

**2016 Illinois Philosophical Association Conference
Paper Abstracts and Author Contact Information**

1. Fictional Detectives and Fake Bank-notes. Reply to Chris Mole

ABSTRACT: The reference of names of real objects used in fiction (such as ‘London’ or ‘Kennedy’) can be treated in two ways. One is to see these names as referring to their ordinary referents, the real objects (London and JFK in this case). The other is to take them to refer to fictional surrogates of the real objects. Although the former option is usually taken for granted and not argued for, there have recently been two significant attempts to justify it, in the work of Stacie Friend, and that of Christopher Mole. In this paper I address Mole’s solution and claim that it fails. Mole offers a criterion for distinguishing real persons, objects, or events, from mere fictional ones. This criterion would permit us to tell whether JFK, as he appears in Don DeLillo’s *Libra*, for example, is really JFK or a surrogate. Ultimately, the proposal relies on what we are licensed in asserting about the fictional characters. If we are licensed in attributing enough real-world properties to them, then the names preserve real-world reference. I argue, however, that this criterion does not work. As a consequence, friends of fictional surrogates can remain tranquil for the time being.

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2. For Inclusive Logic

ABSTRACT: I argue that inclusive logic, namely, a logical theory compatible with the empty domain, is an appropriate theory for logical inquiry divorced of existence assumptions, which inquiry I call *pure logic*. In §1 I offer a working characterization of pure logic. In §2 I defend the tenability of my characterization of pure logic. In §3 I contend that two myths contributing to the widespread neglect of inclusive logic are unfounded. In §4 I conclude.

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3. From Circumstantial to Resultant Moral Luck

ABSTRACT: Moral luck occurs when factors beyond an agent's control partially determine her praiseworthiness or blameworthiness. There are several kinds of moral luck, namely, moral luck in results, circumstance, and constitution, and they are distinguished by the type of factor outside of the agent's control—whether it is how one's action turns out, the particular moral challenges one faces, or one's dispositional endowment. Currently, there is a debate about whether each kind of moral luck exists. Some philosophers hold an asymmetry view according to which resultant moral luck does not exist but circumstantial moral luck does. I argue against this view. In particular, I argue that if circumstantial moral luck exists, there is good evidence for extant resultant moral luck. If my argument is successful, we have good evidence that the asymmetry view is false.

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4. John Dewey's Ontological Grounding of Diversity: The Rhythms of Nature

ABSTRACT: John Dewey's "generic traits of existence" are best understood as pervasive patterns or "rhythms" of nature. These natural rhythms are necessarily operative in all that exists, and every particular existence should be understood as a refinement or manifestation of natural rhythm. The idea of "tension," a recurring theme in Dewey's work, is to be understood as a co-constituent of rhythm. To say something "exists" is to denote something that is fundamentally rhythmic and tensional, in an exchange with other existences. The rhythms of human enterprise, including the pursuit of wisdom, must be in harmony or syncopation with a larger environment.

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5. A Better Solution to the General Problem of Creation

ABSTRACT: Could God have chosen not to create? Or was it necessary that He create at least one good universe? It is often suggested that, since the state of affairs in which God creates a good universe is, in some relevant sense, better than the state of affairs in which He creates nothing at all, a perfectly good God would have to create at least that good universe. Making use of recent work by Christine Korsgaard on the relational nature of the good, I argue that the state of affairs in which God creates a good universe might not actually be better than the state of affairs in which God creates nothing at all, due to the fact that it is not better for anyone or anything in particular. If so, then even a perfectly good God would not be compelled to create a good universe, or any universe at all.

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6. Social and Diachronic Factors and the Epistemology of Disagreement

ABSTRACT: There seems to be a shared assumption in many debates about the epistemology of disagreement that a rational belief should fit what the available evidence objectively supports. I argue that more than the available evidence is relevant to individually rational responses to disagreements. More specifically, I claim that in some domains, it is rational to adopt norms that might allow rational beliefs that depart from the evidence because there are social epistemic gains if people obey these norms. I also argue that in some cases, the rational response to disagreement is to retain all of the conflicting beliefs but to bracket them, and then seek out new evidence. I conclude by discussing what it is to bracket beliefs.

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7. Hannah Arendt's Theory of Judgment Reconsidered

ABSTRACT: This paper considers the apparent gap that exists in Hannah Arendt's thoughts on judgment between the judgment of a spectator and the judgment of an actor. I aim to show such a gap does not exist in her thought and that, instead, Arendt shifts the emphasis of her account of judgment from considering judgment as opinion formation to judgments of exemplary validity. Such a shift in emphasis within her thought does not imply the gap that others have frequently attributed to her. Drawing on recent scholarship, I aim to preliminarily sketch why such a gap is not present.

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8. The Disciplining of Grounding

ABSTRACT: As it is presently employed, grounding permits the getting of many things from one. This is a mistake. In this paper, I show why it is a mistake by pushing for a principle that has it that if x and y share a ground, then x is y . After arguing in favor of this principle, I both discuss a rival principle and show one of the many interesting implications it has on metaphysics.

