American Society for Aesthetics
76th Annual Meeting
October 10-13, 2018
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Panel abstracts (in chronological order)

Author-Meets-Critics Session
***The Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World-Making* (2017)**
By Yuriko Saito
Thursday, October 11, 9:00-11:00 (British Columbia)

Saito's new book merits a session because it advances the topic of everyday aesthetics on several fronts. The first two chapters provide not only an important clarification of basic concepts, but answer critics of her earlier position who argue from within everyday aesthetics (Leddy), and from outside (Carlson, Dowling, Forsey, Parsons). Of particular interest is the contrast between her idea of a aesthetics of the familiar, which stresses the "aesthetic texture" of everyday life and Tom Leddy's idea of an aesthetics of the "extraordinary," which explores the "aura" of ordinary things. As in her previous book, she provides in-depth, illuminative discussions of several cases, laundry drying, wind farms, and sky art. A particularly important contribution of the second part of the book is her concept of the ordinary citizen's responsibility for "world making" through their aesthetic choices. This carries forward her previous arguments for the ethical and political importance of everyday aesthetic preferences. In her final chapters, she explores the negative environmental consequences of everyday aesthetic preferences for such things as green lawns over less consumptive choices, for pretty plants and animals over "ugly" ones threatened with extinction, for attractive fruits and vegetables leading us to discard a huge amounts of food, or for the aesthetically latest product styles, leading to an unnecessary waste of resources. Another kind of ethical implication she draws from everyday aesthetics concerns the ideas of care and respect for others shown both in manners and in the thoughtful design of hospitals, gardens, and everyday objects. The book's philosophical appeal is enhanced not only by her attention to theoretical controversies throughout but also by the natural way she is able to marshal many examples from Japanese and other cultural traditions.

Thomas Leddy (San Jose State University): "Mindfulness and/or Defamiliarization: Some Questions about Saito's Defense of the Aesthetics of the Familiar"

I will focus my comments on the second chapter *Aesthetics of the Familiar*, "Challenges and Responses to Everyday Aesthetics." I agree with Saito's characterization of everyday aesthetics as enriching aesthetics as a whole. However, Saito raises a number of questions here, which are worth

dwelling on a bit. “Are there completely subjective non-sharable everyday aesthetic experiences?” “Is there a non-judgment oriented dimension of everyday aesthetics?” “Is there an aesthetics not of judgment but of perception, or of description of perception?” “Are the aesthetic pleasures of scratching an itch, drinking everyday tea, hanging laundry and making dinner subjective, non-judgment oriented, and essentially unrelated to the art experiences that have previously formed the paradigms of aesthetics?” “Is a mindful way of living also an aesthetic way of living or are there possible divides between the two?” “And is restoring our mode of being-in-the-world best described as restoring our physical engagement with the world?” My own question would be whether restoring physical engagement is enough?

Only after considering these questions will I return to arguments Saito has raised against my own “aura” theory of everyday aesthetics in the first chapter of her book. I will argue for a much more expansive notion of defamiliarization than Saito allows, one that incorporates the notion that mindfulness itself defamiliarizes. Defamiliarization, or at least one type, actually helps justify a subjective non-judgment oriented but highly descriptive domain of everyday aesthetics. Perhaps, despite all the differences between art aesthetics and everyday aesthetics, and between the everyday aesthetics of what Saito calls “hidden gems” and the everyday aesthetics of the ordinary, what makes them all part of aesthetics is the role the defamiliarization plays in each.

Larry Shiner (University of Ilinois at Springfield): “Everyday Aesthetics: Scope and Ethics”

I see two important strides forward for everyday aesthetics in Saito’s new book, but each one is theoretically vulnerable without some additional clarification.

The first stride ahead is the way Saito’s contrasts her idea of the “familiar” and what she calls “the aesthetic texture of everyday life” with Tom Leddy’s the “extraordinary” and the revelatory moments of “aura” She generously suggests that hers and Leddy’s versions of everyday aesthetics are not mutually exclusive, but constitute different points on a continuum of aesthetic experience in general. I find the idea of an aesthetic continuum intriguing, but would like her to be more specific about this continuum. First, what is the common factor that makes all the different points along the continuum “aesthetic.” Second, where are the end points, e.g. does one end trail off into the non-aesthetic, the does the other end include traditional contemplative aesthetics oriented to fine art?

The second way the new book moves the discussion forward concerns the relation of aesthetics to ethics and politics. Many writers on aesthetics from Kant on have struggled with how to reconcile aesthetics and ethics. In *Aesthetics of the Familiar* Saito takes her subtitle *“everyday life and world-making”* to signify each citizen’s responsibility for both the natural and human environment as shaped in part through ordinary aesthetic perspectives, whether they concern how we dry our laundry, or whether we are ready to learn to appreciate wind farms. While I find her specific positions intuitively appealing, the theoretical connection between aesthetic preferences and ethical obligations needs to be worked out more securely and I invite her to trace more explicitly the logic that connects the everyday aesthetic “is” to the environmental “ought.”

Arnold Berleant (Long Island University): "On the Cultural Aesthetics of Everyday Life"

What is striking in Saito's new work is how frequently she draws on her multi-cultural experience, not only to illustrate the philosophical points she is making, but to establish their relevance and authenticity. This raises the question of whether the account of everyday life she is developing is a cultural aesthetics more than a general theory. Her book is replete with examples, one of its strengths and claims to relevance, and they, of course, do not all refer to Japanese instances and practices. The cases she examines in detail--sky art, wind farms, and laundry--are not unique to Japanese culture. Still it is worth considering whether and how these experiences and practices yield a different aesthetic between Eastern and Western contexts.

This presentation will examine this issue in the cases to which she devotes a major part of her discussion, as well as in her treatment of more general theoretical issues. These include the difference between spectator aesthetics and activist aesthetics and between judgment-oriented and experience-oriented aesthetics. An aesthetics of the familiar cannot help but consider the context of ordinary life, and that life is invariably conditioned by a cultural ethos. This presentation will ask whether the cultural dimension in her account makes everyday aesthetics irreparably relativistic.

