

## **Transcript**

**Speaker 1:** [inaudible]

**Speaker 2:** [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible]

**Speaker 3:** [00:00:30] good afternoon everybody. Today on the graduates. [inaudible] discusses all things, language and philosophy and what we ought to do. Stay tuned.

**Speaker 2:** [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [00:01:00] [inaudible]

**Speaker 3:** hello everybody and welcome to the graduates a radio, so dedicated to graduate student research here at cal. You're tuned to University of California and listener supported k a l x 90.7 I'm your host, Emily ehlers, the graduate student myself. This week we'll be speaking with February [00:01:30] CEO Kariani, a graduate student in the philosophy department working on a philosophical model for what we ought to do. Thanks for joining us for Buzios. Thank you very much. First, what is the philosophical model of the word art? Yes. Well, let me just say something in general about what is it to give a philosophical model about some fragment of language, right? So we have this project, which is to explain how language works, right? Then this is a project that philosophers share with other people like linguists and [00:02:00] maybe cognitive scientists as well. But so that's the very general line of work, right?

**Speaker 3:** And now within this line of work, there's a pretty strong division of labor or certain people work in certain things that are gonna be working on other things. And so one thing that I've been working on, which is something at the intersection of what linguists and philosophers do, is to think about the questions like given a fragment of language, you know, given a certain piece of natural language, how we see that the sentences that we can express [00:02:30] using this fragment of language, uh, get their meaning. All right. You know, how did their meaning depend on their structure and in particular the meaning of the particular words that compose them? Right? And uh, this is gonna be interesting because it gets you into question about how is it you're going to explain things like, uh, well, uh, the way in which information is transmitted from one person to the other and what kind of information is it that's communicated by certain sentences?

**Speaker 3:** And that's the kind of thing that we're trying to represent, right? So somebody [00:03:00] of how the sentences, the meanings of sentences depending on the structure and somebody of how sentences get to communicate information. Okay. Like other parts of science, we tried to give former models of this and a, this is the line of business that, I mean, so, and, uh, my, my little chunk of this business, you know, my little garden is how art works and how wards that in general involve something like normativity and how they work. And that's, that's Kinda my, my deal [00:03:30] courtyard. So how does art

work then? There is a kind of a traditional theory, which is the theory that they're resisting my dissertation, which what it tries to do is say that this sentence is involving odd. Uh, they're kind of like disguise claims about what's necessary in an ideal world.

**Speaker 3:** So that when I say I ought to water my plants, what I'm actually communicating is something like that. In an ideal world, I wouldn't necessarily be watering my plants. [00:04:00] Okay. So this is an attempt to explain how art works in terms of this notion of ideology and this notion of necessity. Okay. Uh, so I have some techie arguments, which this is not the right venue for them, uh, which try to oppose this kind of view. And so what I try the viewer tried to defend is a view on which this claims involving art actually express comparisons between different actions. So that when I say something like I ought to water my plants, what I mean is I ought [00:04:30] to water my plants as opposed to maybe, uh, pouring sand on them or burning them underground so that there is kind of always an implicit contrast class, you know, a reference, well, a class that gives you alternative options you could have pursued in this art claims at least insofar as there are certain uses of art, which are a bit bizarre if you have an analysis like that.

**Speaker 3:** So there some coroners of Medisafe station in which I say some strange [00:05:00] things about what goes on with things like a sentence when I sent, it's like, there ought to be no wars. Right? That's a sentence that involves or not, but it's not like a sentence that involves a choice between different courses of action. Right. It's not, it's not saying somebody, some agent should make it the case that there are no wars in a sense. It's a universal sentence. It has to do with what everybody ought to do. Does that make sense? But the basic picture I'm defending is this picture in which the normal [00:05:30] kinds of art sentences, the one like I ought to water my flowers. Uh, they express comparisons between different courses of actions. And then for these other sentences, I'll say something fancy in the dissertation. So if there's not a unified model of art, what's the alternative?

**Speaker 3:** Understand their view. And they built, that was defending before they tried to give a unified model of arts because both sentences, they mentioned the watering the flowers sentence and the, there ought to be no word sentence, [00:06:00] both of the sentence. You could think you could try to three with this idea of ideology. You could say, well, ideally it's necessary. You know, if the world were to be ideal, it would be necessary that there shouldn't be worse in the world or something. So those people who use that theory try to give a unified account. So, but I have some, since I have some objections to that theory, I'm sort of skeptical of the possibility of having a unified account. So what I've tried to do is do a theory that has some ambitions of generality, but it's not the most possible, most [00:06:30] general possible theory. It only graduates at 90.7 cal X.

