

INDIANA PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

Fall 2012 Meeting
16 and 17 November 2012

University of Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana

Meeting Program

Friday, 16 November

	Session A	Session B
11:30am-12pm	<i>Registration</i>	
	Epistemology Chair: Charles McCarty, Indiana University	History/Religion Chair: Eric Dalton, University of Southern Indiana
12-12:55 Speaker: Comments:	“Reliabilism and Suspended Judgment” Peter Murphy (University of Indianapolis) Jared Bates (Hanover College)	“Praiseworthy Akrasia Reconsidered” Matthias Barker (University of Cincinnati) Leigh Viner (Indiana University Southeast)
1-1:55 Speaker: Comments:	“Re-Tooling the Dream Argument” Jonathan Dixon (Virginia Tech) Jonathan Fuqua (Purdue University)	“Laws of Nature and Hume’s Problem of Induction” Alexander Bozzo (Marquette University) Eric Hamm (Purdue University)
2-2:55 Speaker: Comments:	“Making Sense of the Different Senses of Explanation” Danny Pearlberg (Ohio State University) Mark Satta (Purdue University)	“Skeptical Theism Entails Agnosticism” Nevin Climenhaga (Notre Dame) Travis Derico (Indiana University Southeast)
3-4:15	University Lecture “Memory, Identity, and Love” Julia Driver, Washington University, St. Louis	
4:15-4:30	<i>Break (with refreshments)</i>	
	Metaphysics Chair: Jared Bates, Hanover College	Social/Political Chair: Tait Szabo, U of Wisconsin-Washington County
4:30-5:25 Speaker: Comments:	“Deliberation and the Denial of Libertarian Free Will” Mark Satta (Purdue University) Kris Rhodes (Martin University)	“Black Identity and Collective Action” Laura Papish (SUNY- Oswego) Kevin Miles (Earlham College)
5:30-6:25 Speaker: Comments:	“The Need for Absences as Causes” Greg Ackerman (University of Southern California) Danny Pearlberg (Ohio State University)	“Escaping the Modern Soul” Joshua Mills-Knutsen (Indiana University Southeast) Kevin Harrelson (Ball State University)

Saturday, 17 November

	Session A	Session B
8:30-9am	<i>Registration</i>	
	Philosophy of Language Chair: William Bauer, North Carolina State University	Social/Political Chair: Laura Papish, SUNY-Oswego
9-9:55	“On the (Im)possibility of Being a Monkey’s Uncle” Speaker: Louis Gularte (Northern Illinois University) Comments: Mike Koss (Indiana University)	“Against Luck Egalitarianism” Tyler Zimmer (Northwestern University) Phil Osborne (Purdue University)
10-10:55	“(Non-)Counting Statues” Speaker: Michel-Antoin Xhignesse (McGill University) Comments: Ioan Muntean (IPFW)	“Fairness and Voluntary Acceptance” Edward Song (Louisiana State University) Susan Purviance (University of Toledo)
11am-12:15pm	<p style="text-align: center;">IPA Keynote Lecture “A Kantian Account of Moral Complicity” Julia Driver, Washington University, St. Louis</p>	
12:30-2	<i>Lunch Break and Business Meeting</i>	
2-2:10	<i>Special Session</i>	
	Metaphysics Chair: Bryan Hall, Indiana University Southeast	Ethics Chair: Daniel Roach, Kent State University
2:15-3:10	“What Peter Vranas May Not be Able to Do” Speaker: Maria Altepeter (Northern Illinois University) Comments: Charles McCarty (Indiana University)	“Beyond Waiting: Patience and Moral Development” Matthew Pianalto (Eastern Kentucky University) Ben Bryan (Bowling Green State University)
3:15-4:10	“Informing Powers: A New Analysis of Dispositions” Speaker: William Bauer (North Carolina State) Comments: Kris Rhodes (Martin University)	“A Feminist Defense of the Unity of the Virtues” Ben Bryan (Bowling Green State University) Tait Szabo (University of Wisconsin-Washington County)
4:15-5:10	“A Case against Subjectivism” Speaker: Jessica Katz (Bowling Green State University) Comments: Jonathan Dixon (Virginia Tech)	“Moral Sentiments and the Nature of Moral Properties” Eric Vogelstein (Jefferson College of Health Sciences) Kevin Houser (Indiana University)