Author: Yuriko Saito (Rhode Island School of Design)

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Philosophy & Aesthetics: Then and Now
In Honour of Kate Millet and Linda Nochlin
(Feminist Caucus Panel)
Thursday, October 11, 11:15-1:15 (Manitoba)

Chair: Mary Wiseman Goldstein (Brooklyn College and Graduate Center of CUNY)
Panelist: Gemma Argüello Manresa (Universidad Nacional Autónoma des México)
Panelist: Ryan Musgrave (Rollins College)
Panelist: Monique Roelofs (Hampshire College)
Panelist: Sue Spaid (Independent Scholar)

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Authors Meet Critics:
Lee B. Brown, David Goldblatt, Theodore Gracyk's Jazz and the Philosophy of Art
Thursday, October 11, 2:45-5:00 (Manitoba)

In their *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art*, Lee Brown, David Goldblatt, and Ted Gracyk develop a contextual theory of jazz intended to capture the fundamental nature *and* the history of the musical form. They intend their theory as well to offer a model for philosophy of art that departs from standard practices of characterizing the arts without attention to their historical or social contexts. Above all, they wrestle with questions of what jazz is and how it resembles and differs from other

musical and art forms as a consequence of shifting cultural attachments, practices, and values. Such attachments include contextual elements of dance and performance venue; such practices include putatively central features of swing rhythm and improvisation. Against this background, they develop a unified but ostensibly non-essentialist definition of jazz by reference to a pre-history and 'classic' era of the musical form, and a stylistically pluralist framework intended to comprise all and only apt subsequent developments. Do they succeed in their goal of defining jazz in a way that honors that "the music is embedded in social-historical developments"? The authors put this ambition to the test by exploring relationships to race, gender, and politics in the American twentieth century, from the liberating quality of scat singing to commercial exploitation of jazz. In tandem with such contextual factors, the authors propose an ontological and evaluative account of a core feature of much, though not all jazz: improvisation. Their account suggests that improvisation should count as embellishment of a given work or spontaneous performance of a distinctive work, resulting in inherently unique performances rather than replicable instances of a type—and raising the puzzle of how to consider the centrality of the recording in jazz documentation and identity. The evaluation of improvisation in jazz, they suggest, entails a balanced assessment of aesthetic risk and reward.

We examine Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk's rich and diverse claims from standpoints in jazz musicology and history, formalist aesthetics, non-Western philosophy, performance theory, cultural theory, and the social sciences. To mark publication of this early, book-length foray into the philosophical aesthetics of jazz, we investigate possible routes from *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art* to a burgeoning philosophy of jazz and the engagement of such explorations with jazz studies and jazz practice. Indeed, investigations of the nature of jazz are as old as jazz itself—and broadly mooted in public discussion from the first days of writings on jazz. In keeping with that tradition, we welcome public participation in this program.

Chair: Saul Fisher (Mercy College)

John Andrew Fisher (University of Colorado, Boulder)

I examine arguments of Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk in philosophy of jazz in the context of these issues in jazz theory:

1. *Status of jazz as high or serious art.* Several writers, and jazz players since bebop, either directly or by assumption have argued or assumed something equivalent to the thesis that jazz is comparable to Western classical music in the sense of being "Art with capital 'A'".
2. *Ontology*. What in jazz are the artworks, as compared to classical musical works or poems or paintings? What are the objects players and knowledgeable listeners take to be the central focus of appreciation? Are those objects too ephemeral to place jazz in the category of serious art?
3. *Recordings*. What role do recordings play, and do recordings address the ephemerality problem? Whereas Brown rejected recordings as adequate for appreciation, I take recordings to be salient to the status issue.
4. *Improvisation and dance*. What are Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk's accounts of (a) improvisation and (b) dance, and how do they relate to the aforementioned issues?

Teresa Reed (University of Tulsa)

In *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art*, Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk discuss both improvisation and American racial dynamics of the early twentieth-century as central to the flavor and evolution of jazz. I synthesize these two aspects of jazz—improvisation and American racial dynamics—examining more closely how improvisation functioned as a challenge to the racial status quo, serving as a source of artistic resistance, and modeling that mode of resistance for other parts of the world. Using Dr. Billy Taylor's memoir as backdrop, I further explore how artists in America and Europe deployed the jazz aesthetic as expression of social and political rebellion from the early 1900s through World War II.

Tracy McMullen (Bowdoin College)

In *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art*, Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk "…[bring] philosophical theorizing to bear on jazz" to "…help reorganize a reader's thinking about this spirited and moody form of music". Rather than examining jazz via the philosophy of art, I examine the philosophy of art through jazz to help reorganize a listener's thinking about a perhaps spirited and moody philosophy. This philosophy is Western—whereas jazz, from its inception, has been the product of philosophies that do not trace back to Kant or Descartes. Jazz could be understood as a philosophy in itself—a sonic archive with arguments, proofs, persuasion, and contention. Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk, for their part, bring jazz to bear on the philosophy of art, arguing that jazz shows us the "…poverty of trying to understand any of the arts from a purely synchronic or acontextual point of view". Jazz disrupts ideas of art as synonymous with a work that stands outside of cultural and historical context. In this way, the object of their study calls into question tenets that undergird the philosophy of art, and they thereby refine such philosophy. Yet the authors also "accept the standard philosophical job description" of finding and delineating boundaries. I suggest how jazz pushes against standards of *Western* philosophy. To this end, I highlight Buddhist and African American ontologies and epistemologies that, as described by Charles Johnson, Nathaniel Mackey, and Henry Louis Gates, permeate jazz. In particular, I argue that jazz practice presents a challenge for a "history versus essence" binary characteristic of ways of knowing in Western philosophy and cultural theory that privilege finding and delineating boundaries.

