

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY'S 24TH ANNUAL GRADUATE CONFERENCE

The Ethics of (Un)Civil Protest



 APRIL 6TH, 2024

MARQUETTE HALL 115 | HYBRID

9-9:15 AM OPENING REMARKS

9:15-10:45 AM SESSION 1

**Navigating Multiple Identities in Israeli Civil Protest:
Ethical Inquiries and Global Perspectives**

Noah Kupper

Comments: Ian Hosbach

**(Un)settling the Boundaries of Political Action:
Challenging Hannah Arendt's Constraints on Human
Freedom and Exploring Sylvia Wynter's Path Beyond Man**

Sophia Kanaan

Comments: Ibtisam Abujad

11 AM-12:30 PM SESSION 2

**Decentering the Middle Ground in
Political Argumentation**

Urna Chakrabarty

Comments: Dominique Turnipseed

What is "Crossing the Picket Line"?

Rick Lamb

Comments: Xander Vaughn





12:30-2 PM

LUNCH

2-3:30 PM

SESSION 3

Tracking Cases of Silencing in Response to Silent Protest

Z Tobias

Comments: Emily Lange

Dissenting with No Words: On the Power of Silence

Wangchen Zhou

Comments: Patrick Monogue

3:45-5 PM

KEYNOTE

On the Radical Occupation of Liberalism: A Revisionist Historical Materialism?

Rafael Vizcaíno

Moderator: Cameron Roman



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MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY'S 24TH ANNUAL GRADUATE CONFERENCE

The Ethics of (Un)Civil Protest

NAVIGATING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES IN ISRAELI CIVIL PROTEST: ETHICAL INQUIRIES AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

This paper explores the constructs of identity, belonging, and home through protest and resistance engaging with the scholarship of Mariana Ortega, Maria Lugones, Edward Said, and Hannah Arendt. Through examining Jewish and Arab experiences, particularly within the contexts of Zionism and national narratives, the paper critiques the efforts to purify identity and homeland, highlighting the reductionist and often exclusionary nature of such endeavors. It proposes that protest and resistance are essential in contesting these simplifications and facilitating a reimagining of 'home' linked to Lugones's concept of the multiplicitous self. By invoking the critical insights of Lugones's and Ortega's feminist phenomenology alongside Said's critique of nationalist purity and Arendt's reflections on statelessness and belonging, this paper advocates for a purity resistant oriented praxis that embraces the impurity of belonging and identity

NOAH KUPPER, THEY/HIM

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Noah is an MA in philosophy and a concentration in psychoanalysis, focuses on decolonial theory and feminism. They attend shows, write music, and find joy in cooking.

(UN)SETTLING THE BOUNDARIES OF POLITICAL ACTION: CHALLENGING HANNAH ARENDT'S CONSTRAINTS ON HUMAN FREEDOM AND EXPLORING SYLVIA WYNTER'S PATH BEYOND MAN

This essay critically reevaluates Hannah Arendt's notion of political action, focusing on its limitations derived from using the Ancient Greek polis and the American Revolution as exemplars. I argue that Arendt's concept of freedom is narrowly defined, overlooking the reproduction of coloniality within her

framework. In contrast, Sylvia Wynter's idea of autopoetic freedom presents a comprehensive alternative that challenges the colonial underpinnings of Arendt's thought. I critique Arendt's division between necessity and freedom, showing how this dichotomy inherently supports the oppression of marginalized groups under the guise of political purity. By imposing a false separation between the social and the political, Arendt inadvertently legitimizes exclusion and dehumanization. Wynter's framework disrupts this binary, offering a vision of human freedom that embraces the sociogenic principle, thus advocating for a political model that recognizes the interconnectedness of human actions across both public and private realms. This perspective allows for a broader, more inclusive understanding of political agency and the legitimacy of resisting subjugation, challenging the Eurocentric humanism of Arendt's philosophy.

SOPHIA KANAAN, SHE/HER

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Sophia Kanaan, a second-year Master's student at the New School for Social Research, specializes in decolonial feminist philosophy, philosophy of language, and social ontology. Holding a BA in Philosophy from Loyola Marymount, Sophia is dedicated to exploring intersections of language, society, and identity through a decolonial lens.

