”. It grasps ethos, institutions, laws, etc., in terms of compulsion, e.g., impulses, competition, domination, violence, etc. A second, termed “the beautiful-noble”, grasps community in terms of hierarchy, merit,

division of labor, etc.; a third, “the just”, in terms of equality, individual uniqueness, consensual exchange, etc.; and a fourth, “the good”, in terms of education broadly, not just with respect to actual teaching, but to all forms of culture—music, literature, customs, professional codes of conduct, exercise, diet, etc.—insofar as they are character forming. Like the Aristotelian *Phronesis* Model (Kristjánsson et al., 2021), Socrates claims that practical wisdom adjudicates between different virtuous actions, albeit not with respect to individual virtues per se, but rather to ways of understanding virtues. For example, for him, the virtue of justice is giving to each what is owed. When practical wisdom operates in the mode of the beautiful-noble, we give to each what is owed according to merit; when the just, mutual agreement; when the good, what is suitable for growth and development; and when the genetic, what strengthens us and weakens others—justice becomes, as Socrates’s infamous interlocutor Thrasyamachus says, “nothing other than the advantage of the stronger” (1991: 338c). Thus, the mode animating practical wisdom determines how the virtues are understood, their interrelations, their spheres of application, etc. So also, though he is no virtue monist, Socrates shares with the Aretai *Phronesis* Model the claims that practical wisdom “manifests itself through clusters of individual moral virtues” and that it “is a particular kind of expertise” (De Caro et al., 2024). However, Socrates differs from both models in arguing that practical wisdom is an expertise that can be used virtuously or viciously, i.e., when animated by the genetic mode. While, for Socrates, all the modes are always relevant, they are mutually exclusive. No individual or community can simultaneously instantiate, at a high level, compulsion, merit, consent, and education (education points toward the others, but is still a distinct mode and activity, e.g., it does not just convey norms, but also challenges them). As a practical matter and in principle, the modes clash and create impossible-to-overcome tensions within political communities. When leaders and communities fail to understand this, their practical wisdom sets them on a trajectory in which the genetic mode takes over, redefining virtues and the common good in its terms, i.e., private advantage, success, and power as such—sometimes explicitly, sometimes subtly—and slowly increases faction, partisanship, and polarization. Because the tensions cannot be resolved, Socrates advocates instead for a public practical wisdom sensitive to the need for forgiveness, compromise, and ultimately renewal. My presentation will discuss why Socrates thinks practical wisdom is thus as well as its implications for understanding political judgment, action, and community today.

Luca Quinto: Negotiable Virtues: The Sympathetic Dialogue Between Personal Character and Ethos

Abstract: The paper aims to show how, in a Humean framework, virtues are not static qualities of human nature. On the contrary, they are the result of a never-ending emotional and social negotiation process in which sympathy plays a central role. This negotiation takes place between a person’s character and the ethos of the societies in which she lives. The argument rests on two premises. First, I understand virtues as mental qualities of a character, approved for their utility or agreeableness. The approbation comes from the moral sentiment of pleasure these qualities arouse when judging a character. Second, I define ethos as the custom, norms of life, beliefs, emotional responses and practical behaviour of a society. I understand society in the broadest sense possible: as a group of people sharing living space, economic and political interests, or exchange of emotions and beliefs. So, a person could be part of different societies at the same time, such as the narrow circle of family and friends, and the wider Western society. Given these premises, the argument proceeds as follows. We define the quality of a character as a virtue or a vice based on the approbation or disapproval we get from ourselves and the people around us. Moral judgment is based on our moral sentiments, and these sentiments can differ depending on a society’s ethos. As

Hume writes, if a nation is at war, the citizen would have different moral sentiments and behaviour compared to those she would have if her nation was at peace. The most valuable virtues would be military ones, and in that specific context, courage would be the most approved virtue by that society. A man dealing with such an ethos will evaluate his and other people's characters; consequently, society will approve of his courage, and he will be inclined to do the same. Moreover, the meaning of the virtue called "courage" will be completely different in these specific circumstances: A society may define courage as military courage on the battlefield, yet another could esteem courage as the brave action of defending one's ideas. So, virtues can be defined only in relation to the specific ethos from which they emerge. The same argument applies to our definition of society: a person throughout his life needs to deal with and navigate the many different ethos of the many societies she is part of. The formation and judgement of her character will result from a continuous negotiation between the different mechanisms of approbation and the sentimental response she engages within different ethos. How could a person navigate such a complex and ever-changing landscape? In Humean terms, sympathy and its correction mechanisms like wisdom and passion regulation, area solid and necessary answer to the question. Sympathy allows us to understand and share our moral sentiments with others, making us aware of the approbation a character gets, moving among different societies and contexts. Therefore, we can form a concept of virtue and get to a valid moral judgement only by maintaining this never-ending sympathetic dialogue between personal character and feelings and the different ethos in which we are immersed.

Parallel Session 2

Thursday 26th September 2024, 9.30 – 11

Aula Contento

Alessandro Lattuada: **Political Emerson: The Concept of Character as the Foundation of Individuals' Roles in Society**

Abstract: In Emerson's philosophy, the concept of Character occupies a central role in the definition of virtue and man's place in society; it disavows any anarchist, egoistic or, in his words, antinomianistic interpretation of his political thought. For the author, history can be read as the forms that the character of a few virtuous men imprint on societies. As Emerson says: «men of character are the conscience of the society to which they belong». Nevertheless, character has a primarily impersonal meaning: it is «a natural power, like light and heat» that cannot be «withstood, than any other natural force»; and, moreover: «Character is this moral order seen through the medium of an individual nature. An individual is an encloser». It is therefore both an unstoppable natural force and the principle of a moral order that precedes the individual. The moral order has the same consistency as the physical one, both being manifestations of Nature. Therefore, just as man is subject to the laws of physics, so he is to the ethic laws in society. Individual is an encloser «temporary and prospective» that takes in elements that transcend him: he's only a «hint of the truth» but never exhausts it. Character is one of the laws of Nature, to which education leads, as does Fate, which designates the limits within which man can act. The so-called "*Amor Fati*" does not imply giving in to a blind submission; rather, it opens up the possibility of freedom: «if

we must accept Fate, we are not less compelled to affirm liberty, the significance of the individual [...], the power of character». Political laws are an emanation of the laws of the world; character shapes the role the individual should play in society. Indeed, it reveals itself in men through work: «do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself». Where character presents itself most strongly, we recognise the great lawgivers – that is, the poets. «Poets should be lawgivers», because, only when prudence (that is, *φρόνησις*) is linked to poetry, can an association of men turn into a virtuous society. For Emerson, virtue is above all a symptom of power: «an addition to being [...]. In a virtuous action, I properly am; in a virtuous act, I add to the world». Therefore, a virtuous society, exercising prudence and respecting the laws of nature, does not convert «talents into money» (as in economised societies) and does not spawn «men of parts» (as in atomised societies), but is able to give birth to an association of free individuals who share the same heritage of values.