Saul Fisher (Mercy College)

Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk offer a disjunctive definition of jazz according to which a musical work counts as jazz just where it is (1) meeting a style which, prior to the classic era, is retrospectively understood as a jazz style, (2) meeting a jazz style broadly recognized as traditional, or (3) appreciated as a jazz style in the making, because of adherence to some jazz practices. The merit of their definitional approach—building upon the notion of a causal-historical context in which traditions of jazz unfold—is in helping to explain the seemingly disjointed nature of jazz as a single historical enterprise in musical creation. They account for emerging, divergent styles by appealing to

(a) appreciation of new forms as capturing elements of traditional jazz practices and (b) allowance for evolution of higher-order values, such as freedom or modernism, that guide jazz practice.
There are two problems, however, with this strategy. First, jazz history is not as disjointed as Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk suggest. Second, on a more conceptual plane, their approach to jazz definition takes us in directions insufficient to capturing all and only jazz styles. That approach proposes an amalgam appeal to canonical styles (disjuncts 1 and 2), appreciative norms (disjunct 3), and normative practices (disjunct 3). We get neither a picture of how extant subgenres might relate to the jazz traditions by dint of stylistic and formal features alone, nor how they might relate to one another in such fashion. Accordingly, we don't get a picture of how the music might evolve further such that future subgenres would count *formally*, and instead we are asked to rely on retention of indiscriminate elements of quasi-canonical practice and winning the right sorts of appreciation, presumably by the right sorts of appreciators. But if appreciators have a common response to something, surely it's as much the formal features as it is the normative practices. In defining the arts—and jazz more so than most—it's crucial to incorporate social dimensions of what the art form is. Yet the Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk definition risks leaning too far into the social.

Eric Lewis (McGill University)

I interrogate assumptions behind each of the three main sections of *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art*. Concerning Part 1, "How is Jazz Distinctive? Essence and Definition", I ask what is to be gained by dwelling on definitional questions, particularly given the long history of jazz musicians themselves rejecting all such attempts. Indeed, a distinctive feature of jazz may be the many ways in which it fights back against attempts to define it. I suggest this is related to an ontological issue raised in Part III of this book, namely that jazz performances are often best seen as ongoing acts of the creation of musical works that are never completed, or intended to be. Concerning part 2 "Jazz and American Culture", I draw on the example of the jazz singer Jeanne Lee, to suggest that post-scat singing can be best seen as discharging some functions the authors argue for. I also foreground ways in which black female singers have fought constructions of intersectional identities via performances of jazz standards, and even advanced new feminist theories via jazz performance. Concerning Part 3 "Music Ontology", I sketch an alternative theory which draws upon the visual arts to make sense of the relationships between highly improvised performances of works and the works themselves. I conclude with some global comments, asking what is left that is distinctive of a philosophical investigation into the nature of jazz of this sort once one has drawn upon the work in new musicology, genre theory, sociology and anthropology of jazz—what more is there here?

Aaron Johnson (University of Pittsburgh)

Introductory texts on jazz foreground the centrality of improvisation. Whitney Balliet called jazz "the sound of surprise". But jazz is inextricably tied to mass media of the twentieth century—and records, in their production and use, complicate the notion of improvisation and of the musical work. Thus, the end product of the recording process, the record—perhaps the only part "fixed in a tangible medium"—is property of the record company, while the process that created the musical performance is controlled by the artists but can only be

monetized by them through repeated performances. In *Jazz and the Philosophy of Art*, Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk attempt to sort out issues concerning jazz as spontaneous practice and as one that creates durable works. These tensions are replicated in the daily practice of jazz music. Records froze the spontaneous into the fixed, and converted processes into objects. Listening was forever altered by records—with ever-diminishing lay participation in lay music-making. How can we be sure about the degree to which jazz has been altered by recording? In addition, early recording was a formal process, requiring bulky and balky equipment and a sonically sterile environment where every nuance was captured—quite different from the social atmosphere of live jazz performance, with folks drinking, dancing, and talking. Improvisation involves risk, recording demands perfection. Does jazz demand both?

Author: David Goldblatt (Denison University)
Author: Theodore Gracyk (Minnesota State University, Moorhead)

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Perceiving the Athletic Body
Friday, October 12, 9:00-11:00 (British Columbia)

This panel will explore the perception of and resulting judgments—aesthetic and otherwise—about bodies of those who typically engage in athletic endeavors.

Chair: Eva Kit Wah Man (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Graham McFee (Cal State Fullerton): "Answerability and 'the Eye of the Beholder': On Mis-Perceiving the Athletic Body"

How should the perception of athletic beauty be best understood? The human body is often a potential object of appreciation for its grace, line and so on (*aesthetic appreciation*). But when is this body *athletic*? Distinguishing here *contrasts* the concepts *appropriately* deployed in perceptual attention proper to 'the athletic body' (even in aesthetic sports) with those appropriate to, say, the dancing body, at least for artwork dances.

How, through its perception, might beauty for 'the athletic body' come to be acknowledged? Here, attributions of beauty remain centrally *recognitional*: we can *make* them and perhaps discuss (after the fact?) *why*. As both identification and appreciation of 'the athletic body' are *learned*, the possibility of its *mis-perception* is granted. If suitable objects of perception — there to be *seen*, with the associated answerability — include grace, and even its sense of movement, one cannot insist that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. Yet, on many occasions, merely recognizing 'the athletic body' seems to grant its beauty *simpliciter*.

Where to search for *the athletic body*? The kind of 'athletic body' sculpted by (say) Myron is an *ideal*, typically setting aside body-images (and hence bodies) *well-suited* to athletic endeavor, as marathon-runners or weightlifters. Considering 'the athletic body' independent of taking an athletic interest illuminates *our* need to reconsider perceptual judgement, and the judgement of the *beauty* (or whatever) of the athletic body (before turning, in a longer version, to its depiction in *art*).

Bence Nanay (University of Antwerp): “The Gracefulness of Zinedine Zidane vs. the Gracefulness of Pina Bausch”

Zidane was the most celebrated football (or soccer) player of the last decades, often praised for the grace of his movement. I want to ask how the gracefulness of Zidane’s movements relate to the gracefulness we talk about in, for example, modern dance, say, the gracefulness of Pina Bausch. My conclusion will be that the concept of gracefulness is not particularly useful or even helpful when understanding our aesthetic engagement. I will then try to generalise this argument to all aesthetic properties.