**Speaker 3:** We're speaking with Fabrizio Kariani and philosophy doctorate student and his dissertation studying art models. What are your objections to the universal art model? One of the things we want to explain with these models that the kinds of models that are use is why is it that inferences are acceptable? Okay, so here's an example from the

sentence. Everybody ought to water the flowers. It follows. It seems like it follows [00:07:00] it is to be my flowers, right? That's the kind of thing they are. Theory should explain why is it that these kinds of inferences are things that we accept. This transitions between thoughts are things we accept. Okay? But now there's also a way of sort of failing at this, which is not just feeling to explain the accessibility of some inference, but also predicting the accessibility of a lot of other inferences that you shouldn't be predicting.

**Speaker 3:** Alright. And here's where the standard theory goes wrong, but it gets complicated [00:07:30] to explain why it goes wrong. But basically the standard theory predicts that from the sentence, I ought to water my flowers, it follows that I ought to either water my flowers or kill a random pedestrian in the road. It has bizarre consequences about what kinds of art claims follows from other art claims. Basically predicts that whenever, whenever an auth claim is true, like I ought to water my flowers, it follows from that, that I ought to do anything that follows from my watering the flowers. [00:08:00] So in particular, among the things that follow from watering the flowers is that I either wanted the flowers or killed the random pedestrian. Uh, so that's the kind of general line of production. I understand it could get a bit complicated to see why there would be these consequences, but, uh, but that's one consequence of that.

**Speaker 3:** Can I just ask you on that briefly? I don't understand how the two are even related. Like, I don't know that I would say I ought to water my flowers or I'm going to kill a pedestrian. I don't know. Well, it's not something [00:08:30] you would say because, well, I chose the example so that the second sentence would be kind of a dramatic sentence. Uh, but you could pick an example in which the, the, what would come after the war instead of killing random pedestrian was something else that was more relevant. So you could think, uh, from the claim I ought to water my flowers. He follows on this view that they ought to either my flowers or killed them. The flowers. Right. That's still relevant. I mean, were [00:09:00] you found bizarre about that sentence that I gave you? Was that the thing after they all seemed like it was had nothing to do with the rest of the sentence, but, but the view still predicts, predicts that for every sentence like that you should still follows from it or toward the flowers.

**Speaker 3:** So including again, I ought to water my flowers or cut them off. So that's, that's the general line of objection. It's actually not even an objection. That's original with me. It's an objection that basically goes back to the 1940s throughout this period there has been the general belief that you could [00:09:30] sort of explain away the apparent badness of these inferences using some other parts of the theory. Because the theory is very complicated as is you're getting a sensor and the, so there's, you know, a lot of knobs you can turn to try to have things come out right. And people have wanted to turn some knobs. And so part of the argument of the dissertation is to say, well, you can turn the knobs that way. But that's basically the general reason why I think these few failed and way a prefer a view of the kind that I was describing before in which art sentences express [00:10:00] comparisons between courses of actions.

**Speaker 3:** What I'm trying to do is trying to use this idea of comparison, which is an idea that people have used in philosophy in trying to explain other how other parts of language work. And uh, so people have tried to say that, uh, claims about knowledge express comparisons so that, you know, I may know that the animal in the garden is a tiger rather than a zebra. Uh, and that's the deaths. The knowledge has this kind [00:10:30] of comparison built into it. Uh, similarly people have wanted to say that causation has basically these, there's lots of parts of language that intuitively it looks likely involved comparisons of some kind. And so what I tried to do is use the models that people have developed or look at them, all of the models that people have developed for this part of language and try to have them to the problem that I've been working on on this, normally bits of length.

**Speaker 3:** So why does it matter that art has multiple definitions [00:11:00] there? There's actually a lot of different interesting uses of art. Philosophers have, you know, have distinguished them all in class. You know, sort of come up with a like big classification of all kinds of uses of art. People have distinguished, for example, what philosophers called the instrumental art from a have what they call a categorical art. So the idea is that the instrumental artist, what would the one that expresses what you ought to do, given some kind of goals that you may have. So for example, you know, supposing that, do you [00:11:30] really want to become a good tennis player? Then in a context in which that's presupposed it makes sense for me to tell you you ought to practice, you know, five times a week. But that doesn't mean that sort of, if you were a good moral agent, you would practice five times a week.