Manuel Marsico: **Ethos, Shared Agency, and Changes**

Abstract: The acceleration of technological development and the related social evolutions make it increasingly difficult to identify the boundaries of communities and groups. Theories of action offer different perspectives for interpreting the phenomenon of shared agency and, based on that, for describing the nature and role of various social institutions. Given the different levels of self awareness, it is possible to identify various modes of collective action. In these modes, it is necessary to clarify which domain is suitable for the application of the concept of ethos for descriptive purposes. In this work, I argue that the presence of legal institutions is not a necessary condition for the existence of an ethos and that the concept can be fruitfully used starting from the existence of small groups in pre-institutional conditions. Once the necessary tools of action theory are clarified to describe the ethos of a community, I direct my efforts towards a normative level employing the constitutive elements of the phenomenon of shared action. In particular, (i) I argue that the publicity of reasons and the conflict of values are constitutive elements of shared action, and (ii) I propose a consequent interpretation of the role of practical wisdom in relation to ethos: the role of practical wisdom is to mediate with respect to the tendency of social instability/stability due to contemporary ethos in order to maintain the unity of the individual and the community. Finally, I emphasize the idea that changes in ethos can be valuable even if they do not correspond to expected improvements. In cases of non-improving options, it is not always better to proceed with the preservation of the existing or unjustifiable advancement of social changes. Indeed, this possibility is based on individuals' right to change, which becomes a constraint for practical wisdom. Starting from this constraint of normative dissonance structure, the role of practical wisdom will be to establish a range within which changes can be normatively acceptable.

Monica Codina: **Journalism practice and democracy in a crisis of cultural ethos: Proposing a paradigm shift in the pre-political foundations**

This conference addresses how virtuous behavior improves within an appropriate cultural ethos where practice is established. Every cultural ethos is created around certain beliefs and social behaviors since ethical behavior needs to be grounded in a form of rationality. The current Western society's cultural ethos is built around a set of beliefs that stem from the post-Enlightenment heritage and persist in the form of paradigms. Within this context, this paper argues that the weakness in the functioning of democratic institutions -as well as journalism-highlights a crisis of Western cultural ethos; and, that this crisis is partly rooted in the paradigmatic form of some philosophical axioms (such as individualism, universalism, subjective good) adopted from

the post-Enlightenment heritage. These axioms, redefined according to the practices of liberal societies, shape the current paradigms through which Western societies develop an understanding of how democratic institutions as journalism should function. According to Anderson (2019), democratic institutions procedures does not longer guarantee the achievement of the values that it aims to protect in Western societies. Which is due in part, as MacIntyre notes, to the fact that the contemporary cultural ethos is built around “simulacra of morality”. We use language and moral reasoning, but we have lost its theoretical and practical understanding because the contexts from which its meaning is derived are missing (1984: 15). This loss of “cultural ethos” is perpetuated in the academy (1984: 17) and is linked to the opacity of the established paradigms. Thomas Kuhn argues that paradigm changes occur when current paradigm fails to explain the persistent presence of anomalies (1970). Following Kuhn, if the contemporary ethos model does not favor the stability of democratic institutions, to face this problem, it is not enough to apply procedural corrections; we also need to repair the basic paradigms that nurtures democracy and journalism theory and practice. This paper aims to open a philosophical project of cultural ethos paradigmatic reconstruction, by addressing 10 post-Enlightenment paradigmatic challenges, and based on the significant insights traced in the work of scholars as Leo Strauss (1899-1973), Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), Leonardo Polo (1926-2013), Robert Spaeman (1927), Alasdair MacIntyre (1929), Charles Taylor (1931), or Margaret Archer (1943-2023) among others to enable a more comprehensive reading of the contemporary social conte

Aula IX

Jos Kole: “It Takes a Hospital to Raise a Physician”: On the Neglected Importance of the Ethos of Healthcare Organizations for the Virtue and Character Education of Future Healthcare Professionals

Abstract: The importance of ethics teaching to and moral education of our future healthcare professionals is widely acknowledged (Andersson et al., 2022). Good physicians are physicians who take their moral responsibility seriously, good nurses take care of their patients in a morally praiseworthy way. Character and virtue education are generally considered as vital part of professional moral identity formation in healthcare (Buyx et al., 2008). Good physicians are virtuous physicians (Pellegrino, 2002), good nurses show character in how they take care of their patients (Armstrong, 2007; Marcum, 2012). The role of formal ethics teaching to virtue and character formation is rather limited. Time for ethics teaching is limited in curricula of healthcare professionals (Perkins et al., 2000). Students may develop virtue literacy, insight in ethical theories, and deliberation skills through formal teaching, but virtue and character education require longitudinal immersion in healthcare practice, habituation, reflection, role models, (Doukas et al., 2022; Lamb et al., 2022) and, perhaps, a learning environment with a fostering ethos, moral climate and culture? A highly formative part of the education of healthcare professionals takes place at the workplace, on the ward, in the clinical department of hospitals and other healthcare organizations. As clerks, interns and residents, future healthcare professionals learn how to be physician or a nurse on the job. In this way, they get qualified but also socialized. They become part of their respective professional communities and the practice of healthcare, and they, thereby adopt the habits, norms, values and virtues of these communities and practice. It may be assumed that much of the virtue and character education of our future healthcare professionals goes through such

socialisation. In medical educational terms, this formative context of the workplace in which healthcare professionals are socialized is referred to as the hidden curriculum (MacLeod, 2014; Hafferty & Martimianakis, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2018). It's called 'hidden' because the education and formation through this curriculum (often) goes implicitly, informally, and unconsciously. 'Hidden curriculum' both has negative and (more rare) positive connotations. Socialisation through immersion in practice may just as well erode commitment to norms and values, and undermine virtues and idealism. A rather notorious example is the erosion of empathy of medical students during clerkship and residency (Neumann et al., 2011; Hojat, 2016; Bandini et al., 2017). The claim of this paper is that the hidden curriculum of the hospital workplace (as learning environment) is unjustly neglected as an important factor in virtue and character education of our future healthcare professionals. This hidden curriculum is (at least partly) provided through, what we call, the 'ethos of healthcare organisations and professional communities'. In common business ethical terms, we might refer to this ethos as the 'moral climate' and 'moral culture' of healthcare organisations (Schneider et al., 2013; Kaptein, 2020; Roy et al., 2023). Acknowledging the importance of the moral climate and culture of healthcare organisations for virtue and character education may direct our attention to the organisation ethical dimension of virtue and character education. If it takes a hospital to raise a good healthcare professional, shouldn't we perhaps take more organisational ethical effort to strengthen the ethos of hospitals and try to create 'virtuous hospitals' in order to provide medical and nursing students with a fostering moral educational environment?