Abstracts of Presented Papers

“Against Luck Egalitarianism,” Tyler Zimmer, Northwestern University

In this paper I argue that we should reject the popular approach to equality known as “Luck Egalitarianism” for the simple reason that it fails to capture our considered judgments about the wrongness of inequality. To make my case, I draw a distinction between relational and possessive approaches to equality. Relational approaches give primacy to critical evaluation of social relations--structured, as they always are, by institutions of various

kinds--among persons. Possessive approaches, in contrast, give primacy to interpersonal comparisons involving the quantity of privately-consumed goods possessed by different individuals. I associate LE with the possessive approach. With the distinction in mind, I examine a test case to illustrate how LE fails to capture our considered judgments. It is on this basis that I conclude that luck egalitarianism is either implausible or of little use to the egalitarian project. In other words, either LE purports to capture the core of egalitarianism or it does not. If it does, then it fails inasmuch as it finds itself at odds with our considered judgements about what a society of equals would be like. If it does not purport to capture the core of egalitarian politics--e.g. if it addresses only a small subset of egalitarian concerns--then we have little use for it. That is so because we are better placed to address that small subset by means of an overall, coherent account of the egalitarian project--something the relational approach provides but LE cannot. Thus, I conclude that the LE paradigm should be rejected root and branch in favor of a broadly relational approach.

“Beyond Waiting: Patience and Moral Development,” Matthew Pianalto, Eastern Kentucky University
Patience has been neglected by contemporary virtue theorists. This philosophical neglect may have various sources such as Nietzschean suspicion about traditional religious (Christian) virtues as well as the minor place assigned to patience by Aquinas. I argue that one recent analysis of patience starts from an inadequate, artificially narrow definition of patience—as the disposition to accept delays in the satisfaction of our desires—and that patience should be understood to include more than patient waiting. Understood in this broader sense, it becomes easier to recognize that patience is central to the cultivation of virtues and the pursuit of ideals of excellence.

“Black Identity and Collective Action: A Critique of Tommie Shelby’s *We Who Are Dark*,”

Laura Papish, SUNY- Oswego

In *We Who Are Dark*, Tommie Shelby argues that black political solidarity can be grounded in goals that all African-Americans can be reasonably expected to endorse, such as eliminating anti-black racism and alleviating ghetto poverty. As such, attempts to develop black political solidarity need not—and in fact ought not—involve demands that its participants cultivate a black identity or have any commitments to black culture. In lieu of these “thick” forms of identity, Shelby claims collective action requires only a “thin” black identity, one based on common experiences of anti-black racism. My essay examines Shelby’s conception of thin blackness. After describing in detail the balance Shelby tries to strike between a thin blackness and a robust political solidarity, I offer several criticisms of his approach. I conclude by developing an alternative to thin blackness, one I think will better secure the potential for robust collective action.

“A Case Against Subjectivism,” Jessica Katz, Bowling Green State University

Subjectivists about reasons for action maintain that our desires are the source of our reasons. Derek Parfit argues that if subjectivism is true, then we cannot account for the datum that we all have reason to want to avoid future agony. In response, David Sobel argues that the Reasons Transfer Principle (RTP), the principle that if one will later have a reason to get X, then one now has a reason to facilitate the later getting of X, gives subjectivists reason to want to avoid future agony. So long as we will have a reason to want to avoid agony (presumably anyone in agony has a reason to want to avoid agony), we now have a reason to want to avoid that future agony. Nonetheless, it is not clear that RTP is a plausible principle. I argue that an appeal to RTP can only be justified on ad hoc grounds, and RTP entails an implausible characterization of the nature of future reasons. I conclude that Sobel has not defended RTP, and hence, has not provided an adequate response to the Agony Argument.

“Deliberation and the Denial of Libertarian Free Will: A Question of Consistency,”

Mark Satta, Purdue University

In *An Essay on Free Will*, Peter van Inwagen argues that “anyone who rejects free will adopts a general theory about human beings that he contradicts with every deliberate word and act” based on the claim that whenever an individual deliberates between two mutually exclusive courses of action, she must believe that it is physically possible for her to take either course of action. In a 2005 defense of van Inwagen’s position E. J. Coffman and Ted Warfield argue that neither a sufficient counterexample nor a sufficient explanation has been given to falsify this claim. I offer both a counterexample to van Inwagen’s claim and an alternative explanation of the beliefs needed in order to engage in rational deliberation. I argue that these succeed in meeting the criteria that Coffman and Warfield offer as to what would make for a successful refutation of van Inwagen’s claim.

“Escaping the Modern Soul: Audre Lorde and Michel Foucault on Oppression and Emancipation,”

Joshua Mils-Knutsen, Indiana University Southeast

Audre Lorde and Michel Foucault share a common concern with the role of normalization as a technique of oppression. By combining both their analyses of the problem as well as their responses to it, we can come to a much fuller appreciation of what it would mean to be emancipated in a culture which seeks to produce a docile citizenry. Lorde’s contribution has largely been ignored by contemporary continental philosophers; however, her concrete provocations and prescriptions give life to the often ambiguous Foucault. Combined, despite their differences, they paint a powerful picture of oppression and emancipation in contemporary culture.