Sonia Sedivy (University of Toronto): “Athletic Bodies, Aesthetic Properties and Perceptual Skills”

To explore how we perceive the aesthetics of athletic bodies, this paper draws together three views in aesthetics and philosophy of perception. (i) Aesthetic properties are open-ended and contextual in nature; (ii) human perception is a skillful conceptually informed activity; and (iii) aesthetic judgements figure in artistic and other practices. I will use these views to argue for the following points. Just as in the case of an artwork, the perceptible properties of an athlete’s activity are open-ended and context-dependent; much more varied and complex than examples of properties such as explosive or lithe suggest. Just as socially oriented art historians reconstruct the social, economic and historical context in order to understand the aesthetic properties of an artwork, we similarly need to look to the broader social context to understand the aesthetic properties of athletic bodies. This complexity is open to our perceptual skills, which are informed by our understanding. We can perceive the aesthetic properties of bodies with the same immediacy with which we see the expressions of human faces (as Wittgenstein for example has argued about faces). Human bodies are no less expressive than human faces, and both may be claimed to bear aesthetic properties or to be the appropriate subject of perceptual aesthetic judgments.

Jonathan Weinberg (University of Arizona): “Bodies in Action and Action in Perception”

I will consider the implications of recent shifts in the psychological literature, towards a greater emphasis on both embodiment and enactivism, for how we should understand the aesthetic perception of athletic bodies in action.

Peg Brand Weiser (University of Arizona): “Perceptual Sexism Revealed”

The perception of aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties of elite athletic bodies is influenced at least in part by cultural norms of female beauty. These can result in cases of gender misidentity due to perceptual sexism: a mix of both explicit and implicit bias depending on how the process of perceiving unfolds for a viewer. Data from psychological studies will inform an analysis of the process of perceiving the athletic body, particularly as it contrasts with viewing works of art.

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Art and Digital Technology

Friday, October 12, 9:00-11:00 (Manitoba)

This panel examines the impact of digital technology on the status of art and its role in society. The digital age is characterized by a near-ubiquitous reliance on high-speed computer processing for the purposes of sharing, processing, and storing information. Since the earliest days of computing, artists have been experimenting with digital tools—for example, by programming post-war mainframe computers to create intricate plotter drawings. Since then, the speed, storage capacity, and portability of computers has increased dramatically such that our practical dependence on computers is matched, in both variety and extent, by artists' creative exploitation of them. On the one hand, computers can be used to support and extend existing artistic practices in traditional art forms—for example, musical composition, film editing, or architecture. On the other hand, computers can be used to develop practices for new art forms—for example, net art, virtual reality art, and videogame art.

Importantly, it is not just established or formally trained artists using digital tools for artistic ends. Anyone with a smartphone can make videos, produce music, or modify images, and then share their work with millions—even billions—of internet users. Digital technology thereby has the potential to democratize artistic practice in an unprecedented way. Members of communities that previously had limited access to the art world are finding new ways to create and distribute artworks digitally. Such works can convey the distinctive outlook and experiences of those who have been marginalized in a society due to race, class, gender, religion, or disability. Relatedly, the adoption of digital tools can support creative collaborations between artists and audiences who would otherwise be cut off from one another due to geographical distance or cultural alienation. Another kind of collaboration underlies every artistic adoption of digital tools: the collaboration between the tool's artist-user, and the engineers and programmers who design and update the tool. When artists do their own programming, they will often describe this activity as artistic or creative in itself. This raises an important question about the aesthetic dimensions of code and coding in general. Pursuing this question, along with questions about artistic understanding and access, is central to an inquiry into the shifting boundaries and functions of art in the digital age.

Katherine Thomson-Jones (Oberlin College), "Digital Technology and the New Image"

The digital revolution involves the replacement of analog mechanical and electronic technologies with digital electronic technologies. What makes the digital revolution a revolution in the truest sense is the introduction of a general-purpose technology—namely, digital logic circuits—capable of transforming an entire economy along with its social and political frameworks. The digital revolution is often referred to as the third technological revolution, following the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions. Each of these revolutions, as characterized by economic historians, heralds a new kind of society or era. We are now 'digital citizens' of a post-industrial Information Society.

In the contemporary art world, it is often assumed that our new era must require new kinds of art, a new role for art in society, and new modes of artistic understanding and appreciation. In other words, the digital revolution must bring an artistic revolution, equally fundamental and pervasive. This paper assesses the case for artistic revolution in the digital age. Focusing on visual art, I consider two proposals for revolutionary developments in recorded imagery. The first proposal

refers to a ‘decisive rupture’ in the history of photography and the ‘profoundly artificial’ nature of digital images. Ultimately I dismiss this proposal, citing important continuities in the conventions governing photographic realism and the perceptual conditions of appreciation. The second proposal is my own; I argue that, for the first time in the history of image making, it is possible to have digital image schemes. The inherent replicability and transmissibility of digital images help set the terms for their proper appreciation. My conclusion is that artistic revolution in the digital age is real, insofar as digital technology affects the most basic categories of art. At the same time, artistic innovation in the digital age relies on and extends many preexisting capabilities and practices.

Shelby Moser (University of Kent), “Code Aesthetics”

The phenomenon of computer code is well established in society and, over the last one hundred years, digital technologies have pervaded an array of art forms. This has made the digital medium (if we can singularize it) significant for the philosophy of art, but, its inclusion in philosophical theories usually surfaces only insofar as it pertains to complete digital works. The practice and material instances of code are significantly less apparent in our literature even though the philosophies of technology, software, and information theory analyze well-written code in terms of its elegance and beauty. Although code is difficult to understand due its ephemeral nature, one way to think about programming languages, in relationship to art, is the requirement for a programmer’s adeptness in reading, writing, and interpreting code being similar to the practices considered important within literature, poetry, and music. That being the case, we should question whether established definitions of art can tolerate code as an art form, since the practice of coding is more readily viewed as a technological process that merely contributes to a realized aesthetic object (e.g., digital works, computer art, videogames).

As a practice, coding is generally viewed as a means to achieve practical end x. Although function is a key component of code and is necessary to achieve x, function alone promotes the normative view that technology consists in instrumental rationality more than anything pertaining to the creative. On the one hand, it is obvious that coding concerns rational attitudes because it requires the individual to question which of the options available are the best ones to achieve a desired goal. On the other hand, more recent philosophies recognize that such a strict rational view of technology misses a creative aspect of coding because, after all, technological options must first be created if they are to be made available as design possibilities. For example, a programmer can code ad hoc so that the program merely functions, or she can exhibit technical competence and literacy by minimizing unnecessary language to produce a string of elegant code. We can characterize this latter example as a kind of creativity where our aesthetic appreciation is redirected to the code itself and away from the execution of that code.