Maxence Carsana: **The Therapeutic Alliance as a Quest: How Virtues Can Help Combat Meaninglessness and Improve Mental Health**

Abstract: Among the professions involved in the development of the individual and his character, the psychologist finds himself in a position that is – to say the least – ambiguous. As an expert, he or she cannot take a position on what the patient should do, and he or she then has to set aside the moral question in order to treat the patient with empathy and without judgement. This absence of judgement, questionable in terms of its authenticity, partly reflects the liberal conception of our time, which refuses to recognise teleology as a valid concept. Humans are free to build their own meaning but this freedom through the absence of constraint and purpose comes at a cost: an existential loneliness that runs counter to fundamental human needs (Rosa, 1998). Personal development cannot guarantee people their need for social recognition and gratification. The epidemics of depression, burn-out and nihilism attest to this unfulfilled need. If every individual creates their own set of values, they avoid peer pressure but cannot share their achievements. In contrast, virtue, as opposed to modern coaching practices, does not encourage people to develop alongside each other but towards one another. It encourages the control of desires rather than their immoderate pursuit. In the neo-Aristotelian framework, man is an incomplete being at birth who has to actualise his nature in order to achieve his end: that of a social being inserted into a human community. This paper aims to examine whether modern psychotherapy can fit this pattern without compromising its work ethics. At a societal level, the lack of moral meaning does not lead to neutrality but to the satisfaction of the individual's will to power. This arbitrary will is fuelled by a scepticism of principle towards any attempt to define a meaning external to us at the centre of our lives; and this scepticism is encouraged by the clinician in his practice under the guise of professional prudence. Wouldn't it otherwise be a desire to dictate to other show they should live their lives? The supposed advantage of this conception collapses when the absence of judgement and the unconditional acceptance of the patient can be maintained through the exercise of by the psychologist. Making use of Kristjánsson's (2024) account of professional *phronesis* within

MacIntyre's (1981 & 2016) virtue-based practice scheme, I would like to argue that the therapeutic relationship can be experienced as a quest, with the associated virtues. The therapist's role would then be to equip the patients so as to practise these virtues, helping them to sharpen their judgement so that they may eventually pursue their quest on their own. This article seeks to show how the use of *phronesis* and the conceptualisation of therapy as a quest make it possible to meet certain human needs neglected by a professional neutrality sometimes experienced as artificial. All whilst maintaining the benefits of the latter in terms of freedom left to the patient, acceptance of their subjectivity, and freedom of tools and techniques left to the therapist.

Aula VIII

Pawel Pijas: Genealogy Vindicating the Ethos

Abstract: According to Max Scheler, ethos should be understood as a set of axiological preferences characteristic of an individual, group or epoch, which emphasizes selected values, and thus virtues and moral ideals ("exemplars"). Of course, the concept of ethos understood in this way is descriptive and names a social-historical fact: there have been, there are and there will be many different ethos. In my presentation, I try to answer the question on what basis it can be claimed that there is an ethos in the normative sense, i.e. a legitimate set of axiological preferences. One way to develop such a justification is to use the method of vindicatory genealogy (hereafter VG), developed within Anglophone (post) analytic philosophy in the last three decades by authors such as E. Craig, B. Williams, M. Fricker and M. Queloz. The VG method involves the construction of a quasi-historical narrative tracing the genesis and evolution of collective conceptual practices (e.g., recognizing a certain disposition as a virtue and conceptualizing experience in its spirit). VG treats such practices as responses to the challenges of the human condition (the needs of human beings), and if these are apt responses, we can say that it provides their pragmatic justification. At the same time, if VG is dealing with practices that are responses to universal human needs, this justification acquires a necesaristic character. In this way, Williams and Fricker seek to justify certain epistemic virtues (forms of truthfulness and epistemic justice), which can be interpreted as an attempt to justify ethos in a normative sense. My presentation is structured as follows. I begin with Scheler's remarks on the concept of ethos and pose the question of the possibility of the existence of its normatively understood form. I then present the VG method. In the last part, I try to show how VG can be used to justify certain virtues, and thus to construct a normatively understood ethos.

Piero Tarantino: The Fictitious Construction of Virtue: An Investigation into Bentham's Linguistic and Utilitarian Approach

Abstract: An original but as yet largely overlooked examination of the linguistic and utilitarian nature of virtue was provided by the English philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). He worked out his theory of virtue in a treatise called *Deontology*, which was written roughly between 1813 and 1815, when Bentham's distinction between real and fictitious entities was full-fledged, as testified by his writings on ontology, logic, language, and grammar. Bentham identified virtue along with vice as 'names of fictitious entities,' i.e., products of human language depending for their meaning and truth on the perceptions of pleasure and pain, the only real entities of the practical domain. According to Bentham, virtue and vice are created for the purposes of discourse and can be explained by tracing them back to their empirical roots of pleasure and pain: virtue

denotes something—an act, habit, disposition, or propensity—which leads to happiness, i.e., pleasure, or averts from unhappiness, i.e., pain, just as vice takes away pleasure and increases pain. The utility of virtue lies in its ability to maximize pleasure and reduce pain. As a consequence, what is regarded as virtuous is associated with a sentiment of approval, which guides human conduct to conform to virtue; while what is considered as vicious is related to a sentiment of disapproval, which involves disregarding vice. This paper will explore Bentham's interrelation between language and utility in the construction of virtue: it is addressed as a product of the human mind grounded on sense perception and aimed at the achievement of pleasure. This exploration will be carried out through the analysis of the section of Bentham's *Deontology* devoted to a detailed account of virtue and its specifications (primary virtues, namely prudence, probity, and beneficence, and secondary virtues, such as temperance, fortitude, justice, and so on); it will be enriched by the consideration of relevant passages from his writings on ontology, logic, language, and grammar. Finally, I will try to clarify the normative implications of such a linguistic and utilitarian approach to virtue in ethics.

Simone Grigoletto: “Winning Isn’t Everything; It’s the Only Thing”: Reflections on the Moral Role of Professional Athletes

Abstract: Henry «Red» Sanders (head coach of the UCLA football team in the 1930s) is considered the first author of one of most well-known mottos in the sport world: “winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing”. Different versions of this very line have been widely used in the following decades by athletes and coaches of different sports and in different sport venues. In Italy a similar maxim was made popular by Gianpiero Boniperti (first player, then manager and honorary president of Juventus soccer club). In the 2012-2013 season this phrase was sewn inside Juventus’ t-shirts: “Vincere non è importante, è l’unica cosa che conta”. At first, this motto opens up a series of questions on the very purpose of sports and what athletes are allowed to do in order to achieve their goals. Still, this paper wants to highlight that there are further reflections that can derive from this more general theoretical take on the foundations of sport. In recent decades, the moral philosophical field has shown a renewed interest in exemplarist theories (among them, it is worth mentioning the recent publication by L. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*) which, however, do not represent a complete novelty in the history of moral thought. More specifically, the close connection between admiration for moral excellence and the desire for emulation represents one of the crucial theoretical points for this ethical approach. Hence, these questions arise: where do we identify our moral models? How do we come into contact with the examples that end up characterizing our moral life? We cannot but take into consideration the main role of our direct experiences. At the same time, we cannot deny a considerable role played by charismatic figures we learn about through different types of narratives (testimonies, parables, myths, or even fictional narratives). In light of this, we should admit that sports seem to be a particularly fertile area for identifying inspiring figures and narratives that generate admiration. Accordingly, if we endorse the exemplarism theoretical framework, further philosophical issues arise. More specifically, this work wants to focus on questions that arise when we consider the public role of professional athletes. Hence, the main issue will be the following: do famous athletes, as figures with considerable public exposure, have specific moral responsibilities? Can champions truly represent a model for our ordinary moral life? These questions will be addressed by considering a more general account of moral responsibility of public figures. Where does this responsibility originate from? Is it intrinsically connected with the job of famous people (in a way that would make us reconsider the real purpose of professional sport) or is it derived extrinsically as a consequence of their fame?

