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Ethics and the Emotions: An Introduction to the Special Issue

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ABSTRACT

This introduction provides brief outlines of the articles collected in this special issue of the International Journal of Philosophical Studies on the topic of Ethics and Emotions. It also announces the winners of the 2021 Robert Papazian and PERITIA prizes.

KEYWORDS Ethics; emotions; PERITIA; climate; trust; blame; love

Our emotional and ethical lives are intertwined. Many important forms of ethically significant engagements with others involve emotion. Blame, for example, manifests itself in negative emotional attitudes like resentment and guilt; love manifests itself in a pattern of caring emotions concerned with the beloved. More generally, our expressive behaviours and emotional reactions are responsive to the value of the situations we find ourselves in: we respond to kindness with gratitude, and to injustice and an increasingly insecure world with fear and anger. Moreover, our nature as emotional and socially connected creatures makes us vulnerable in certain ways: our trust in others can be betrayed, and we can be maliciously led to doubt the aptness of our emotional responses to the world.

This special issue explores some important connections between ethics and the emotions. The nine articles collected here address the following three themes:

- (i) *Blame, Responsibility and Forgiveness.*
- (ii) *Love, and Responses to Value.*
- (iii) *Emotional Harm and Environmental Danger.*

Blame, Responsibility and Forgiveness

The first theme concerns the nature of blame and blameworthiness. The three articles collected in this thematic block advance our understanding of the nature of blame, when blame and responsibility are appropriate, and the ways that time affects blameworthiness and the possibility of forgiveness.

The first prize winner of the 2021 Robert Papazian Prize is Amy Sepinwall's 'Shared Guilt Among Intimates'. The article investigates the puzzling phenomenon of guilt felt by the loved ones of those who have committed wrongs. What is puzzling about this form of *shared guilt* is that it appears to violate an otherwise plausible 'fault principle' according to which blameworthiness for a wrong requires having contributed to the wrong. How, then, can shared guilt by those not at fault be rational when they are not blameworthy?

Sepinwall argues that it is sometimes morally appropriate for loved ones of those who have committed wrongs to judge themselves blameworthy. It is proposed that intimate relationships involve *shared agency* where the projects, aims and acts of any individual are shared with those to whom they are intimately related. Sepinwall motives the possibility that first-person judgements of responsibility bear on the appropriateness of the assessment of responsibility by third parties. There are then reasons to treat the loved ones of wrongdoers as partly blameworthy too. These arguments constitute a novel challenge to a foundational 'fault principle' often taken to govern the attribution of blame.

The runner-up and second winner of the 2021 Robert Papazian Prize is Edgar Phillips's 'Addressing the Past: Time, Blame and Guilt'. In this article, Phillips explores how the course of time affects the blameworthiness of an agent for past actions. The article examines the 2020 trial and conviction of 93-year-old Bruno Dey for his role as a Nazi concentration camp guard over seventy years ago. Some expressed an ambivalent response to the trial. For example, Ben Cohen, who attended on behalf of his grandmother Judy Meisel, claimed that while the punishment was appropriate, the lateness of the trial meant that it was 'too late for questions of forgiveness'. What explains the kind of ambivalence felt in cases like this where justice is brought 'too late'? How, if at all, does time affect the blameworthiness of an individual like Dey?

According to one view, the blameworthiness of an agent depends on the presence of a morally significant psychological flaw in the agent (Khoury and Matheson 2018). Time affects blameworthiness to the extent that the agent is more or less similar to her past self. Phillips argues that anchoring blameworthiness in features of the blamed individual's psychology mischaracterises the source of the ambivalence felt in response to cases like Dey's. Drawing on 'processual' accounts of backwards-looking emotions, Phillips

offers us a new perspective on which time matters insofar as it affects the possibility for morally reparative processes by which emotions like anger, resentment and remorse can be resolved. According to this view, the ambivalence felt toward Dey's late trial is not the result of uncertainty we feel about the extent to which the 93-year-old Dey has changed, but about the very possibility of moral repair and forgiveness.

