

The Social Function of Scoring Systems

WE FIND SCORING SYSTEMS APLENTY IN BOTH GAMES AND INSTITUTIONAL LIFE – IN ALL THE RANKINGS AND METRICS WHICH SURROUND US. WHY ARE SCORES SO COMMON, AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT WE ARE SO OFTEN ENTANGLED IN SCORING SYSTEMS THAT WE DON'T ENTIRELY CONTROL? A SCORE IS A QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION THAT RENDERS A SINGULAR VERDICT. I WILL SUGGEST THAT SCORES HAVE A TYPICAL FUNCTION: THEY FUNCTION AS THE EVALUATION OF SOCIAL RECORD, AND SO FUNCTION TO ENCOURAGE CONVERGENCE ON A SINGULAR EVALUATION. WHEN THEY DO SO OUTSIDE OF GAMES, THEY CAN EXERT SYSTEMATIC PRESSURES ON OUR SOCIAL PROCESSES OF EVALUATIONS. THEY WORK TO SUPPRESS PLURALISM ABOUT VALUE, AND TO DISCOURAGE EVALUATIONS IN VAGUE TERMS, AND THEY ENCOURAGE EVALUATION IN MECHANICALLY REPEATABLE TERMS. IN DOING SO, SCORES CAN ALSO SERVE TO SETTLE KEY CHOICE POINTS IN COLLECTIVE REASONING PROCESSES – WHICH EXPLAINS, IN PART, THE CENTRALITY OF METRICS IN INSTITUTIONAL DELIBERATION.

A Talk By: **Thi Nguyen** of *The University of Utah*

Friday, December 1st, 3:30-5 p.m.

Close-Hipp 303, Reception to follow in

Philosophy Common Area, 5-6 p.m