“Fairness and Voluntary Acceptance,” Edward Song, Louisiana State University

The principle of fairness suggests that it is wrong for free riders to benefit from a cooperative scheme without also assisting in the production of these benefits. Considerations of fairness are a familiar part of moral experience, yet there is a great deal of controversy as to when such considerations rightly obtain. One of the most central of these controversies concerns whether cooperative benefits need to be *voluntarily accepted* by participants or merely be received. Most theorists argue that acceptance is unnecessary because it does not appear to be present in a variety of intuitive cases where considerations of fairness seem applicable. I argue, however, that these cases are deceptive, that the idea of voluntary acceptance explains what is wrong with unfair actions, and that accounts of the principle of fairness that deny that acceptance is necessary have a hard time accounting for a central feature of judgments about fairness.

“A Feminist Defense of the Unity of the Virtues,” Ben Bryan, Bowling Green State University

In *The Impossibility of Perfection*, Michael Slote tries to show that the traditional Aristotelian doctrine of the unity of the virtues is mistaken. His strategy is to provide counterexamples to this doctrine, by showing there are “partial virtues”-pairs of virtues that conflict but both of which are ethically indispensable. I argue that Slote’s critique of the unity of virtues is problematic in two ways. First, Slote’s central argument, built on a single case that is supposed to show that frankness and tact are partial virtues, fails because it depends on a problematic conception of the value of frankness. Second, Slote’s feminist critique of the unity of the virtues fails to take seriously the degree to which we ought to rethink not only the ability of traditionally gendered values to be integrated into a single life but also the content of traditionally gendered values.

“Informing Powers: A New Analysis of Dispositions,” William Bauer, North Carolina State

The conditional analysis of dispositions, or powers, is subject to the problem of prevention in which the conditions of manifestation of a disposition are satisfied yet the manifestation does not occur. An alternative conceptualization of dispositions is that they are directed towards their manifestations. This is not an analysis *per se*, but it provides a useful starting point. What is it about dispositions such that they are directed? This

paper develops the informational analysis of dispositions and present two arguments in support of it, thus opening questions for further research about the relation between dispositions, directedness, and information.

“Laws of Nature and Hume’s Problem of Induction,” Alexander Bozzo, Marquette University

David Hume places pressure on the justification of inductive arguments with the so-called *problem of induction*. Relevant to this discussion is Hume’s denial of any knowledge of a necessary connection implicit in causation. Hume suggests that the subjective probability of billiard ball *a*’s striking *b* in circumstances *c* in manner *k* is highly improbable. But we can ask: What’s the probability of consecutively witnessing billiard balls moving in manner *k* given the same initial circumstances *c*? Indeed, given the probability calculus, the probability of such uniform occurrences is extremely improbable. In this paper, I argue that the best explanation of this data is that laws of nature exist, guaranteeing the realization of such large improbabilities; and that, once admitted, the problem of induction no longer constitutes a serious threat.

“Making Sense of the Different Senses of Explanation,” Danny Pearlberg, Ohio State University

I argue that the debate amongst New Mechanists concerning whether mechanistic explanations are best construed ontically or epistemically has heretofore failed to identify a substantive issue of disagreement. Instead, the debate has turned on a mistaken assumption concerning the different senses of explanation—namely, that theories of explanation that place emphasis on one of the referents of ‘explanation’ are committed to denying the existence of the other referents of ‘explanation’. However, I also argue that the real issue of disagreement underlying the debate is best seen as an issue concerning the norms of explanation—specifically, whether or not evaluations of explanations should take into account the cognitive impact that explanations have on individual cognizers. This is a debate very much worth pursuing, as it involves the perennial question of what makes a scientific explanation a good explanation without getting bogged down with confusions concerning the ambiguity of the term ‘explanation’.

“Moral Sentiments and the Nature of Moral Properties,” Eric Vogelstein, Jefferson College of Health Sciences

In this paper I propose and defend a novel view of the nature of moral wrongness. On my view, the property of moral wrongness can be analyzed in terms of reasons for having the sentiments of compassion and respect. I argue that my account is not only superior to the standard kind of theory that attempt to ground morality in reasons for having sentiments, but is highly plausible in its own right. In particular, I argue that my account is specially poised to account for a particular aspect of moral life: that we commonly chastise wrongdoers for failing to have a sufficient degree of compassion or respect. I also explain how my account allows us to navigate between the horns of a dilemma imposed by the plausibility of Humean views of normative reasons for action.

“The Need for Absences as Causes,” Greg Ackerman, University of Southern California

The view that absences cannot be causes has many supporters. I argue that in certain cases an absence must be a cause. In these cases, a lack of, or absence of, some condition being present causes a part of an organism to stop functioning properly.