Although code does not typically fit within definitions of art, I will suggest that the philosophies of technology and information leave considerable room for aestheticians to emphasize some important but ignored features of code in its raw form (e.g., sophisticated architecture and clever implementation). In other words, we might not unequivocally embrace code as art but its aesthetic qualities should make us recognize code for something more than its

pragmatic purposes and instances.

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The Art of Self-Making and Transformation, A Decolonial Approach
(Diversity Caucus Panel)
Friday, October 12, 11:15-1:15 (Manitoba)

Panelist: Laura E. Pérez (University of California, Berkeley), "Decolonizing Self-Portraits in the Work of Kahlo, Mendieta, and Cervántez"
Panelist: Mariana Ortega (The Pennsylvania State University), "*Autoarte* as Aesthetics of Self-Making"
Panelist: Kevin Cedeño Pacheco, (The Pennsylvania State University), "Reflection of the Self: *Selena* Through the Mirror of Anzaldua's *Borderlands*"

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Comedy and the Limits of Transgression
Friday, October 12, 2:45-5:00 (Manitoba)

This panel explores the relationship between comedy and trangression in a variey of genres: ancient comic theatre, contemporary journalism, stand-up comedy, and theatrical magic. We are especially concerned with cases in which transgressive performances elicit laughter from audience members despite their incredulity or the deliberately offensive nature of the transgression, as well as with the possible limits of such transgressions.

Chair: John Carvalho (Villanova University)

Rebecca Bensen Cain (Oklahoma State University), "The Comic Art of Aristophanes' Humor"

The humor in Aristophanes' comedies is notoriously transgressive in every way imaginable. The foul language, bad jokes, verbal abuse, mockery, and obscene actions are embedded in a story line in which such shameless behavior is not the exception but the rule. Usually, the comic protagonists are scoundrels who are ignorant, stubborn, lewd, and have a low socio-economic status.

In this paper, I look at Noel Carroll's typology of comic amusement (*BJA* 54, No. 2, 2014). I focus attention on his category of "moderate comic immoralism" and argue that this category may be more adaptable to the current trends of mockery and political comic humor in contemporary comedy than initially supposed. To make my case, I discuss the comic humor of Aristophanes and the tradition of Old Comedy with a history that goes back to religious rituals of song and dance and the iambic roots of blame or abuse poetry. I suggest that Aristophanes does not simply transgress boundaries, rather he creatively works the established oppositions against each other with consummate artistic skill.

Jason Leddington (Bucknell University) , "Comic Impossibilities"

Theatrical magic is fundamentally transgressive. The defining goal of magic performance is the apparent presentation of a violation of natural law. And since assessing possibility is generally an intellectual matter, it seems that, as Teller of *Penn & Teller* puts it, magic's "essence is intellectual." So, it is perhaps surprising that magic performances can elicit powerful emotional responses. In particular, *laughter* is one of the most common responses to good magic—even when it's presented with a straight face. David Blaine matter-of-factly bites a chunk out of a coin and the audience gapes and laughs. But why? Is magic funny? In what sense? My presentation explores the nature of magical laughter via analysis of *comedy magic*, one of the most popular genres of magic performance. Standard magic performances frequently include jokes and gags, but the magic always plays first fiddle. By contrast, contemporary comedy magicians such as Mac King, Chris Capehart, and John Archer give magic and comedy equal billing. Theirs is a blended, yet apparently completely natural genre, equally at home in a magic venue or a comedy club (where most comedy magicians start out). But how exactly do its elements relate? By exploring this question, I hope to illuminate the nature of magical laughter, which, I believe, is a *limit-case* of comic laughter.

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Varieties of Formalism Reconsidered
Saturday, October 13, 9:00-11:00 (British Columbia)

In aesthetics and the philosophy of art, the notion of "form" has traditionally been associated with those properties of artworks that can be seen or heard or otherwise perceived in the work by one of the five senses. "Formalism" in this realm is the view either that art is defined by such a sensory form or that the value of art lies in this form to the exclusion of any non-sensory properties of works. Late 20th century criticisms of formalism were usually based on the assumption that formalism stands or falls with the "aesthetic" as such. Given that art cannot be defined by its sensory properties, the anti-formalist claimed, both formalism *and* aesthetic approaches to art, above all, those 18th century aesthetic approaches that founded the discipline and gave it its name, are false. But there are strong reasons to think that the early modern founders of the discipline did not reduce the aesthetic to the merely sensory, and so too that, unlike 19th and 20th century formalists, they did not confound the formal with the sensory. History aside, there are also strong reasons to rescue the aesthetic from its reduction to the sensory by both traditional formalists and anti-formalists alike, and perhaps even reasons to preserve this notion as a proper approach to art. Or so at least the panelists listed below have argued, and will further argue in this panel (e.g., Shelley (2003), Zuckert (2006), Zangwill (2002), Gorodeisky (2011)). In any case, the very plausibility of a non-reductive notion of the aesthetic, based on an expansive and not merely sensory notion of perception and experience, affords plenty a reason to rethink the notion of aesthetic form, its role in the development of aesthetics from the 18th

century (and way before) up to the present day, and the prospects of both reductive and non-reductive varieties of formalism. The proposed panel aims to do just that.

Chair: Karl Ameriks (University of Notre Dame)

James Shelley (Auburn University), "Pretty Much the Entire History of Aesthetics, from Plato to the Present"

One way to conflate the aesthetic and the formal is to conflate the history of aesthetics with the history of formalism. Danto, for instance, does this when he holds Duchamp's readymades to be a repudiation of "pretty much the entire history of aesthetics, from Plato to the Present."
I argue that this misses the mark by 2200 years give or take—that the history of aesthetics from Plato to the early nineteenth century is, if anything, the history of aesthetic intellectualism, the view according to which aesthetic objects are, first and foremost, objects of intellect rather than objects of sense. I offer an account of the rise of formalism according to which it took hold not because good philosophical arguments favored it, but because influential art critics—Hanslick, Bell, Greenberg—regarded it as a way of championing the artists they favored. I close by reflecting on the way in which formalism remains alive and well in our post-Duchampian era.