Parallel Session 3

Thursday 26th September 2024, 14.15 – 17.00

Aula Contento

Natasza Szutta: **What Is Moral Depth? Is It Indispensable for Being a Morally Wise Person?**

Abstract: The currently discussed concepts of practical wisdom (Jubilee Center and Aretai Center) seem to overlook an important component, pointed out by John Kekes in his book *Moral Wisdom and Good Lives*. This element is the moral depth, including the awareness that we, as agents, are all subject to numerous factors beyond our knowledge and control. No matter how much we know, how much experience and moral sensitivity we have, and how committed we are to ethical principles, our actions may have unpredicted and dire consequences. *Phronimoi* must be aware of this. They must have faith that despite this unpredictability, the weaknesses of our character, and the many setbacks, our life and struggle against adversity are still meaningful. In my talk, I will consider whether moral depth, understood in this way, is a necessary condition for being *phronimos* and what it would mean in applied ethics, e.g., in jurisprudence virtue.

Silvia Corradi: **The Rule of Law Between Formalism and Substantialism: Some Implications for Legal Reasoning**

Abstract: After analyzing the essential characteristics of rule of law, the paper aims to understand what kind of reason is implied in this expression: it will be argued that, depending on the conception of rule of law adopted, the reason for rule of law changes significantly. The paper accepts a substantive conception of rule of law, and implies a reason not only governed by an institutional apparatus but also by the virtues of jurists. Rule of law, from a historical perspective, was born with the English constitution in the common law environment, before the State, in a context where “law is not understood as a product of power, but lives in the customs and legal principles based on the reason of judges” (Omaggio 2014, 66). It therefore presupposes horizontal constraints alongside the traditional vertical constraints of power (Trujillo 2020, 45; on these concepts also Puppo 2023; Greco 2022). Precisely because of these horizontal constraints, so that rule of law does not remain just a legal ideal (Viola 2009, 161) but can find concrete application in the diverse context of today’s legal pluralism (Puppo 2013), legal argumentation is considered central (Trujillo 2020, 45; Tomasi 2020), to the point that even the legislature is called upon to justify legislative provisions, as evidenced by jurisprudence (Witgens 2006; Luzzati 2018; Ferraro 2018; Zorzetto 2018). Here, then, reason is assigned an essential function for rule of law as it is called upon to account for legal decisions made: but what kind of reason is involved? The answer changes depending on the conception of rule of law adopted. Craig (2017, 2-18; also Krygier 2014, 79) distinguishes formal and substantive conceptions of rule of law. While the former are concerned with the enactment of the provision and not its content, for the latter there is no dichotomy between formal and substantive aspects. Waldron speaks of proceduralism to indicate the union of form and substance of rule of law, and to differentiate it from formalism, which is

typical of the former conception (Waldron 2011, 8, 12). If formal conceptions seek certainty (and require the formalism typical of the age of codification: Trujillo 2020, 44), substantive conceptions are aimed at balance (Omaggio 2014, 73): the latter are distinguished by the fact that “one cannot conceive of the rule of law without a heavy moral loading and a substantial moral achievement” (Krygier 2014, 79). While having some apparent merits, it is intended to argue in the paper that the formal conception of rule of law is insufficient and that the formalism involved in substantive conceptions is not only about the architecture of institutions (Krygier 2014, 82) but also involves flesh-and-blood people and thus, first and foremost, jurists and their virtues (Trujillo 2020, 47; Klabbers 2017). In an attempt to clarify this thesis, an example inherent to abductive reasoning in the judiciary will be offered (Canale, Tuzet 2020, 47-50; Solum 2003) aimed at explaining how the jurist’s virtues have concrete relevance to the rule of law.

Nancy Snow: **Democratic Political Consciousness and the Possibility of Hope**

Abstract: In an earlier paper, I presented a conception of hope as a democratic civic virtue. The aim of this presentation is to sketch a theory of political consciousness as it emerges in democratic societies, and to show how democratic political consciousness can make hope as a democratic civic virtue possible in citizens’ lives. The first part of the presentation is devoted to clarifying what political consciousness is. I do this by drawing on Ernst Bloch’s warm-stream Marxism as developed in *The Principle of Hope*, volume 1. Bloch there offers a version of Marxist political consciousness and situates hope within it. Though I do not endorse a Marxist theory of political consciousness or of hope, Bloch’s approach furnishes a template for thinking through how a theory of democratic political consciousness that promotes hope as a democratic civic virtue might be developed. I sketch a theory of democratic political consciousness that is hope-conducive in the second part of the presentation. There are many democratic nations and traditions, and a theory of political consciousness must be able to accommodate them all. Far from being able to undertake this project, I focus on a theory that applies to the country I know best, the United States. Even within the United States, there are various ethnic cultures and traditions, e.g., African-American and indigenous, some of which are alienated from democratic principles and rightly skeptical that hope as a democratic civic virtue can be a viable resource for them, given their histories and current situations. Though I acknowledge these traditions and their skepticism, I nonetheless develop a theory of democratic political consciousness in the American political tradition. In the third part of the presentation, I argue that features of political consciousness as found in the United States provide a framework within which hope as a democratic civic virtue can be fostered by political institutions and embraced by citizens.

Angelo Campodonico: **The Role of Wisdom in Fostering a Common Ethos Between Intellectuals and the People**

Abstract: The role of wisdom in fostering a common ethos between intellectuals and the people, as well as among intellectuals themselves, is paramount for societal cohesion and progress. However, there exists a growing difficulty in Western societies in cultivating this relationship, which is essential for keeping pace with social change, scientific progress, and facilitating democratic coexistence. This gap is fueled by several factors. First, there is a greater fragmentation of research, influenced by funding policies, which hinders interdisciplinary collaboration and the dissemination of knowledge to the broader public. Additionally, the social framework has become more fragmented, making it challenging to establish meaningful connections between intellectuals and the general population. The dominance of the internet and its tendency to create echo chambers

exacerbate this issue further, as individuals become isolated within their own ideological bubbles, losing touch with traditional cultures and diverse perspectives. This, in turn, leads to increased polarization. Moreover, there is a lack of interpersonal communication between intellectuals and the wider populace. Intellectuals often engage primarily with their peers, leading to a disconnect from the concerns and experiences of ordinary people. Conversely, many individuals may distrust the advice or perspectives offered by intellectuals, perceiving them as out of touch or elitist, having a vision of themselves as a self-anointed vanguard, leading toward a better world. Since as Kant observes, no one can ever be completely wrong, it is necessary for both interlocutors to understand the good reasons of the other. Although the problem is not easy to solve, Aristotle's distinction between practical wisdom and other intellectual virtues provides insight into addressing this issue. Wisdom, defined as the ability to judge rightly what to do, matures through lived experiences and the emulation of good examples. Thus, the cultivation of wisdom is essential for recognising and creating a common ethos or prescientific experience that transcends intellectual divides. Although intellectuals often have a wider vision of problems and are familiar with achievements in the sciences, their risk is that of thinking of abstract people in an abstract world. Unlike engineers, physicians or scientists, the humanistic intellectuals face no serious constraint or sanction based on empirical verification. They tend to gravitate toward environments where sheer intellect is highly valued, and where wisdom is not always necessary.

To bridge the gap between intellectuals and the general public, several practical suggestions related to education and wisdom can be considered. Firstly, we should emphasize the topic of the quest for meaning of life, as it is a concern common to everyone. Secondly, since memory is connected to experience and wisdom, there is a need for increased awareness of history and its relevance to contemporary issues. Understanding historical contexts can help individuals better contextualize their own judgments and behaviors, as well as those of others, thereby fostering empathy and mutual understanding. Thirdly, since friendship (*filia*) is associated with wisdom, intellectuals should strive to communicate their findings in accessible ways, while also engaging with diverse perspectives and experiences. All topics should be open to discussion. Encouraging open-mindedness and curiosity, as well as facilitating meaningful interactions across professional, ideological, and generational boundaries, can further promote a shared experience of wisdom, as well as societal cohesion and progress.

By promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, fostering empathy and mutual understanding, and cultivating wisdom through lived experiences, societies can bridge the gap between intellectuals and the broader community, which facilitates democratic coexistence and progress.

Edward Brooks: A European Character Project: A Proposal to Strengthen the EU's Democratic

Abstract: In 2023, the Council of the European Union expressed its concern regarding “social polarisation, political disaffection and detachment from democratic institutions and their participatory processes” (EU, 2023, p.1). Described by scholars in terms of “democratic backsliding” (Haggard & Kaufman, 2021; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2019) the concern is not simply that some citizens lack an intellectual or practical commitment to liberal democracy, but that there is a broader—often purposeful—deterioration of the democratic ethos. Such deterioration requires an urgent response in order to prevent the erosion of electoral integrity, political rights, and civic liberties, or a more serious reversion to authoritarian rule (Haggard & Kaufman, 2021). The EU Council proposes a dual approach, advocating the need “to continue defending our democracies and strengthening our common European values” (EU, 2023, p. 1). This paper focuses on the second aspect, where the Council's proposal to member states is to “strengthen the promotion of

common European values and democratic citizenship as vectors for cohesion and inclusion, in all levels and types of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) from an early age and throughout life” (p. 4). The EU’s values are laid out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union: “Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal human values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice” (EU, 2012). The framing of this foundational statement is significant since it underlines the moral status of the EU’s values and points both to their provenance in Western philosophy and theology as well as their universality. In proposing that democratic resilience necessitates the strengthening of EU values, the Council thus implies the need for a project of moral renewal. In proposing that such strengthening is the business of educational institutions it makes a case for a broad programme of moral education. This paper argues that this educational programme should not only be conceived of as an education in values but in terms of the cultivation of virtues necessary to sustain the EU’s democratic ethos. Part 1 lays the foundations, suggesting that a turn to virtue is implicit in the Council’s recent directive (EU, 2023), which goes beyond principles and commitments (values) to emphasise underlying dispositions to action, described as “key competences, including the social, cultural and emotional dimensions” (p. 3). Part 2 considers the Council’s central notion of “citizenship competence”, described as “the ability to act as a responsible citizen and fully participate in civic and social life” (p. 3) and identifies virtues that such a competence requires. Part 3 turns to higher education and outlines what it might mean for universities to participate in a European character project.

Aula IX

Antonio Lizzadri: **Epistemology of Sustainability. Model-Based Reasoning in Civic Education**

Abstract: In this presentation I would like to reflect on the theoretical preconditions of the Education to civic virtues, with particular attention to “Global Education”. I maintain that the difficulties in concretely achieving the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda depend on an abstract and utopian reference to sustainable development. In order to think critically about critical thinking, I will propose an epistemological analysis of the recurring argumentative structures in the justification of practices related to global citizenship.

Pedro António Monteiro Franco: **Liberal ideology, Modern Life, and Human Virtues**

Abstract: The main questions of this paper are: is it possible to be virtuous in the modern world? What’s the role of virtue in the modern world? We will explain how every community needs virtues and what kinds of virtue modern, liberal institutions demand by asking the question: do the practices of both particular communities and liberal institutions ultimately aim at the human good, at a common good, or do they stop at the good of a particular beneficiary (or fragmented goods for a sum of particular beneficiaries)? Do liberal institutions and liberal ideology erode or enhance the goods of particular communities? We shall explain how virtue and modern socio-political organization and liberal ideology conflict and whether virtue might perfect socio-political organization, against the crystallization of particular liberal ideas and institutional forms. To be

more specific, the two main challenges for the development of human virtue in the modern world are usually said to be the diversity and pluralism at the heart of communities (which puts forward different accounts of the good life), and the default moral spirit of modern societies, which, as Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor have argued, is bureaucratic, hedonistic, atomized, and individualistic. This not only distorts the conception of the good life but by definition curbs full participation in the life of a community. We shall try to show that the first challenge might be converted into a benefit for the community but that the second one needs thorough transformation if human virtue is to thrive. Special mention will be made to liberal thinkers (particularly John Stuart Mill, John Rawls, Bernard Williams, and Stephen Macedo) who acknowledge the relevance of community and virtue for a truly flourishing human life, and we will also try to show how so-called “communitarian” thinkers such as MacIntyre are actually not hostile to liberal constitutionalism, but rather to “modern liberal individualism”. More than that, such a “communitarian” worldview will be strengthened with the background of liberal constitutionalism. Lastly, we will explain how we can have universal, human virtues in a plural world without restricting ourselves to mere tolerance (an honorary virtue at best), which costs us the integrity of our deepest convictions and the possibility of dialogue and moral progress. We will hint at three specific virtues that might fill this void: authenticity, empathic imagination, and attention.

Igor Larionov: How Could We Use the Ethics of Virtues to Solve Moral Dilemmas?

Abstract: The ethics of virtue is often criticized for its practical irrelevance as it provides no action guidance for moral dilemmas: – For the ethics of virtue, the human character manifested in a series of actions is more prominent than a singular action; – At this moment, the ethics of virtue has no specific theory of decision-making in a moral conflict. Virtues are primarily considered to be the benefits for a person per se, whereas moral dilemmas normally imply the conflict of obligations towards others as well. In her theory of moral action, Rosalind Hursthouse discusses the applicability of the ethics of virtue to moral dilemmas [in: *On Virtue Ethics*, NY, Oxford Univ. Press, 1999, 25-35]. She suggests the concept of “virtuous agent” that is a person who possesses a set of virtues. Subsequently, it is a pattern of behavior of a virtuous person that constitutes a moral guide and a principle for individual actions for others. According to Hursthaus, the important character of moral life is revealed here, that is the dependence upon moral specimen. No matter how natural it is, the lack of personal autonomy within the constraints of moral specimens imposes some limits on the development of moral person. In this paper, I suggest the way to reconcile the ethics of virtue with the theory of moral dilemmas through the auxiliary theory of duty. I argue that it is the moral duties as well as the moral responsibility towards the moral person itself that seems to comply with the ethics of virtue. In the framework of the ethics of virtues, the ideas of best life (such as “happiness” or “meaning of life” etc.) could be regarded as the sources for such duties. The ethics of virtues so constructed would have a considerable motivating force. Viewed in this way, the moral dilemma could be examined as a moral challenge for a moral person. It is important for the ethics of virtue, that it provides a basis for a strategic or existential moral choice. At the same time, the main proponents of virtue ethics associate the individual flourishing to the conditions of human life i.e. professional and political environment. Aristotle suggested the correlation between rational idea of happiness and the approval of state policy. Thus, the “civic ethos” and political virtues presuppose certain moral duties of the citizen towards itself as πολίτης [e.g. *Pol.*, 1280b39-1281a3]. For Alasdair MacIntyre, the ethics of virtue helps agent to deal with the variety of rules and with the possibilities of applying them in a specific situation. It is the history (“tradition”) and the roles we play in society (“characters”) that provides the basis for this ability, as well as for virtues per se and for “moral identity” [in: *After Virtue: A Study in Moral*

Theory, 3rd ed., Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, 204-225].