“(Non-)Counting Statues,” Michel-Antoin Xhignesse, McGill University

This paper attempts to come to grips with the problem of coincident objects. In an effort to explain away the identity of a statue and its constituent matter, I argue that the coincidence of statue and matter is merely a special case of a common linguistic phenomenon: the use of partitive terms to individuate uses of non-count nouns (NCNs). I argue that by paying close attention to occurrences of partitives and NCNs in the statue-problem, we can easily account for the intuition that a statue and its matter are identical. It is not just that the way we count objects is sensitive to our purposes; rather, the semantics of NCNs prevent us from counting them without some specific linguistic machinery. The problem of coincident objects therefore rests on an inadequate semantics of NCNs which leads us to conflate linguistic machinery and ontological fact.

“On the (Im)possibility of Being a Monkey’s Uncle: A Defense of the Hook Analysis of Indicative Conditionals from a Stalnakerian Perspective,” Louis Gularte, Northern Illinois University

In this paper I endorse Robert Stalnaker’s account of indicative conditionals as the correct picture of how we assign subjective probabilities to them but reject his conclusion that it rules out the so-called ‘hook analysis’. Using evidence from cases in which it is doxastically impossible that the antecedent is false, together with a closer look at ‘monkey’s uncle’ conditionals (of the form *if P, then I’m a monkey’s uncle*), I argue that the hook analysis is both the proper heir of the Stalnakerian framework and the most simple and attractive view available; no non-truth-functional account is required, and neither is an analysis which concedes the unassertability of indicatives true solely in virtue of their false antecedents by offering non-truth-functional but rigid assertability conditions. The key insight is that *possibilia* matter when assessing indicatives *because of*, not despite, indicatives’ being intuitively just about the actual world.

“Praiseworthy *Akrasia* Reconsidered,” Mattias Barker, University of Cincinnati

Akrasia (weakness of will) occurs when we intentionally act in ways that we rationally recognize to be bad. Sometimes such failures actually lead us to perform good actions, a possibility that Aristotle rejects in Book VII of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*). This “common book” also appears in Aristotle’s lesser---known *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*). The last book of the *EE* returns to the topic of *akrasia*, solving puzzles left over from the discussion in the common book, and making seemingly paradoxical cases of praiseworthy *akrasia* more plausible than previously supposed. I claim that there are good reasons to regard the rejection of praiseworthy *akrasia* in the common book as inconclusive, and that the loose ends picked up again in the first two chapters of *EE* VIII vindicate, in part, Anthony Kenny’s attempt to get us to read the *EE* as an integrated whole, with the common books restored to their proper home.

“Re-Tooling the Dream Argument,” Jonathan Dixon, Virginia Tech

The purpose of this paper is *not* to defend skepticism about the external world. The purpose of this paper is to provide a version of the skeptic’s argument that is both significantly different from, and harder to contest than, previously proposed versions. My goal is to identify the skeptic’s best argument so efforts to refute skepticism can succeed. To accomplish this, my version of the skeptic’s argument focuses on the skeptical scenario that you could be currently dreaming instead of the brain-in-a-vat (BIV) scenario. I will argue that the dream possibility is a greater threat to our knowledge of the external world and provides a more difficult skeptical argument than has hitherto been unrecognized.

“Reliabilism and Suspended Judgment,” Peter Murphy, University of Indianapolis

Under what conditions are suspensions of judgment justified? This paper provides a process reliabilist answer. The simple negative system view is defended. It says that a suspension is justified if and only if the cognizer who suspends has no reliable processes that produced (or perhaps could have produced) an otherwise undefeated belief about the matter that the cognizer suspended on.

“Skeptical Theism Entails Agnosticism,” Nevin Climenhaga (Notre Dame)

I consider the skeptical theist response to a Bayesian version of the argument from evil, i.e., the claim that the probability of the evils we observe given theism is “inscrutable.” I argue that on the most plausible reading of the claim that a proposition’s probability is inscrutable, we ought to have a maximally vague credence in that proposition – i.e., one spread out from 0 (maximal nonbelief) to 1 (maximal belief). I then show, via Bayes’ Theorem, that this implies that the probability of *theism* given evil is itself nearly inscrutable, such that upon learning about evil, we ought to become agnostic about theism. After responding to objections to this argument, I conclude that skeptical theism entails agnosticism.

“What Peter Vranas May Not be Able to Do,” Maria Altepeter, Northern Illinois University

The issue of autoinfanticide has been the center of time travel dialogue for recent philosophers. In this paper, I will enter into this discussion. Kadri Vihvelin (1996) originally argued that a time traveler does not have the ability to kill his younger self. Most recently in the literature, Peter Vranas (2010) has addressed Vihvelin’s argument. Vranas puts forth counterexamples in attempt to show how Vihvelin’s argument fails. In this paper, I will present and address Vranas’ arguments. I will provide responses to his objections, showing how they are unsuccessful. Thus, I will conclude that Vihvelin’s argument is not threatened by Vranas’ objections.