In 'Blame as a Sentiment', Marta Johansson Werkmäster considers a foundational question about blame: what is it to blame someone? The article develops objections against accounts of blame that identify it with judgements, overt actions or anger directed at the individual blamed. Werkmäster develops a non-reductive account of blame as a *sentiment*. On this non-reductive account, blame is to be identified with a multi-track disposition, one with a set of manifestation conditions that include characteristic emotions like resentment, indignation and guilt, characteristic actions like demands for excuses and social withdrawal and characteristic thoughts like judgements about blameworthiness.

Love and Responses to Value

The second theme concerns the nature of love and, more generally, our emotional responses to value. The three contributions in this thematic block consider the relationship between love and care, whether love is a rational response to the value of the beloved, as well as the nature of our reasons for expressive action and emotional responses.

A major area of dispute in the philosophical literature on love concerns its relationship with rationality and reasons. Rationalist accounts treat love as a response to the value of the beloved (e.g. Kolodny 2003). On such a view, we love *for reasons*. In contrast, arational accounts hold that while there are explanatory reasons why one falls in love, love itself is not a response motivated by an appreciation of those reasons (e.g. Frankfurt, 2004). Natasha McKeever and Joe Saunders's 'Irrational Love' corrects a prevalent tendency in both camps to neglect *irrational* aspects of love and to regard them as defective elements of loving relationships. McKeever and Saunders argue that basic elements of love such as whom we love, how much we love them, and the relative importance of romantic relationships can often be irrational. While these elements are irrational, they can constitute valuable features of loving relationships.

Pilar Lopez-Cantero's 'Non-Harmonious Love' challenges an influential style of account of love as entailing *care* toward the beloved. Helm (2010), for example, proposes that love involves 'intimate identification', that is, concern for the beloved as the particular person they are. Lopez-Cantero argues that accounts of love that centralise care for the identity of the beloved are unrealistic. The article explores cases of *non-harmonious* love; for example,

where one individual loves another in spite of the beloved holding values that are contrary to their own well-being, holding values that conflict with their partner's, or simply values that do not interest or resonate with the lover. In highlighting such cases, Lopez-Cantero advocates a reorientation of philosophical analyses of love, moving us away from unrealistic ideals and toward analyses that centralise not just the beloved, but the lover.

The third essay in this thematic block zooms out to consider the expressive actions that pervade our social life: thanking, consoling, congratulating, protesting, and so on. Such expressive acts are intimately connected with emotion insofar as they are typical ways in which we *express* emotions like gratitude, regret, anger and so on. While many such acts are quotidian, they can be enormously significant. Take, for example, Colin Kaepernick's taking the knee during the national anthem as a gesture of protest against police brutality and racism. What is the nature of such reasons for action, and how are they related to other practical reasons? In 'Could There be Expressive Reasons?', Chris Bennett argues that reasons for expression acts are *sui generis* and cannot be subsumed under more commonly recognised categories of practical reasons. Chris Bennett develops an account of such reasons according to which they are grounded in the value of a certain situation that speaks in favour of certain expressive actions. Expressive actions, then, mark or highlight the value of a situation in a symbolically adequate fashion.

Emotional Harm and Environmental Danger

The third theme concerns the kinds of harm that we can suffer in virtue of our vulnerability as emotional creatures, and further explores our complex emotional responses to the existential threat of climate change.

