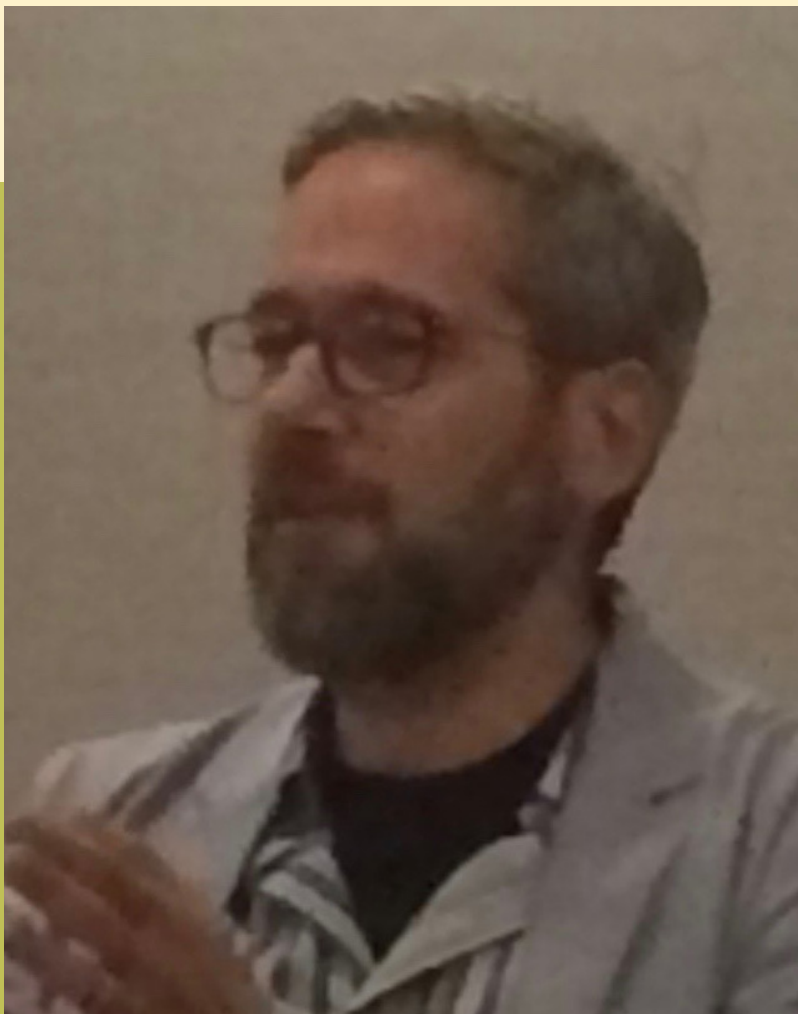


HUMBOLDT CONVERSATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY

15:15-18:00
GWZ H2 1.16

JULY 25



Marcus works chiefly in the philosophy of mind and action, but also has active research interests in epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics and the philosophy of language. He is the author of numerous articles and a book, *Rational Causation* (Harvard U Press). He is currently working on a second book, tentatively entitled *Belief, Inference and the Self-Conscious Mind*.

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INFERENCE AS CONSCIOUSNESS OF NECESSITY

Consider the following three claims:

- (i) There are no truths of the form 'p and \sim p'.
- (ii) No one holds a belief of the form 'p and \sim p'.
- (iii) No one holds any pairs of beliefs of the form {p, \sim p}.

Irak Kimhi has recently argued, in effect, that each of these claims holds and holds with metaphysical necessity. Further, he maintains that they are ultimately not distinct claims at all, but the same claim formulated in different ways. I find his argument suggestive, if not entirely transparent. I do think there is at least a grain of truth even to (iii), and that a common explanation underlies all three. Consciousness of a metaphysical impossibility makes belief in the obtaining of the corresponding state of affairs a metaphysical impossibility. Interestingly, an appreciation of this fact brings into view a novel conception of inference, according to which it consists in the consciousness of a metaphysical necessity. This essay outlines and defends this position. A central element of the defense is that it reveals how reasoners satisfy what Paul Boghossian the Taking Condition and do so without engendering regress.

For more information, additional reading and registration please contact:
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