**Speaker 3:** You just means, given your goal of becoming a very good tennis player, practicing times a week is the thing you have to do. Contrastingly uh, there is this idea of an absolute art or could they go to cloud, which is, so for example, the, the senses then, Oh, [00:12:00] a sentence. Like I ought to kill children. Sorry, I ought to refrain from killing children. That sentence, uh, there is something which that has a forced that goes beyond some particular goal. I may have, you know, it's an, it's a knot that sort of stems from morality itself. So if lots of folks have distinguished this arts and there is a question when you're doing the kind of work that I'm doing, which is a lot less substantive than the work that philosophers in this tradition of that is how you're gonna do justice to all these distinctions.

**Speaker 3:** So what I tried to do [00:12:30] in my project is to explain some of these distinctions as distinctions between context. So the idea is that there are going to be some context in which it's presupposed that we're talking about somebody goals and then there's going to be other contexts in which what we're talking about is morality itself. Right. And that's how we're going to explain this idea. How do different models of art vary with culture, I mean is it just the United States where we have multiple definitions of art? That's, [00:13:00] that's actually an excellent question and it's very interesting. So this, this things, this things in colleges, the anti concepts like art, they're actually, even in English

there are very different ways of expressing them. You could think for example, that should means the same as art and that's actually roughly with a thing. So that's saying you are to water the flowers and you should are the flowers that that kind of thing is roughly the same thing.

**Speaker 3:** But there is also a use of must which is sort of in this general [00:13:30] line. And so you could say something like you must work the flow. No, you could also have the contracture than must in these use also means the same as art. And Shit. But actually it turns out that some linguists are skeptical about this view. So they think, look, if it meant, if it meant that we wouldn't be able to explain sentences like this, everybody ought to wash their hands. Employees must. All right, so imagine that you're in the bathroom of a restaurant. If must meant the same thing. It seems that the claim that's been made about employees in some time is in some sense [00:14:00] redundant when I say everybody ought to wash their hands. Well that includes employees. So there's nothing to be added by saying and please must. And so that make makes people think, and I, and I sort of agree with that view, that must has all this kind of slightly stronger force than, than art.

**Speaker 3:** Everybody would wash their hands if they were good enough human beings, but the employees get fired if the don't or something. Uh, and so there is a sense in which the must dare is adding something that makes it stronger and under the bizarre [00:14:30] things about this thing has to do with how they go in different languages. So English is actually very special in having this designated word like art for these concepts. I'm actually not sure, for example, that my native language, Italian has a distinct word that means exactly the same like art. And so for example, the distinction within [inaudible] is a bit difficult to explain in the client. And if you were to explain it, you would have to [00:15:00] do all right, seven fencing playing around with the language. So what's bizarre by this is that it sounded like Italians don't have the concept. We do have the concept, but we have to do something special with a, in order with our language in order to explain this quite the same concept.

**Speaker 3:** What is it? Well, so there is a distinction between various modes of, of a verb. So which in English it's kind of hard to describe, but it's roughly the distinction between being negative mode and subjunctive mode and Italian. There's a special mood [00:15:30] which is called the conditional mode. Then is what you're doing apply to Italian or is it strictly specific to the English language? That's a very good question too. Um, it applies to Italian in a roundabout way. In a sense, what I'm trying to do is modeling the behavior of a certain concept of England. Now the concept is express happens to be expressed by, by a particular word. Then in Italian it happens to be a little bit harder to express that same concept. The same concept is like I said, well alive in the minds of Italian native speakers. [00:16:00] So, uh, there's a sense in which the work I'm doing is perfectly relevant to the study of how Italian works because it's a study in a sense of how a particular concept works.

**Speaker 3:** On the other hand, it's not quite as clear as in English. At the very least, it's possible that the same concept could be processed by people speaking different languages. You're listening to the graduates and the University of California and listener supported Kal x 90.7 and [inaudible] CEO Yanni. If you'll ask me graduate students, we had been talking about art and the Arctic models, [00:16:30] but I kind of want to talk about other work that you've done surrounding groups, irrigating individual opinions into collective opinions. This does that. Our work is completely separate from the stuff that they've been doing. It still is connected because it has to do with how you're going to do formal models of various things, but it's a completely different topic. And the topic is this. The question is how are we going to put together the opinions of the members of the members of a group in trying to come up with something like the collective opinion [00:17:00] of the group.