Rachel Zuckert (Northwestern University), "Formalism and Cultural Style; Herderian Reflections"

It has often been recognized that aesthetic formalism has serious limitations with respect the value of significantly representational arts, such as literature. Clive Bell's remonstrations notwithstanding, it seems implausible that the subject matter (characters, scenes, portrayed world, etc.) of literary works (or representational visual works or films etc.) could have nothing to do with their value. Formalism also seems likely to be blind to (and in fact is often designedly blind to) the cultural value of artworks, e.g., the ways in which artworks express, criticize, or otherwise comment upon the culture in which they are made, or the way in which people define who they are, what their cultural moment is, by reference to artistic portrayals. This again seems to be a limitation in aesthetic formalism: it cannot account for an important value in (much) art, and one that seems wrongly dismissed as a "mere" instrumental value, a "mere" add-on to its "proper" aesthetic value, as formalism will tend to do. On the other hand, theories that emphasize the representational content or cultural import of art may seem to miss the special "how," the "way" in which (culturally significant) content is presented in art – that is, to miss aesthetic or artistic *form*. In this paper, I investigate a possible middle way, a possible combination of cultural meaning and formalism, suggested (I think) in Johann Gottfried Herder's essay, "Shakespeare": cultural style, that is, culturally inflected and varying artistic form. Such style, at its best, is an artistic "how" that is distinctively adapted to present culturally important content. It is, therefore, indexed to particular cultural contents and conditions that it expresses, criticizes, manifests, and so varies historically and (at least potentially) across subcultures. (Here one may think of many arthistorical and literary-historical categorizations of styles.) In appreciating such forms, I argue, we are therefore in part appreciating the aptness of such form to its

representational content, itself taken as culturally significant, as well as the ways in which particular contents or cultural formations can generate new, wonderful, different forms.

Nick Zangwill (University of Hull), "Formalism, Humanism and Classicism"

In this paper, I lay out the idea of aesthetic formalism and describe versions of it. I discuss the issue across various art-forms, and introduce the renaissance debate. Humanists (such as Alberti) presuppose idea of a universal human response to artistic beauty. But this can be questioned. Research on east-Asian/European difference is one possible source. Another is feminist theory. My sympathies lie with humanist universality, and I defend that. Lastly, I explore the connection between formalism and classicism in architecture. I criticize one way that Branko Mitrovic links the two and propose a more modest alternative.

Keren Gorodeisky (Auburn University), "A Matter of Form? Judgement-Formalism and Art-Formalism Reconsidered"

Traditionally, "formalism" in aesthetics and the philosophy of art is a view about the definition and value of art. According to the formalist, art is defined by (and its value lies in) its sensory properties. Anti-formalism is the denial of this claim. In this paper, the prospects of this variety of formalism (and its rival) will be reevaluated indirectly through a reconstruction of a different, and largely neglected, variety of domain-specific formalism: formalism not about art, but about aesthetic judgment. Though heralded by no lesser than Kant and Sibley, this kind of formalism is a rarity in the contemporary landscape. The standard view in contemporary aesthetics is anti-formalist insofar as aesthetic judgments are predominantly defined, as Aaron Meskin clearly puts it, only "in terms of the content of such judgments rather than in terms of some special mode of judging" (1994). On this prevalent view, aesthetic judgment is constituted by a belief (about the aesthetic properties of an object) rather than by a feeling or perception. The main claim of the paper is that Kant and Sibley were right to think that aesthetic judgment is constituted by a feeling or perception rather than by a belief, and thus that it differs from other kinds of judgment in form, not only in content. I will argue further that the blindness to this kind of judgment-formalism is grounded in the same assumption that misleads both the traditional formalist and the traditional anti-formalist about art: the assumption that aesthetic feeling and perception can, at best, give us access to sensory properties. But this assumption is mistaken, and the consequences of ridding ourselves of it run deep. Without the assumption, we could see more clearly (1) where the traditional formalist went astray, (2) why the traditional anti-formalist was wrong to think that the denial of traditional formalism implies the exclusion of aesthetics from the philosophy of art, and (3) why the Kantian-Sibleyan idea that aesthetic judgment is a matter of form, though largely negative.

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Formalism in Design and Architecture
Saturday, October 13, 11:15-1:15 (British Columbia)

Broadly, formalism suggests that the primary or sole contributor to aesthetic properties of an object are its formal properties, with attendant consequences for how we are acquainted with and evaluate those aesthetic properties and, thereby, the object. Architecture and design may seem prime creative media in which to find formalism at work, given their shared disciplinary focus on form and its organization and manipulation, and their de-emphasis of representation; and given our reliance, in creating or critiquing architectural or designed works, on visual, form-oriented thinking. Further, as with aesthetic formalism generally, negative formalist arguments in architecture and design take issue with alternative candidate determinants of aesthetic properties, including emotional, historical, contextual, categorical, or functional properties. Questions in consideration of formalism relative to architecture and design include these:

(1) What we mean by 'formalism' in architecture and design, as against aesthetic formalism—and how such views relate to one another, historically or at present.
(2) How architectural or design formalisms are best understood descriptively (and *what* explanatory work they do) or normatively (by way of criticism or prescription).
(3) What the contribution of form is to the
   (a) Identity of architectural or other designed objects, as individual objects or as members of a particular creative kind;
   (b) Success of such objects as instances of the kind; and
   (c) Value of such objects *qua* designed objects.
(4) How architectural or design formalisms stand in relation to functionalism in those domains.
(5) Whether architectural or design formalisms best all alternative accounts of aesthetic properties, identity, or evaluation in those domains.

Architectural and design formalisms represent special, ramified application of more global aesthetic formalisms, and lessons of the resulting, special views are diverse, too, for the global accounts.

Chair: Remei Capdevila Werning (Oberlin College)

Saul Fisher (Mercy College), "Aesthetic Formalism and Architectural Formalism"

In the aesthetic tradition, formalism offers a view about the sorts of properties that objects have, such that we arrive at distinctively aesthetic experiences and judgments of those objects. In the case of architectural works or other architectural objects, formalists arrive at these core theses:
P1. Architectural objects have forms—that is, formal qualities—which, together with their organization or relations, yield aesthetic properties of those objects.
P2. Forms or formal qualities of architectural objects play a significant role in design of those objects.
P3. Forms or formal qualities of architectural objects play a significant role in appreciation, contemplation, or evaluation of aesthetic properties of those objects.