'Gaslighting', a term which originates from the 1944 film *Gaslight*, refers to psychological manipulation by an abuser designed to gradually lead a victim to doubt the deliverances of their psychological capacities. Katharina Anna Sodoma's 'Emotional Gaslighting and Affective Empathy' explores the phenomenon of *emotional* gaslighting which refers to manipulation designed to undermine a victim's trust in their emotional reactions and evaluative judgements. How should we respond to victims whose trust in their emotional capacities has been maliciously undermined? Sodoma argues that affective empathy can counteract the effects of emotional gaslighting. Affective empathy with the emotional reactions of a victim involves representing the victim's emotional reaction in imagination and engaging with them from the victim's point of view. Sodoma argues that affective empathy can counteract the effects of affective gaslighting because it allows reassurance to be given, restoring the victim's confidence in their emotional reactions.

The second article in this thematic block examines betrayal and its relationship with trust. According to an increasingly popular view, trust in others involves making oneself vulnerable to the possibility of betrayal of trust when trust is breached. Rowland Stout's 'Betrayal, Trust and Loyalty' develops an account of betrayal that challenges this view. While betrayal does involve breaches of trust, Stout argues that a breach of trust alone is not sufficient for betrayal.

To make sense of this possibility, Stout develops an account of trust as reliance on others as part of collaborative activity. Collaborative activities can include short-term projects like winning a football match, but also stable long-term enterprises like maintaining a romantic relationship or friendship. Stout's key insight is that breaches of trust that amount to betrayal take place within the context of collaborative activities that require *loyalty*. Monogamous romantic relationships, for example, involve a commitment to loyalty, in particular, to retaining the exclusivity of the relationship. Infidelity constitutes betrayal because it violates what is at the heart of such relationships: trust in the loyalty of the other.

Finally, we have the winner of the 2021 *PERITIA* prize: Julia Mosquera and Kristi M. Jylhä's *How to Feel About Climate Change? An Analysis of the Normativity of Climate Emotions*. Faced with the emergency of climate change, there is public disagreement about how we should emotionally respond: what kinds of positive or negative emotions are appropriate? And to what degree? Can it be rational to be hopeful in the face of an increasingly desperate situation?

The right answers to these questions have the potential to alter our self-understanding, as well as affect the interpersonal trust on which collective action needed to tackle climate change depends. In this article, Mosquera and Jylhä provide the conceptual tools to better understand the normativity of our emotional responses to climate change – our 'climate emotions'. Drawing extensively on the philosophical and psychological literature on emotions, Mosquera and Jylhä consider how a more sophisticated framework for understanding the normative properties of emotional states like the fittingness and warrant allows us to better understand our complex, often ambivalent, climate emotions.

On the Prizes

The Robert Papazian Prize

The Robert Papazian Annual Essay Prize on Themes from Ethics and Political Philosophy was established in 2012 in memory of a young political activist who was executed in Iran in 1982. Papazian was born to an Armenian family in Tehran, Iran in 1954. He studied Politics and International

Relations at *École des Relations Internationales* in Paris. Like many other political activists abroad, Papazian returned to Iran in the summer of 1978, to join the uprising against the Shah. After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he continued his political activism in Tehran and then in the Kurdistan Province of Iran as a political and theoretical instructor to a left-wing opposition group. Papazian was identified by a former activist turned collaborator on the streets of Tehran and was arrested in February 1982. Two weeks prior to his arrest he had turned 28. In prison, he, along with thousands of other political prisoners was not granted any legal representation nor was he permitted to have visitors. Years later the family found out that a representative of the Armenian Council had been allowed to pay a visit to ask him to recant and cooperate with the authorities as a condition of his freedom. He had refused the offer categorically.

Robert Papazian, along with a number of other political prisoners, was executed in July 1982. He was buried anonymously in the mass graves of the Khavaran cemetery in the outskirts of Tehran. However, the date of his execution as well as the exact location of his interred body are unknown. His last letter to the family, sent two or three days before his execution, indicates that he still had no knowledge of the verdict. Robert Papazian's political activism was motivated by his hatred of injustice and cruelty. He cared deeply for others and was affected by their suffering. His short life was guided, above all else, by a desire to defend the weak and vulnerable. The themes for this annual competition are chosen to reflect his life and ideals. The Papazian annual prize is funded by a donation from the Papazian family.

