



Indiana Philosophical Association

Spring 2025 Workshop at Ball State University, Muncie, 5 April 2025

Spring 2025 Works

Saturday, April 5 th	Location: Bracken Library Meeting Room 1 (BL L82A)
8:30am- 9:00am	<i>Registration</i>
	Morning Session: Chair:
9:15am- 10:00am	Spinozist Fictionalism: The Metaphysics of Good and Evil Author: Julia Shenot
10:05am- 10:50am	How Theists Should and Should Not Argue From Morality Author: Jashiel Resto Quinones
11:00am- 11:45am	Punishment, Forgiveness, and Pardon Author: Graham Renz
11:45am- 1:00pm	<i>Lunch/Business Meeting</i>
	Afternoon Session: Chair:
1:15pm- 2:00pm	Minne and Brahman: A Comparative Analysis of Love and Illusion in Hadewijch and Vedanta Author: Kush Sachdeva
2:15pm- 3:00pm	"What's Love Got to Do with It?" Leibniz on Divine Benevolence and Creation Author: Joshua Horn
3:00pm- 3:45pm	The Power of the Name: The Role of the Name in Creation and Invocation within the Islamic Occult Sciences Author: Ahmad Rhatib Karkoutli

IPA Executive Officers 2024-25:

President	Joseph Gamache
Vice President	Brian Johnson
Secretary	Samuel Bennett

Registration: If you did not have a chance to register your membership at the Fall Conference, you can do so online [here](#). Registration fees are \$20.00 for faculty and \$10.00 for graduate students; undergraduates are welcome to attend the conference at no charge. If you pay your membership dues online, then when prompted to “add a note” on the confirmation page, please enter your name and professional affiliation. If you are paying registration fees for more than one conference participant, then please include the names and professional affiliations of everyone you would like to register.

(https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=UDJ8U7UKC7RPE)

Dining: A short walk away from the Bracken Library lies a shopping area, with Chava’s (burritos), Yats (Cajun), Jimmy John’s, Roots (bar/ restaurant), and The Cup (coffee/ sandwiches). There’s also Chinese and perhaps a few other options.

Abstracts of Presented Papers:**Morning Session:**

Title: Spinozist Fictionalism: The Metaphysics of Good and Evil

Author: Julia Shenot

Abstract:

I argue that Spinoza’s account of the metaphysics of good and evil is best characterized as a kind of fictionalism. In the Ethics, Spinoza writes that neither good nor evil have real positive existence as properties of entities or actions. Instead, the concepts were invented as a way to make sense of the chaos we observe in nature. Not even God is intrinsically good, and not even sin is intrinsically evil: ‘good’ and ‘evil’ only indicate usefulness (or lack thereof) to us. Nevertheless, Spinoza maintains that we should make use of these terms. Secondary literature often identifies him as a relativist (because our judgments of goodness or evilness are relative in various ways) or constructivist (because good and evil are concepts invented by humans). While not inaccurate, these labels both leave something to be desired: Spinoza is better understood as a fictionalist.

Fictionalism is a method for reconciling our ordinary speech with our ontological commitments. If we are fictionalists about some region of discourse, then we hold that the claims made by that discourse are literally false, but we continue to employ them anyway because it is in some way useful to do so. Spinoza’s view of good and evil clearly fits this description: he denies that good and evil exist, but supports our continued talk of good and evil. His accounts of God and sin provide further support for my reading. I propose a paraphrase scheme a Spinozist might use to translate sentences from the fiction of good and evil into literally true sentences about relative usefulness. Identifying Spinoza as a fictionalist allows a superior understanding of how his metaphysics and philosophy of religion fit into contemporary frameworks.

Title: How Theists Should and Should Not Argue From Morality

Author: Jashiel Resto Quinones

Abstract:

Moral arguments for theism are arguments that infer the truth of theism (i.e., the view that God exists) from some moral fact. Two moral arguments have drawn considerable attention: Craig's deductive moral argument and Baggett & Wall's abductive moral argument. The former goes like this: 1) the falsity of theism entails that there are no objective moral values and duties; but 2) there are objective moral values and duties; therefore, 3) theism is true. The latter goes like this: 4) there are objective moral values and duties; 5) theism is the best explanation for the fact that there are objective moral values and duties; therefore, 6) theism is probably true.

In this paper I have two goals. The first is to show that theists should *not* argue their way to theism using Craig's deductive moral argument or Baggett & Wall's abductive moral argument. I arrive at this conclusion by arguing that Craig's deductive moral argument is unsound because premise 1 is false, and that Baggett & Wall's abductive argument is invalid because the probable truth of theism does not follow from its being the best explanation of the moral fact under consideration.

The second goal of this paper is to show that theists *should* argue in some other way if they find the above criticism reasonable. To do this, I develop a new moral argument that sidesteps the problems with the above-mentioned arguments. Call "robust obligations" those moral obligations that are binding and universal and let "M" abbreviate the proposition that there are robust obligations. The argument goes as follows: 8) it is known that M; 9) M is more likely given a moderate divine command theory than given its negation; therefore, 10) M is some evidence for a moderate divine command theory; 11) a moderate divine command theory entails theism; therefore, 12) M is evidence for theism. My contention is that this last argument avoids the problems faced by the previous two discussed above.

Title: Punishment, Forgiveness, and Pardon

Author: Graham Renz

Abstract:

Theories of divine forgiveness must (i) provide an informative account of the *nature* of God's forgiveness, and (ii) explain that in virtue of which God, qua third party, has *standing* to forgive. This paper develops a pardon-based account of divine forgiveness that answers (i), (ii), and other challenges to such accounts in general.