P4. By contrast, such factors as meaning, representation, content, or context, are not necessary to generate or to appreciate, contemplate, or evaluate aesthetic properties of architectural objects.

Other, further theses yield formalist variants, for example, that the identity of the architectural (or other art) object is a product of its constituent forms.

For their part, architects along with architectural critics and historians also promote formalisms—built on core theses including normative counterparts to P2 and P3, minus the aesthetician's special interest in metaphysical underpinnings of aesthetic properties:

A2. Forms or formal qualities *should* play some significant role in design of architectural objects.

A3. Forms or formal qualities of architectural objects *should* play a significant role in appreciation, contemplation, or evaluation of those objects.

Here, too, there are variant views, all sharing a common, polemical character. It might appear that architectural formalisms are prescriptive and value-laden, in contrast to thinner, metaphysically-focused accounts of aesthetic formalists. Yet this is a caricature. Famously, aesthetic formalisms from Wilde to Greenberg lean towards the prescriptive. Less well recognized is that some architectural formalisms deliver robust metaphysical theses—that formalist accounts are built not merely on simple forms of architectural objects but as well on their composition, structure, and processes; that function is rejected as a primary driver in architectural design; or that the autonomy of architectural objects is established through their opacity or non-referential character. As this last point suggests, some architectural formalisms are more closely tied to the history of aesthetic formalisms than widely advertised. More significantly, looking beyond their advocacy role, we see the contribution of architectural formalisms to special aesthetic formalisms relative to a given art form.

Michalle Gal (Shenkar College of Engineering, Design, and Art), "Aesthetic Qualities of Function-Depleted Designed Forms"

I examine the class of re-used designed objects as paradigmatic cases supporting a formalist definition of design. I argue as follows:

1. A privileged added value is attributed to the aesthetic qualities and status of re-used forms of designed objects and buildings.

Function-depleted designed forms—those forms of objects for which new functions may be substituted for old ones—gain aesthetic qualities (even beauty) due to a 'metaphorical-dialectical' structure. Exemplary instances include Marcel Duchamp's *Trap* (a coat hanger converted to a 'trap', where the function is only metaphorically projected); Fallen Furniture's *737 Cowling Chair* (an engine cowling of Boeing 737 converted to a chair, where only part of a undefined form is re-used); Junktion Studio's *Telephone Desk Lamp* and IKEA Hackers products; the Tate Modern Museum and Musée d'Orsay (a power station and a railway station converted to museums); and other modernist factories. In each of these instances, a form-follows-function structure is inverted to a function-follows-form structure, where the designed object is born anew from its form. However, it is not *pure* but rather *deep* form. Formal properties rise and thicken as a result of a lingering, vacuous presence of a former function, and a 'subjugation' (in Gombrich's sense) of the new projected function to the existing form.

2. This phenomenon might be definitive of the nature of the designed object, rendering form as its core property, if not its essence. In this way, function-depleted form may call for new uses, beyond what modernist architecture literature refers to as premeditated ‘functionalist flexibility’.
3. Such aesthetic added value supports a normative formalist definition of design, namely, that the main role of design consists in attaining a rightness of composition of a functional object. I thus challenge rationalist-functionalist views such as Parsons (2015).

Ivan Gaskell (Bard Graduate Center): “Formalism and Categorization in Building Design”

There do not seem to be shared criteria of distinction applicable to different kinds of products of creativity within the arts. Distinctions and categories differ among, say, painting, photography, architecture, drama, music, and poetry. Many of these distinctions serve to exclude entire categories of created things from aesthetic and historical consideration. However, we only understand a practice such as architecture as a functioning category in contradistinction to other kinds of building practice often excluded from aesthetic and historical consideration in the architectural world, whether within Western societies (the work of professional builders, or of amateurs and improvisers) or outside of them.

Something similar happens in the visual art world (among other fields of creativity) but not necessarily in the same way. Just as in the architecture case, so painting in the Western manner within the art world functions as a category of practice in contradistinction to other forms of painting excluded from the art world. (This includes certain kinds of religious paintings, ‘mall’ paintings, handmade copies of art paintings made to order in Asia, amateur work, and so on.) Yet patterns of distinctions among forms of creativity most likely vary so that there is unlikely to be a shared ‘aesthetic template’ to which all these practices—building design, visual art, poetry, and so on—conform.

Can formal properties help us to establish criteria of differentiation within all or any of these creative practices? I investigate this question with reference to the broad spectrum of building design, appealing to the work of named architects, such as Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Renzo Piano; that of seasoned builders, such as Niitsitapi lodge makers; that of amateurs, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein; and that of those in many parts of the world who inhabit improvised dwelling communities spurred by the ingenuity of desperation. My concern is to discover whether consideration of formal qualities might have a bearing on using material things for historical purposes.

Glenn Parsons (Ryerson University) : « Graham’s Principle »

Taken as a substantive principle, architectural formalism is, roughly, the denial of the claim that architectural success requires forms that bear an aesthetic connection to the building’s function (a stronger version would hold that such a connection is incompatible with architectural success). While all agree that architectural success requires functional adequacy and aesthetic success, formalists hold that these aims can largely be disconnected, and may be achieved separately.

Formalists thus see architecture as a hybrid of engineering and sculpture, where the latter can be freely pursued on its own terms once the former has been adequately accounted for. The anti-formalist view is nicely captured by a principle advanced by Gordon Graham: a unity of form and function, while not always achievable, is at least our ideal for architectural success. While Graham's principle is intuitive (at least to anti-formalists), it is not so clear why it would be true. Traditional anti-formalist arguments appeal to formal architecture's supposed pathologies or to its supposed diminishment of architecture's artistic status. I take a different approach, examining Graham's principle in light of the different *activities* involved in the functioning of various buildings. Drawing on insights from other branches of design, I argue that Graham's principle must hold for certain sorts of buildings, whereas for others, it may not. Thus the legitimacy of formalist approaches in architecture is not a 'black and white' issue: rather, formalist approaches will be legitimate in some contexts but not others.