The PERITIA Prize

The multi-disciplinary research project, PERITIA – Policy, Expertise and Trust in Action, funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, is an international research project exploring the conditions under which people trust expertise used for shaping public policy. Its team members, philosophers, social and natural scientists, policy experts, ethicists, psychologists, media specialists and civil society organisations, from Armenia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom, investigate the role of science in policy decision-making and the conditions under which people should trust and rely on expert opinion. The key hypothesis of the project is that affective and normative factors play a central role in decisions to trust, even in cases where judgements of trustworthiness may seem to be grounded in epistemic considerations, such as professional reputation, reliability and objectivity. The PERITIA Essay Prize is funded by the Centre for Ethics in Public Life at University College Dublin and reflects some of the main themes and interests of the project.

The 2022 Call for the Prizes

The Robert Papazian Prize in Ethics and Politics was launched in 2011, with a generous donation from the Papazian family. From modest beginnings of a single prize, over the last 11 years, the competition has grown to a multi-award major publishing event resulting in the publication of a number of special issues and edited books. The PERITIA essay prize was added to the competition in 2019, upon the launch of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation project Policy, Expertise and Trust in Action (PERITIA). The 2022 call for submissions and the publication of the winning and runner up articles in a special issue of IJPS in 2023 will mark the end of these two competitions. The editors of the special issues and the journal would like to thank all those who contributed to the process, in particular the many referees of the competitions, for their invaluable work. To mark this special occasion, the monetary award for the 2022 Robert Papazian competition has been increased to €3000 and that of the PERITIA prize to €2000. At the discretion of the referees, runner up and early career prizes may also be awarded.

The Theme for the 2022 Robert Papazian Prize is

The Ethics and Politics of Disagreement

Disagreement is a pervasive, at times intractable, feature of ethics and politics. Understanding and addressing means to overcome or accommodate such disagreements remain major philosophical and practical tasks. Essays are invited to address philosophical questions arising from disagreement in ethics and politics from all relevant areas of philosophy, including metaethics, moral epistemology, political philosophy and political epistemology, value theory, social epistemology as well as normative and applied ethics. Papers discussing the increasingly toxic features of political disagreement and how to overcome them are also welcome.

The Theme for the 2022 PERITIA Prize is

Expert Disagreement

Topics may include but are not limited to the following:

What are the best ways to understand and deal with peer disagreement among experts?

How should we choose between advice and opinion given by dissenting peer experts?

What is the impact of disagreement among scientific experts on trust in their advice?

What is impact of expert disagreement on policy decisions?

The sources of peer expert disagreement.

Resolution of peer expert disagreement.

Intractability of peer expert disagreement.

Terms and Conditions

Scholarly essays from all philosophical approaches – analytic, continental, and historical are invited. You do not need to specify which prize category applies.

Word limit: 8000–10,000 words, including notes and references.

The Closing Date for Submissions is 30 January 2023

Please submit your paper by email directly to Professor Maria Baghramian at Maria.Baghramian@ucd.ie, using the subject line ‘IJPS Ethics and Politics of Disagreement’.

Make sure that the essay is modified for double blind review and that it has an abstract (200 words).

Terms and Conditions

Submissions should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere and should not be submitted to any other journal until the outcome of the competition is known.

All submitted papers will be evaluated, in the first instance, by the journal’s editorial board. The shortlisted papers will be judged by external referee(s). The jury will evaluate the entries on the originality of the paper, its engagement with the announced topics, the contribution it makes to scholarship in the field, the quality of the argumentation and its conceptual clarity.

The decision of the jury will be final. The jury reserves the right to award no prizes at all if submitted material is not of an appropriate standard.

The winning articles will appear in the 2023 volume of the *International Journal of Philosophical Studies (IJPS)*. All shortlisted papers will also be considered for publication in a special issue of the journal.

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Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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