We assume a thoroughly deontological moral framework and, further, that liability to punishment is understood in terms of rights forfeiture. On such an account, x is liable to punishment because x forfeited, by culpably violating the rights of y, their right against hard treatment. So, when x culpably violates the rights of y, x is open to punishment (and y is owed compensation).

Starting with the idea that the final community before God is to be morally perfect, we argue that a Lockean account of divine punishment gives way to an account of divine forgiveness as pardoning. In short, without an eternal judge to mete out punishment, forgive, and restore victims, the final community couldn't be morally perfected. So, just as we transfer our competitively-held right to punish to the state in this life, we transfer our right to punish to God in the next. And, just as the state can pardon, so too can God. So, divine forgiveness is understood as God pardoning those liable to punishment in the eschaton. This account provides an informative answer to (i) and answers (ii) by grounding God's standing to punish in our own primitively held

right to punish. And it answers other questions, such as why God would be in the business of punishment in the first place. It also has interesting upshots, such as that punishment meted out in this life aggregates with divine punishment in the next life, that avoid issues regarding the proportionality of divine punishment.

Afternoon Session:

Title: *Minne and Brahman: A Comparative Analysis of Love and Illusion in Hadewijch and Vedanta*

Author: Kush Sachdeva

Abstract:

This paper examines Hadewijch’s notion of *minne*—her “most perfect love”—through the lens of Vedantic concepts of brahman and *māyā*, arguing that once a theistic framework is terminated, love reveals itself as a praxis. Hadewijch describes *minne* as a love that transcends relational hierarchies, not a love between distinct subjects like “A loves B,” but rather as an unmediated, field-like exploration of being itself. In Letter 30, she writes of a love that operates in silence, suggesting that *minne* cannot be fully captured by language or conventional structures. This silent quality connects deeply with the Vedantic idea of brahman, the formless essence beyond conceptualization, and *māyā*, the illusory veil that creates the appearance of separation.

In this paper, I argue that *minne*, like brahman, is not an object or force but a binding essence that unites beings while simultaneously dissolving distinctions. Drawing from Hadewijch’s metaphor of “glue” in Poem 16, where love is described as a force that both binds and annihilates, I suggest that *minne* functions like brahman, as an ungraspable reality that escapes definition. Through this exploration, the paper contrasts Hadewijch’s relational metaphors with the *māyā*-driven illusion of duality, highlighting how the transcendence of love requires a release from identification with objects or separate selves.

By introducing the praxis of love as a shared, unarticulated essence, this paper calls attention to the wisdom embedded in metaphor. Through *minne* and brahman, we discover a way of being in relation that is not confined to conventional attachments or projections, but rather exists in openness and non-attachment—an understanding of love as a silent, ever-present force that unites all beings beyond the need for identification or ownership

Title: "What's Love Got to Do with It?" Leibniz on Divine Benevolence and Creation

Author: Joshua Horn

Abstract:

Perhaps Leibniz’s most famous contribution to the philosophical canon is his theodical idea that God freely created the best of all possible worlds from among a plurality of alternatives. Part of this story is that prior to the act of creation, God surveys all possible states of affairs which include different combinations of individuals, and chooses the world which he deems to be the most harmonious. Although this account of creation is fairly straightforward, there are lingering questions that were not properly addressed by Leibniz, and which have not been dealt with in the secondary literature. One such question will be the focus of this essay, namely, “Can Leibniz’s God love purely possible objects (I use “objects” here instead of “creatures” to not focus merely on God’s love of humans (or animals for that matter). The goal of the paper is to investigate whether God loves purely possible humans, animals, plants, natural objects, artifacts, etc.)?” And if so, what

does this understanding of divine benevolence mean for the act of creation? Put simply, does God's love feature in Leibniz's account of creation?

In the first part of the paper, I will describe what Leibniz means by a purely possible object. In the second part of the paper, I will explain how Leibniz understands the nature of love. In the final part of the paper, I will analyze the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different views regarding God's love of possible objects and conclude that Leibniz adopts a similar strategy for dealing with benevolence as he does for some of the other divine attributes such as omnipotence and omniscience. Just as God's power and wisdom are limited to that which is possible, God's loving nature is limited to possible objects.

Title: The Power of the Name: The Role of the Name in Creation and Invocation within the Islamic Occult Sciences

Author: Ahmad Rhatib Karkoutli

Abstract:

This paper has as its purpose the discernment of the foundational metaphysical principles underlying the efficacy of the occult sciences within the classical Islamic tradition. Though there is scholarship on both the Islamic philosophical tradition and the Islamic occult sciences, there is little in the way of placing the occult sciences, as techniques for the attainment of particular material or spiritual ends, within the framework of classical Islamic metaphysics. This paper is an initial effort to elucidate the contours of the metaphysical principles that underly these sciences within the Islamic tradition.

The thesis of the paper is that the name serves as the unitary principle upon which the occult sciences depend, in both their structure and employment to achieve particular worldly ends. Taking sections from the Arabic work, *Fusūs al-Hikam*, a seminal text by the philosopher Ibn 'Arabī, the argument in this paper relies upon the *name* as having a cosmogonic, an intelligible and an invocatory mode, each of which corresponds to the phases of divine creation, human knowledge and invocation, the last of which is essential to the logic underlying the efficacy of the occult sciences. The cosmogonic and intelligible roles of the *name* are, we contend, implied within the metaphysics upon which practical manuals of the occult sciences were written within the classical Islamic world.

In order to bring greater clarity to this rudimentary scheme of functions, or powers, inherent to the *Ism* within classical Islamic metaphysics, the work of Stephen Skinner on the tradition of Solomonian magic, stretching from Late Antiquity to the modern era in the West, will be used as a template for the schematic we attempt to present as existing in the Islamic world. It is hoped that from this rudimentary presentation a fuller account of the Islamic occult sciences may be achieved.