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Reconsidering the Work of Peter Kivy
Saturday, October 13, 2:45-5:00 (Manitoba)

The aesthetics community recently lost one of its towering figures with the passing of Peter Kivy, a prolific writer, profound thinker, and former ASA president. The panel will bring together five philosophers of art to discuss Kivy's work in philosophical aesthetics and his influence on the field. Topics to be discussed include authenticity, differences, literature, and musical notation, as well as issues regarding influence and training within philosophical aesthetics. . . . Each talk will be no longer than 15 minutes. (And the chair will be strict!) This will allow for meaningful and productive discussion.

Chair: Jeanette Bicknell (Independent Scholar)

Eva Dadlez (University of Central Oklahoma): "Peter Kivy on the Philosophy of Literature"

Peter Kivy's current work on the philosophy of literature includes *The Performance of Reading*, his *Once-Told Tales*, and perhaps most recently, "The Dilemma of Emma." The first two essays in literary aesthetics are investigations of silent reading based on Peter's own (perhaps exceptional) experience. Each of these is compelling, inspiring, and maddening by turns. Peter Kivy is not one to sidestep controversy. In the first work he boldly (and to my mind, not unconvincingly) characterizes silent readings of novels as performances that incorporate interpretations. In the second, he explores the roles of various aesthetic features in silent reading, relegating much of his audience to the category of readers who aren't serious enough. In the brief essay on Emma, he proposes an informal paradox or dilemma. On the one hand, Emma and Austen's other novels are regarded both as classics and as members in good standing of the Western canon. Works known as masterpieces, classics, and

members in good standing of the canon are expected, at minimum, to "tell a whopping good story." But a variety of complaints about Emma's falling short in respect of story have been and are still being ventured. These range from claims about the novel's deficiencies in story and substance to accusations of triviality and superficiality. Are these criticisms legitimate, imperiling Austen's standing? Kivy challenges the contention that some deficiency in story can be laid at Austen's door, maintaining that these apprehensions are due, rather, to deficiencies in the imaginative capacities of the reader who makes such judgments concerning Emma. I believe that he is absolutely right.

Jennifer Judkins (UCLA) : "Musical Notation as Performance: The Bach Manuscripts"

"[M]usical notation is not separable from the music it notates…the two interpenetrate one another in such an intimate manner as to make them both parts of the work of art, rather then the notation in service, so to speak, to the artwork…Perhaps all notation is a kind of performance." (Peter Kivy, *New Essays on Musical Understanding*, p. 15)
A single, original Bach manuscript sold for $3,300,000 in 2016. Of course, one does not have to own a Bach manuscript in order to enjoy his music: we have excellent, scholarly printed editions and a multitude of recordings. Original manuscripts can be smudged, messy, and even musically unclear. Why do we seek them out and prize them so highly? Other written ephemera such as letters and autographs may hold some aesthetic significance (such as age-value and genuineness), yet musical scores hold entire artworks, with a directedness that insists on "performance." Notating music in manuscript requires an intimate, tactile engagement with each note, each bar, each phrase. Now that music notation software such as Finale or Sibelius has largely replaced ink pens, the losses are immense: we are now often without sketches, drafts, marginalia, and not insignificantly, the visual delight of the composer's hand.

Aaron Meskin (University of Leeds): "Similarities"

In his Presidential address, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the American Society of Aesthetics, Peter Kivy urged and predicted 'that progress in the philosophy of art in the immediate future is to be made not by theorizing in the grand manner, but by careful and imaginative philosophical scrutiny of the individual arts and their individual problems, seen as somewhat unique, individual problems.' Here, and in *Philosophies of Arts*, Kivy tends to frame the options for the philosopher of art as a choice between 'grand theorizing' about fine art ('Art with a capital "A" as he puts it), which paradigmatically involves a quest for a definition of art, and the study of their 'distinctive differences'.
The pursuit of differences has provided a useful correction to grand theorizing over the last two decades. But although I venture no predictions, I urge philosophers of art to consider a third option—*the rigorous and creative investigation of similarities and commonalities between various arts and art kinds*. My contention that significant progress can be made by pursuing this project and that it can be done without pursuing a definition of art or a general theory of the arts.

In fact, I shall argue that this investigation of similarities and commonalities is much of what we already do when we say that we are pursuing differences. The exploration of analogies and parallels is central to philosophical practice. And much of what is alleged to be an investigation of the distinctive problems raised by the individual arts is, in fact, an investigation of issues that are raised by a number of the arts. For example, many of the central questions in the philosophy of literature (e.g., about cognitive value and ethical value) are raised clearly by film, television and comics. But the fact that these issues are raised by non-literary (and quasi-literary) art forms does not make them any less significant as problems for the philosophy of literature. The same is true about the key question about representation that is raised by photography, cinema and video. This suggests that it is simply a myth that the development of a philosophy of some particular art rests on discerning issues distinctive to that art.

I also contend that some of the most fruitful similarities and commonalities to explore are those between the so-called 'fine arts' and the popular arts and between Western artistic practices and the arts found in other cultures. If we want to fully understand creativity, artistic excellence, the social role of the arts, and the aesthetic value of producing art, we cannot be satisfied just focusing on the Western Classical tradition or eighteenth century British literature. Nor will we achieve philosophical enlightenment by simply examining videogames, Irish 'trad' and rapping or Rakugo, Ikebana and chado on their own. Only by exploring the similarities and commonalities between art forms, while remaining sensitive to difference, will we make the kind of philosophical progress that Peter hoped for.

Paul Taylor (Vanderbilt University): "Differences, continued: On Learning from Peter Kivy"

"Differences, continued" brackets the work of engaging arguments and positions and focuses instead on the experience of being mentored by Peter Kivy. The essay will have at its core a handful of tensions, between, for example, generationally distinct models of training for the professoriate, hegemonic and heretical approaches to the work of professional philosophy and of philosophical aesthetics, and personal and professional loyalties. The aim will be the work out a sense of the author's inheritance of Kivy's influence, beyond the straightforward questions of shared or overlapping philosophical projects.

-May 23, 2018