Celso Vieira: Noisy Dispositions: Virtue Ethics and Research on Noise in Decision-Making

Abstract: Virtue ethics (VE) purports to offer an agent-based account of moral behavior. It does so through an embodied theory of human agency in which the notion of disposition, a predictable mode of reaction, plays a central role. However, psychological studies have found that situational aspects are stronger predictors of people's reactions than dispositions (Ross & Nisbett 1991). The situationist critique followed (Harman 2000, Doris 1998). Applied ethics should not focus on traits that are not supported by science. Virtue ethicists have adopted two types of responses (Kamtemkar & Nichols 2024). Eliminativists argue that VE and psychologists have different targets. Revisionists try to accommodate empirical findings. In this paper I will explore another problematic dimension. The critique and most of the responses rely heavily on the literature on bias in decision making, while either ignoring or failing to differentiate the effects of noise. Bias is a tendency to make an incorrect judgment. Psychologists put participants in a situation, choose a variable to manipulate, and identify a greater than random tendency to reach a judgment. Since the manipulated variable should be irrelevant to a decision, they have identified a source of bias. For example, when participants find a coin, they are more likely to help a stranger. This generous reaction depends on the situation, not on disposition (Isen & Levin, 1972). Nevertheless, bias is only part of the story. It measures average error and thus misses the variation in the data. Noise is the variability that escapes average measurement because it is unordered. Although neglected in bias research, noise has a greater impact on human decisions than bias (Kahneman et al. 2021). Noise is variability, so the first intuition is that it should add another dimension to the situationist critique. But the picture is more complex. Occasional noise is the disorderly situational variation that confirms this intuition. Still, most of the noise consists of level noise and stable pattern noise. Level noise is a tendency to judge that is characteristic of an individual. A judge who is more lenient than average. Stable pattern noise is a tendency of different judgment with respect to a particularity. A lenient judge may be consistently harsh in judgments concerning drug dealing. There is a degree of stability in these behaviors. I will argue that if there are different types of noise-related errors, VE should look for different corrective approaches. In the end, I draw on a character virtue strategy in the Nichomachean Ethics that can help with level noise and adapt an intellectual strategy to the case of stable pattern noise.

Arthur Szutta: Moral E-Daimonion: On the Possibility of an AI Moral Mentor

Abstract: The presentation considers the possibility of AI programs aiding children's moral development as moral mentors. It will start with a thought experiment, a futuristic story about an AI toy inspiring a child to moral transformation. Then, based on the conceptual analysis of moral mentorship, moral growth, and transformative experience, I will attempt to show the possibility of AI meeting the conditions of some form of moral mentorship. One of the difficulties is that AI programs are not persons with conscious minds. As Searlian Chinese rooms, AI programs cannot build true interpersonal relationships with children, and such a relationship seems necessary in moral mentorship. I will argue for the possibility of a weaker form of mentorship the criteria of which AI could meet.

Parallel Session 4

Friday 27th September 2024, 10.45 – 13.00

Aula Contento

Roberto Luppi: A More Individualistic Approach to Civic Virtues? The Judge as Example

Abstract: In Western thought, civic virtues have traditionally been matched with the image of the Ancient Greek citizen, engaged in debating public issues with his fellows in the agora. Among all the examples in this regard, Pericles is perhaps the most evocative. The purpose of this paper is certainly not to challenge such a pairing, nor to refute the suggestions that may be generated from it. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the developments of recent decades have put such an approach to civic virtues under strain. The crisis and the level of disintegration reached by collective realities of liberal societies, whether these are national, local, political, occupational, associational or religious, are there for all to see. Conversely, as is well known, the individual and their individualization process have acquired a role of absolute prominence. These observations give rise to the basic question of the proposed paper, which can be expressed as follows: in light of today's developments in our societies, is it correct that the way of observing and describing civic virtues, which we have inherited from the past, remain unchanged, or has the time come to modify it—at least in part—in the sense of referring to a different model of the ideal citizen, one that stresses character traits partially dissimilar to those traditionally emphasized? Related to this question are the following ones: nowadays, what type of citizen should be considered the model or example par excellence of civic virtues? The citizen-politician at the center of the agora or perhaps the judge, who, in her isolation, seeks to make justice prevail in her actions? Should the need for a more individual(istic) approach to civic virtues be proved, it would then be necessary to reflect on what is the ideal educational path of the citizen of the 21st century. What content, emphasis and impulses should characterize their educational process? What is set out in the paper does not imply a value judgment or wishful thinking about developments in contemporary societies; rather, it merely describes the ongoing trend of increasing individualization in the liberal world, which is very unlikely to come to a halt in the years to come and has profoundly altered the public scenes of our democracies. The underlying conviction is thus that this phenomenon cannot be omitted or neglected in academic analyses on civic virtues, which, on the contrary, must be able to examine it in depth and, from it, seek new trajectories of development.

Sandra Borden – Monica Codina: Newtime Rituals: Cultivating Civic Reverence for Journalism

Abstract: As a virtuous practice in Alasdair MacIntyre's (2007) sense, journalism's telos is to contribute to human flourishing by helping people jointly exercise practical reasoning in pursuit of the common good. To this end, journalists in democratic polities should cultivate civic virtues characterizing excellent publics. The civic virtue we highlight in this paper is reverence. According to Woodruff (2014), reverence is a "well-developed capacity to have the feelings of awe, respect, and shame when these are the right feelings to have" (p. 6). In the journalistic context,

reverence as a civic virtue encourages a sense of “being in it together” to achieve the proper ends of a “public”, which include coordinated deliberation, planning, and execution of wise strategies over the long term (Vallor, 2021). These ends require shared devotion to the truth, informed deliberation and the common good. In a democratic ethos, democratic processes and institutions fostering these goods (including the “press”) should be shared objects of reverence, too. However, many democratic societies are seriously deficient in civic reverence. Focusing on reverence for journalism, many citizens are not motivated to seek out news. For example, a majority of adults in the United States encounter news only incidentally on social media. Some avoid news altogether (Newman, 2024), contributing to a highly fragmented information landscape marked by “social-epistemological breakdown” (Lottridge et al., 2022). During the heyday of mass media, reading the morning newspaper and watching the evening news on TV were widely shared media rituals. Like any effective rituals, these habits carved out a special place and time for designated activities – and maybe even a prescribed form (such as which newspaper sections to read first). The predictability and regularity of these media rituals, in turn, created similar experiences across individuals, contributing to a sense of a shared social world (Lottridge et al., 2022) and, we would argue, a condition for civic reverence towards journalism. This paper aims to sketch a “news hygiene” of media rituals in today’s digital environment that creates more occasions to “feast” on news, rather than “snack” on news all day or “fast” from it. An original but as yet largely overlooked examination of the linguistic and utilitarian nature of virtue was provided by the English philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). He worked out his theory of virtue in a treatise called *Deontology*, which was written roughly between 1813 and 1815, when Bentham’s distinction between real and fictitious entities was full-fledged, as testified by his writings on ontology, logic, language, and grammar. Bentham identified virtue along with vice as ‘names of fictitious entities,’ i.e., products of human language depending for their meaning and truth on the perceptions of pleasure and pain, the only real entities of the practical domain. According to Bentham, virtue and vice are created for the purposes of discourse and can be explained by tracing them back to their empirical roots of pleasure and pain: virtue denotes something—an act, habit, disposition, or propensity—which leads to happiness, i.e., pleasure, or averts from unhappiness, i.e., pain, just as vice takes away pleasure and increases pain. The utility of virtue lies in its ability to maximize pleasure and reduce pain. As a consequence, what is regarded as virtuous is associated with a sentiment of approval, which guides human conduct to conform to virtue; while what is considered as vicious is related to a sentiment of disapproval, which involves disregarding vice. This paper will explore Bentham’s interrelation between language and utility in the construction of virtue: it is addressed as a product of the human mind grounded on sense perception and aimed at the achievement of pleasure. This exploration will be carried out through the analysis of the section of Bentham’s *Deontology* devoted to a detailed account of virtue and its specifications (primary virtues, namely prudence, probity, and beneficence, and secondary virtues, such as temperance, fortitude, justice, and so on); it will be enriched by the consideration of relevant passages from his writings on ontology, logic, language, and grammar. Finally, I will try to clarify the normative implications of such a linguistic and utilitarian approach to virtue in ethics.