DECENTERING THE MIDDLE GROUND IN POLITICAL ARGUMENTATION

In liberal democratic cultures of political argumentation, middle-ground views are often held to be neutral and thus fair, while more extreme positions are seen as "political" or biased. I argue that this characterization of the middle ground constitutes a methodologically biased approach to political debate, one that ignores how the call to meet in the middle impinges unequally on different social groups, based on their relative marginalization. I offer three reasons against imbuing the middle ground with inherent political virtue. First, I question its purported neutrality; second, I show how illegitimate calls to meet in the middle are premised on the forced symmetrization of incompatible positions as "two sides of a story"; and third, I analyze the dehumanizing impact of illegitimate calls to meet in the middle in terms of the constraints to which they subject the ethical and epistemic agency of marginalized parties.

URNA CHAKRABARTY, SHE/HER

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Urna works mainly in ethics, epistemology, and feminist theory.

WHAT IS “CROSSING THE PICKET LINE”?

In this paper, I offer an account of what it is to “cross the picket line” in the broad, metaphorical sense. I take this question to be not only of theoretical interest, but also of practical interest to workers involved in present and future labor disputes. I reject one intuitive account, which holds that whether an action crosses the picket line is simply determined by the opinion of the relevant labor union. Against this view, I argue that labor unions can be mistaken about which actions cross their picket line. As an alternative proposal, I sketch an account that I call “Solidarity Theory”: an action crosses a union’s picket line if, only if, and because it breaks solidarity with or among the union’s workers.

RICK LAMB, HE/HIM

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

Rick is a 6th year PhD student at UC Santa Barbara. His research focuses on epistemology and metaethics. His current writing is on moral disagreement. He grew up near Milwaukee, and the thing that gets him out of bed in the morning is his one-year-old son, Ernie.

TRACKING CASES OF SILENCING IN RESPONSE TO SILENT PROTEST

In this essay I track cases of silencing in common responses to silent protest. At the analysis’s center is Kaepernick’s National Anthem protest. This is an illocutionary act which enables him to perform two actions: mourning and defying. Given that kneeling is what constitutes his illocutionary act, demands that he cease kneeling just are demands that he cease mourning and defying; this constitutes illocutionary silencing. His silent protest is silenced. I extend this analysis to other kinds of tone policing, which confront protesters with two options, both of which entail silencing. I provide reasons for thinking that silent protest is an important ability to have, especially for those facing testimonial

smothering. One problem for smothered individuals is providing evidence of smothering. The performance of silence serves as this evidence and allows protesters to assess testimonial competence before testifying.

Z TOBIAS, THEY/THEM

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Z is working on their PhD in philosophy with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. They work on social epistemology and is especially interested in silencing, testimony, and ignorance. They also have interest in the philosophy of food and in social philosophy of language.

DISSENTING WITH NO WORDS: ON THE POWER OF SILENCE

This paper offers an analysis of the significance of individual silence. After differentiating between spontaneous silence and deliberative silence, I identify three core values of silence. For spontaneous silence, I argue that it can reveal gaps in our existing cognitive frameworks and motivate us to develop more fine-grained moral concepts and attitudes. In the case of deliberative silence, I explain how it can (1) constitute a person's resistance against unwarranted distortions of her inner self, and (2) form an effective communicative act that not only disrupts certain norm-enactments but also builds solidarity among dissenters.

WANGCHEN ZHOU, SHE/THEY

YALE UNIVERSITY

Wangchen a first-year Ph.D. student in Philosophy at Yale. They work on early modern philosophy (esp. Spinoza), social/political epistemology, and critical theory.

KEYNOTE

ON THE RADICAL OCCUPATION OF LIBERALISM: A REVISIONIST HISTORICAL MATERIALISM?

This talk develops an interpretation of what it means to “occupy” liberalism for the purposes of a radical agenda, as it was conceived by the Jamaican philosopher Charles W. Mills. Reading Mills’ call within the context of his earlier Marxist commitments, the talk proposes that the occupation of liberalism could be conceived as a genuine attempt to advance a revised historical materialism not just for the twenty-first century, but for the foreseeable future. Overall, Mills’ late liberal turn should not be conceived as an abandonment of the radical aspirations of his earlier work, but as a new attempt to fulfill them.

RAFAEL VIZCAÍNO

An assistant professor in the philosophy department at DePaul University, Vizcaíno specializes in Latin American and Caribbean thought. He examines race, religion, politics, and secularization through decolonial approaches. In 2020, he earned the American Philosophical Association’s Essay Prize in Latin American Thought. He holds Ph.D. and M.A. degrees from Rutgers, and a B.A. from Northwestern University.