**Speaker 3:** So suppose that the members of the group, for example, disagree. How are we going to come up with a concept of group opinion, which is sensitive to how the disagreement plays out between the members of the group. And so this is a question that has applications to all kinds of fields of studies. So there's some obligations in law and political science and economics and one sort of natural thing you could think is that look, one natural way of coming up with the opinion of the group is by taking the majority of the opinions of the members of the group. If you have [00:17:30] five people and three of them believe that the bus, the 51 went by five minutes ago, well the collective opinion of the group is that the bus came by five minutes ago. Now it turns out that the, this idea of using the majority across the board is problematic because it's actually problematic in a very strong sense in the sense that you could get, he could ascribe to the group a contradictory set of beliefs if you follow the majority.

**Speaker 3:** So for example, suppose that you have two propositions. One is that the philosophy department [00:18:00] should get more Grad students. The other one is that the mathematics department should get more Grad students. Okay. And imagine that a panel of three people trying to decide on these issue. Okay. Now there could be a situation in which there is a majority for the philosophy departments should have more, more Grad students. A majority for the math department should have more grad students, but a minority for the conjunction. So it could be the case that the majority is done overlap. So that maybe person one person, two things that [00:18:30] uh, the philosophy departments should get more Grad students and person two, person three thinks that the math department should get more grad students, but only one person have three things that both departments should get more Grad students. So that you feel if you were to apply this idea of majority across the board here, you would think that the group thinks that the philosophy departments should have more Grad students.

**Speaker 3:** The math department should have markers students but not, not both. Right. But not both departments should have broadcast it. So the project here is to try to understand [00:19:00] how is it that you are going to, on the one hand do justice of this idea, the

majority is something important. And on the other hand, sort of curb the apparent badness of this idea. For me, just majority opinion by performing collective opinion by just flat out, majority tested yet what do they look? What do your models look like? The models themselves, what do they have? The models have sort of people or you know, w, w, w, W and, but more importantly to each person, one tries to associate some [00:19:30] too, like a representation of their opinion. There's various ways of trying to associate it with a personal representation of, of their opinion. And uh, for example, if you go to certain kinds of philosopher, they will tell you that if you want to represent that person's opinion, uh, what you have to consider is which propositions they believe in.

**Speaker 3:** In our example, say number one is represented by the proposition. The fast food department should have more Grad students. The math departments should have fewer grad students and not [00:20:00] both or not. Both departments should have more Grad students. Or if you go to more, uh, sort of science minded people, they will tell you that if you wanted to represent somebody's opinion, you'd have to to use probabilities. So how, how probable there's things are in there of course a lot of variations on both of these ideas. But you start with these materials, you start with some kind of representation of each individual's opinion, which is going to be different representation according to sort of which dogmatic framework [00:20:30] you're that. And once you have the individual opinions, you try to defined a policy, define a procedure that's going to sort of extract collective opinion. How do the I out of the individuals individual opinions, a lot of the formal work actually consistent this, start again with the representation of opinions, trying to impose constraints on what you want.

**Speaker 3:** The degregation function. This is the function that gives you from the individual opinions, give you the collective opinion in post conscience and what that function can [00:21:00] look like and see which constraints are compatible. That's you could publish it, you know, lots of papers doing this. So this is what happens at the formal level. A lot of people figuring out which constructs are compatible. Now at the informal level, the debate to be had is, well, once we know that two constraints are incompatible, what do we do? And there's a lot of argument that basically normally involves just referring to some parts of philosophy to motivate why this country is better than these other constraints. There are in some cases it's already been [00:21:30] referred to particular parts of philosophies matters maybe um, parts of legal theory or political science. It depends on, it partly depends on the application.

**Speaker 3:** What I like about models is that I can do my work and always defend myself by saying, oh, but your objection is not quite the kind of application they had in mind for the model. I like to work on something that a lot of different people could use for different purposes and to eventually the adjudicating between this constraints that I was mentioning before [00:22:00] kind of comes down to understanding exactly what kind of applications do we want to put the model to. And uh, maybe once we know something about the application, we can say something about we, trends of discussions should be

preferred over others. Can you give us an example? Here's the condition. You could impose that your, the members of your group all have the same weight. Okay. So then you're not going to, yes, yes. You're not going to, sorry. No, not their physical.