Matilde Liberti: Smash the Wall! On the Disruptive Potential of a Virtue Ethical Account of Moral Change

Abstract: Two objections have been recently raised that seem to target specifically VE accounts of moral education, or of moral change for the better broadly construed: the Indoctrination objection, according to which since VE exemplarity-based education does not seem to foster

agent's autonomy, it risks being indoctrinating (Siegel 2018), and the Conservatism objection, according to which since VE approaches broadly understood are only concerned with reinterpreting the same old virtues and not with the possibility of creating new ones, then VE is inherently conservative (Ohlhorst 2023). Provided that moral education is indeed a process in which agents undergo morally significant changes for the better, then it is important for VE to be able to meet these challenges for the following reason: morally significant changes at the individual level can come about linearly, such as is the case for Aristotelian character education (Sanderse 2015, Kristjansson 2015) and/or disruptively, as is the case for “moral conversions” (Kristjansson 2018) or “individual moral progress” (Bina et al. manuscript). In the former case, there is a moral status quo that is consolidated, while in the latter there is a moral status quo that is disrupted and, ultimately, transcended. If VE educational approaches cannot account for these latter types of moral changes, then all they do is establish a continuity with a moral status quo (Rehen and Sauer 2022) without equipping the agent with the possibility to disrupt such continuity when necessary, which is exactly the worry behind the Indoctrination and the Conservatism objections. I will begin by presenting the objections, then argue that a VE account of moral change can meet them and, thus, leave room for progressive, disruptive changes. In particular, that of Indoctrination is a well-formed objection that has already been met in the field of virtue epistemology (see Croce 2019), while that of Conservatism is still primitive in its form. I will, thus, introduce Indoctrination as it is currently discussed, and define Conservatism by both considering Ohlhorst's objection and by carving out implicit worries of conservatism present in moral change literature.

Giulio Leopoldo Bellocchio: *The Rule of Saint Benedict: Elements of Anthropology, Ethics, and Politics*

Abstract: St. Benedict has been pointed out by MacIntyre as a model of intuitive and realizing capacity for stable and productive community realities, which, spreading throughout Europe, contributed to the formation of a common identity. The founding text of the Benedictine cenobitic tradition, the Rule, is obviously rich in political, ethical and anthropological indications; the purpose of the talk is to highlight some of them by contributing to the reflection on the roots of a communitarian ethos whose practice is today strongly compromised. First, just as political science – among all, the most architectural – aims at the highest good and the good of a nation, so the Rule organizes common life (coenobium, koinòs bios) in view of the highest good, and can be read as the Constitution for a polis, an ethical outline for political life. Secondly, just as political science and ethics, with a view to happiness must train citizens, making them good and engaged in beautiful actions in accordance with virtue, because it is the activities that determine happiness, so the Rule is an ethical way to assay man “like gold in the crucible” and train him for spiritual combat against inclinations to evil by favoring those to good. The monk, after a long practice of life, having reached the goal of the love of God, “what he used to observe out of fear, he will now begin to perform without any effort, almost normally, as if out of habit [...], out of the very habit of goodness and the taste for virtues”. If the goal of morality is action, not mere knowledge, the Rule offers itself as a “teacher of experience” to which the whole community must submit with the “toil of obedience”, to learn a way of life and accomplish the path to reach the ultimate goal. The third relevant aspect is the grounding of these political and ethical directions in a realistic and complex anthropology: man is a unity of soul and body, pride and need; he can be a slave to vices or he can fight them; he is obstinate in erring but has the opportunity to correct himself, with inclinations as much to evil (of the flesh and thoughts) as to good. In contrast to the autarkic Aristotelian ideal, in the Rule man is seen as incapable of autonomous self-realization and in need of Someone – greater

than himself – to “bring the work to completion”. A task that, in the first instance, the Rule itself fulfills by governing the conduct of life of those who obey. Since man, “free” to follow his own inclinations, actually becomes its slave, the Rule prescribes obedience and renunciation of one’s own will through the difficult daily practice of spiritual combat. This inner work is “spiritual art”, endowed with its own “tools” and its own “workshop”, the cloister of the monastery and stability within its own community. The condition of man described in the Rule is of a being “sent” into the world; paradigm of the human condition is therefore service, to which the Rule exhorts to correspond adequately with readiness and joy. Listening, obedience, discipline and humility are just some of the expedients the Rule proposes as concrete practices of liberation from bondage to one’s own bad inclinations and unification of self and community through service. The Rule of St. Benedict deserves careful consideration, not only for its spiritual and religious value, but also for its unified vision of anthropology, ethics and politics, which, in the concrete test of history, has yielded results of the highest value.

Aula IX

Consuelo Martínez Priego – Ana Romero-Iribas: **Ways to Reach a Meta-Ethos That Enables Coexistence in Emotionist Societies**

Abstract: The contemporary ethos seems to have a more emotional intensity (Sauer, 2022) than in the previous decades, not so much based on values as on feelings (Illouz, 2007). Peaceful and cohesive coexistence of social groups (Dragolov et al. 2016) with emotionist ethos demands the development of a meta-ethos. We understand meta – ethos as a framework of a cultural, valorative – emotive and – to some extent – normative character, which does not produce uniformity ad intra and antagonisms ad extra (Fischer et al., 2018), but allows coexistence between diverse, multicultural and plural groups; that is, a meta-ethos has to be able to articulate diverse ethos, one of whose elements would inevitably entail rationality. Given this sociocultural context, how is it possible to generate a meta-ethos? The aim of this paper is to theoretically argue the hypothesis that a condition of possibility for the rationality of a meta-ethos to emerge, is the emotional self-regulation of citizens, directly linked to the capacities of “delay” and “coping”, and to the virtues of temperance and courage. This dynamic integrates both rationality and emotions, since emotions also have a social function (Scherer, 2022), and are essential in civic friendship (Author1). We explain that, in order for the citizens of an emotionist society to share goals or objectives beyond their own group, they should overcome the predominantly emotional dynamic that keeps them bound to others; that is, each individual should be capable of acting on feelings as well as on rational motives (emotional education). When citizens are emotionally educated (Author2), the search for common goals is feasible while respecting the plurality of groups. We conclude that, if the individual improves these emotional capacities, she can develop the virtues of temperance and courage, and feelings such as empathy. This makes it easier for citizens to coexist peacefully in society (justice) and to articulate diverse ends; specifically, the pursuit of a shared/common end is made possible. A shared end which encompasses rationality (*phronesis*) and allows for the coexistence and development of groups and individuals in a common context.

