

AMA Announcement: Wednesday 4/5 11AM EST - L.A. Paul (UNC Chapel Hill) on transformative experiences, rationality and authenticity

ADefiniteDescription¹ and r/Science AMAs¹

¹Affiliation not available

April 17, 2023

Abstract

As previously announced, /r/philosophy is hosting an AMA series this Spring semester which will host AMAs by a number of world class academic philosophers working in a variety of different areas of contemporary philosophy. Check out our series announcement post to see blurbs for all the AMAs lined up this semester. You can also check out last semester's series announcement post to see all the AMAs from Fall 2016. So far this semester we've had AMAs by Amie L. Thomasson on metaphysics, philosophy of mind and philosophy of art, available here, Samantha Brennan on normative and feminist ethics, available here, Chris W. Surprenant on moral/political philosophy, available here, S. Matthew Liao on ethics, bioethics and neuroethics, available here, David Chalmers on consciousness, technology and various areas of philosophy, available here, Lisa Bortolotti on irrationality and the philosophy of mind, available here and Shannon Vallor on philosophy of technology and science, available here. We continue our Spring 2017 Series this upcoming Wednesday with an AMA by L.A. Paul (UNC - Chapel Hill). Hear it from her: L.A. Paul I'm a philosopher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill whose main interests are in metaphysics, phenomenology, and cognitive science. If you want to know more about me, here's my website, an interview about my research interests with 3am magazine, and an interview with more personal sorts of questions at NewAPPS. Much of my recent work focuses on the nature of experience and its role in constructing the self. I'm especially interested in exploring the way that some experiences can be transformative. Transformative experiences are momentous, life-changing experiences that shape who we are and what we care about. Going to war, winning the lottery, having a baby, losing your faith, or being spiritually reborn are all experiences that transform us epistemically, and through the epistemic transformations they bring, such experiences change us personally. Massive epistemic change can restructure who you are and what you care about. When you have a transformative experience, something new is revealed to you—what's like to be in that situation or what it's like to have that experience. Once you discover this, you discover how you'll respond, and in particular, who you'll become as the result of the transformation. In this sense, an exploration of transformative experience is also an exploration of the self, since we are exploring the way that experience allows us to discover who we are and what we care about. We discover new features of reality through experience, and this discovery turns us back into a new understanding of our own selves. I prefer to work on these philosophical questions using somewhat technical and formal tools from contemporary philosophy drawn from metaphysics, epistemology, decision theory, and the philosophy of mind. I'm also interested in empirical work in cognitive science, statistics, and psychology, and I try to bring relevant empirical research to bear on my conceptual work. I see myself as a defender of the importance of phenomenology and lived experience, but within a context that emphasizes the use of formal tools and empirically informed research combined with analytical metaphysics to frame and tackle philosophical problems. I've done a lot of work in the past on the nature of time and the metaphysics of causation and counterfactuals, and that work also informs the project of transformative experience in some obvious and some not-so-obvious ways. Recent Links: There have been a number of good discussions in the media of transformative experience. Here are a few, and there are more links on my website. In the New Yorker, Joshua Rothman discusses impossible decisions and the transformative experience of seeing color for the first time In the Wall Street Journal, Alison Gopnik discusses my original argument about the transformative nature of becoming a parent here In The New York Times, David Brooks discusses my book The Philosopher's Zone has a fun podcast

about transformative experience here OUP Book Thanks to OUP, you can save 30% Professor L.A. Paul's new book by using promocode AAFLYG6 on the oup.com site, while the series is ongoing: Transformative Experience AMA Professor Paul will join us Wednesday for a live Q&A on 4/5 at 11AM EST. Please feel free to post questions for her here. She will look at this thread before she starts and begin with some questions from here while the initial questions in the new thread come in. Please join me in welcoming Professor Paul our community!

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L.A. Paul

I'm a philosopher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill whose main interests are in metaphysics, phenomenology, and cognitive science. If you want to know more about me, here's [my website](#), an interview about my research interests with [3am magazine](#), and an interview with more personal sorts of questions at [NewAPPS](#).

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[The Philosopher's Zone has a fun podcast about transformative experience here](#)

OUP Book

Thanks to OUP, you can **save 30% Professor L.A. Paul's new book by using promocode AAFLYG6** on the oup.com site, while the series is ongoing:

[Transformative Experience](#)

AMA

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