**Speaker 3:** You're not going to can somebodies [00:22:30] opinion, uh, as more important than somebody else's opinion. Uh, and there are some applications for which this is a wild one. The implausible assumption. Okay. So if you, if your, suppose you're not asking a group of experts, but you're asking a group of sort of people of various x, Oh, you're asking a family, there is a sense in which maybe you could put more trust in the opinion of the parents, then you put in the opinion of the children. I hope this is not a politically [00:23:00] incorrect to say, but you can imagine there have been cases in which some among the members of the group, somebody whose opinion matters more than somebody else, for example, because they studied the subject for years and uh, uh, and the other people did not study the subject for years. So you could imagine there cases in which this assumption would violate it.

**Speaker 3:** The assumption that every, every member of the group has equal weight in Killam giving you the collective opinion. But you should also imagine [inaudible] context in which the assumption should be upheld in a sense, right? So for example, if [00:23:30] you're trying to think of a democratic system and people are trying to make up their opinion about what to do when you want to come up with the collective opinion of some kind of body that's acting democratically, you want to have a rule that gives equal weight to each one of the members of the group. Right? So in that context, I don't think you can negotiate on this idea that uh, the members of the group all that have the same weight. So that that would be an example of a constraint that has different possibility according to which application you're [00:24:00] putting it to.

**Speaker 4:** You're tuned to the graduates on 90.7 k a l. X. I'm Emily ehlers and we're speaking with Fabrizio Kariani, a philosophy graduate student and models of OT and group decision making now for Ruscio. How'd you get into this work?

**Speaker 3:** It's interesting. I started out in philosophy thrilling, some of the most informal work that could possibly be doing. And in fact, when I was an Undergrad, the kinds of things I liked about philosophy, where was where the fact that it was asking big questions and uh, [00:24:30] it was a subject where you could ask about what is existence, does God exist? And you know, all the questions that really philosophers through the centuries have sort of thought were important but sort of very slowly. It's very interesting. I thrived towards the more, I don't want to say number crunching because we don't do much with number but with the more sort of rigorous but also in a way less, uh, independently significant type of philosophical project. And so [00:25:00] I, I think that I got into philosophy for this, for the interest in these very big questions, but slowly my personality of being of Mathy guy or a person who liked math sort of came out and then, and I tried to find the areas of philosophy that had the most balanced between, uh, having some of that sort of ambition, theoretical ambition at the same time for rigor.

**Speaker 3:** And so that's what got me interested in this kinds of topics. And where are you taking it? Do you know what's next? Well, I basically for the next few years, [00:25:30] so we were talking before and I was mentioning that I've been just recently on the dreadful academic dub market for the next few years. I plan to sort of as I moved through the profession to expand this work and try to find new areas of application for somebody. These I've been coming up. So one of the things that I'm interested in on the first project, the one there was about, uh, uh, language. I, I'm interested in figuring out how the bits of language that express desires, uh, is related to the bits of language that [00:26:00] express norms. And so whether the very same ideas that I described or the very same ideas that I adopt in trying to understand how artworks could be used.

**Speaker 3:** Interesting to model how words like one thing and once or desiring hoping how those constructions work. Basically the sort of the, the road ahead is to see how, um, sort of the general lines of explanation can be exported to some other parts of language. And as [00:26:30] far as the get it project, the project on, on testimony and group one group opinion. I basically just want to continue doing it because I've actually been neglecting you a little bit. Uh, when I was considered elaborating the content of my dissertation, maybe release the under language stuff is stuff about group opinion has been a very important but in a sense a side project. You know how how Ben's uh, have side projects and uh, and uh, you know, they put out maybe the band puts out three records and then your side projects puts out one record. Then that's the whole project. [00:27:00] Yeah, that's, that's kind of what the time I'm thinking what, what is this? It's my side project, but it's a project that they really care for and once I'm done I'll get them a dissertation. I just hope to make a stronger contribution than they had so far. Thank you so much for joining me. This is wonderful. Thank you. This has been fantastic.

**Speaker 4:** Yes. You've been listening to the graduates radio show dedicated to graduate student research every Monday from 12 until 1230 on Calex 90.7 my name is Emily Ellers. Thanks for joining us everyone. Do you have any comments or ideas for future guests? Please don't hesitate. Feel free to email me@graduatesdotcadillacsatgmail.com

**Speaker 2:** [00:27:30] [inaudible] [inaudible]

**Speaker 1:** [00:28:00] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible]

**Speaker 2:** [00:28:30] [inaudible]

**Speaker 1:** [inaudible] [00:29:00] [inaudible]

**Speaker 2:** [inaudible] [00:29:30] [inaudible].