Gabriele Laffranchi: A Virtuous Education for Society: Rehabilitating the Subject-World Relationship

Abstract: The current state of education faces various challenges due to the rapidly changing society and policies set by national and international governments (Biesta, 2018). This necessitates a critical evaluation of its methods, purpose, and status (Chiosso, Previtali et al., 2021). The following reflection considers the relationship between education and society, with the aim of promoting a genuine civic ethic in learners and preventing unjustified interference by society in the educational process. From the theory of world-centered education (Biesta, 2022), I propose to focus the educational problem in the relationship with the world to which students are to be introduced. From this perspective, two fundamental positions can be observed. The first position considers the world as an object of learning that can be turned into a place of action and self-affirmation; the second position considers the world as gradually acquiring its own integrity in the face of the subject that inhabits it. At this point, I propose exploring the subject from a perspective that can rehabilitate it as a conscious, active, and deliberative interlocutor with respect to the context in which it is placed. Starting from the first J. Habermas (1968) and the critique of instrumental reason acquired by the Frankfurt School (i.e. Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947), I would focus on the perspective of communicative action that empowers the subject to its autonomy and the community to a democratic capacity (Habermas, 1981). The concept of ethics of discourse aims to liberate individuals from the mediums of power and money, which distort and reduce subjectivity. Technocratic functionalism undermines the existence of a critical and self-expressive subject embedded in the world of life (*Lebenswelt*) in order to subjugate it to a system of which it is a function. Therefore, education must play a fundamental role in establishing a civic ethos that enables a society based on respect and cooperation to flourish. The communication paradigm is becoming fragile and inadequate in a hyper-digital society characterised by an exponential growth in the production of data and the use of communication media (Floridi, 2017). Starting from the modern paradox emphasized in H. Rosa's theory of acceleration (2013), I propose to show the need to educate for a relationship between subject and world characterised by a necessary resistance to impulses (Houdé, 2022 – Mantegazza, 2021). Moral, civic and philosophical education therefore is meaningful in the sense that it develops the relationship to the world as a resonance, where it educates to meet the other in the fundamental dimension of unavailability (Rosa, 2019). In conclusion, education has an essential role to play in building a civic ethos, but it is crucial that it starts from a rethinking of what is most needed for learners to inhabit and flourish in the society in which they live. Rather than a competent disposition towards a set of problems to be solved, what is needed is a virtuous education that promotes a conscious and subjective relationship with the world.

Pierre-Thomas Eckert: *Phronesis*, Civic Virtue, and Collective *Phronesis*

Abstract: The Aristotelian tradition is quite consensual on the prominence of *phronesis* as the crowning individual virtue, which when obtained shows that a human being deserves to be labelled excellent. *Phronesis*, though an intellectual virtue, is equivalent to moral virtue in a completed sense, i.e., to the mature manifestation of all the singular moral virtues. There is widespread agreement on this Nicomachean-Ethics-based account of individual *phronesis*, with minor differences regarding the exact nature of the transition from single virtue to *phronesis*, with some accounts favouring a token/type immanent distinction (e.g., De Caro et al., 2021), some a virtualisation/actualisation relationship (e.g., Darnell et al. 2019, Hacker-Wright 2023), and others

a particular practice/cross-practice dynamic (e.g., MacIntyre 2016). What remains to be inquired into in further depth is the nature of the connection between this account and what Aristotle adds in the *Politics*. Indeed, all three kinds of accounts are yet to fully explore the relationship between *phronesis* qua completed moral virtue and *phronesis* qua virtue of the ruler.

In this presentation I would like to argue that in the *Politics* there is both a thick and a thin version of *phronesis*, and depending on which version we subscribe to there are going to be two distinct ways of construing the relationship between *phronesis* and civic virtue. These accounts of *phronesis* are not mutually contradictory but they do reveal a tension nested at the heart of Aristotle's political thought, which is revelatory of the tension that runs between ethics and politics in general, as Delannoi (1987) noted. I will argue that these two *phronesis*/civic virtue relationships are directly relevant to our understanding of the concept of collective *phronesis*, two versions of which could be extracted from the Stagirite's writings: a 'weakly emergent' one, endorsed today by the likes of Kristjánsson (2023), and a 'strongly emergent' one (e.g., Narbonne 2021). These two distinct accounts are not always kept fully separated by Aristotle, and his oscillation between aristocracy and constitutional democracy as the best regime testifies of this tension. As Narbonne argued, the defence of a strongly emergent account of collective *phronesis* in Book III probably reflects an eventual endorsement of democracy as the regime in which the essence of politics is best respected. In more detail, I will argue that civic virtue receives a clear definition throughout the *Politics* – excellence both in commandment and obeisance – but that the political relevance of *phronesis* seems to fluctuate depending on whether *phronesis* is presented as self-mastery or as mastery tout court. *Phronesis* as self-mastery can be scaled-up and made into a collective virtue but its reach will necessarily be reduced: we will only have what Kristjánsson labelled a synergic partnership between a small group of quasi-*phronimoi*. This is weakly emergent collective *phronesis*. On the other hand, *phronesis* qua mastery is easier to augment into a collective virtue and does not have to be a simple scaled-up version of the individual one. This is the strongly emergent version of collective *phronesis*, which has stronger political implications than the weakly emergent account. None of the three branches of neo-Aristotelianism mentioned above have so far ventured into providing an account of strongly emergent collective *phronesis* and my presentation will therefore be an exhortation for them to take on the topic with the peculiar resources available to their tradition. I will provide a sketch for each one of them to do so.

Adrian Zaorski: Two Ideals of a Judge: Hercules and *Phronimos*

Abstract: The aim of my presentation is to formulate an alternative for Judge Hercules, called Judge *Phronimos*. This new proposition is then used to make an argument for an approach to the hard cases of Jerzy Zajadło. At the offset, I am going to describe an original proposition made by Ronald Dworkin, describing his idea of Judge Hercules. Especially, the focal point of this part is going to be an idea of “law as integrity” and a question of the practical/empirical adequacy of such a conceived idea. In this second part, I am going to show, how Judge Hercules has superhuman capabilities. Furthermore, the Dworkinian concept of hard cases is going to be put under scrutiny, through the lens of “law as integrity”. I am also going to show how this concept was critiqued and altered by Jerzy Zajadło. The main point is the need for a singular “correct” answer in each instance of a hard case. To sum up the first part of my presentation, I am going to determine whether the problems of Dworkin's concept of hard cases stem from Judge Hercule's psychological characteristics. The second part of my presentation is going to focus on Judge *Phronimos*. I am going to start, by showing how virtue jurisprudence takes on the challenge of formulating a theory of adjudication in a similar scope to Ronald Dworkin's “law as integrity”. Thus, virtue jurisprudence proposes, that a virtuous judge is a cornerstone of a good adjudication. Next, I am

going to subscribe to the Aretai Center model of *phronesis* as General Ethics Expertise. Due to the purpose of my presentation, I am going to concentrate on the idea of a moral domain. On such a theoretical basis, I am going to formulate an idea of Judge *Phronimos* as a practically wise person in an area of law and show how it supports Jerzy Zajadło's version of hard cases

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