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9. Tolerance and Coherence

ABSTRACT: In analyzing the meaning of propositions, Rudolf Carnap came to advocate both a coherence theory of truth as well as his Principle of Tolerance. For Carnap, a proposition is true if and only if it is a member of a consistent set of propositions. His advocacy of multiple such systems lead him to promote the Principle of Tolerance, most famously associated with the following quote from *The Logical Syntax of Language*: “It is not our business to set up prohibitions, but to arrive at conventions.” I examine the relation between the Carnap’s theory of truth and his Principle of Tolerance, dividing my exploration of that relation vis-à-vis first logical truth, and then vis-à-vis the language of science. I contend that in both systems, it is possible to take the view that commitment to the Principle of Tolerance leads to a coherence theory of truth, but also that the converse holds.

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10. When Does Consciousness Matter? Lessons from the Minimally Conscious State

ABSTRACT: Patients in a minimally conscious state fall into an importantly different diagnostic category than patients in the more familiar persistent vegetative states. Not only are minimally conscious patients conscious in some sense—they have a higher chance for recovery than patients in a persistent vegetative state. Because of these differences, Joseph Fins has argued that we owe minimally conscious patients something more than what we owe patients with more severe disorders of consciousness. I agree. In this paper, however, I argue Fins’s recommendations don’t go far enough. The reason is that we must justify our differential treatment of minimally conscious patients partly on their potential for consciousness—we are partly justified treating minimally conscious patients differently than other patients because minimally conscious patients are potentially conscious while other patients are not. But if the potential for consciousness is morally salient in this way, the recommendations Fins makes ultimately fall short.

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11. Metaphysical Foundationalism and The Fallacy of the Argument from Transference

ABSTRACT: Does reality have a fundamental level or do the levels of reality descend all the way down, never bottoming-out? I assess an argument advocated both historically (by Leibniz) and in the contemporary era (by Jonathan Schaffer) in favor of metaphysical foundationalism: the view that it's necessary that reality has a fundamental level. On the "argument from transference," entities at any non-fundamental level obtain their existence via an ontological transference: their existence is transferred to them from the entities they exist in virtue of which are located below them at a deeper level of reality. So there must exist fundamental entities which this ontological transference of existence originates with: for if there were no fundamental entities then there would be no entities whose existence serves as the source from which derivative / non-fundamental entities ultimately get their existence via the transference. Thus there must be a fundamental level of reality which contains these fundamental entities, so metaphysical foundationalism holds. I show that this argument fails.

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12. Vigilance and Action

ABSTRACT: Vigilance is an important part of our agency. Vigilance allows us to efficiently allocate scarce cognitive resources in the service of coordinating and implementing complex plans over time. Despite the importance of vigilance, no philosopher has offered a systematic treatment of this crucial feature of our agency. This paper begins to rectify that oversight. In this paper, I argue that vigilance is useful for filling out a standard causal theory of action. Additionally, I discuss the nature of vigilance, focusing on its psychological and functional profile.

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13. Agent Causation, Cross-World Luck, and Ontological Dependence

ABSTRACT: Many people think there is a *luck* problem with libertarian freedom. Agent-causal libertarians attempt to solve this problem by positing a direct causal connection between agents and their actions. According to Al Mele, however, this attempt is unsuccessful: libertarian actions are lucky even if agent-causation exists. I offer a response to Mele that has been overlooked by his interlocutors. His argument presupposes that an agent's actions are *ontologically dependent* on which world is actual. I argue that agent-causal libertarians can escape Mele's argument by affirming the opposite: facts about which world is actual ontologically depend on facts about agents' free choices.

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14. Punishing the Oppressed and Valid Objections to Blame

ABSTRACT: Expressivist theories justify punishment as an expression or communication of condemnation from the community toward criminals. According to these theories, we are justified in treating people in ways that would otherwise be morally problematic when this treatment expresses appropriate blame. In this paper I question whether expressivist theories can justify punishment under conditions where states are complicit in the wrongdoing of citizens. In particular, I focus on the punishment of those, such as the ghetto poor, who commit crimes under conditions of oppression. Under these conditions, the punished can object that their punishment does not express appropriate blame. Nevertheless, it seems that such punishment is justified because letting such crime go unpunished would have disastrous consequences. One might claim that this dilemma gives us reason to reject expressivism, but I consider some ways that expressivists might defend their views in light of it.

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15. Defending Traditional (Indirect) Virtue Epistemology: Epistemic Frankfurt Cases and Miracchi-Style Gettier Cases

ABSTRACT: Lisa Miracchi and Christoph Kelp have argued against indirect virtue epistemology (IVE), called “indirect” since “it aims to analyze knowledge in terms of a competence to do something other than know”. Kelp’s and Miracchi’s arguments turn on the putative inability of IVE to accommodate widespread intuitions about crucial cases. For Kelp, IVE cannot simultaneously accommodate our intuitions regarding both epistemic Frankfurt cases and Fake Barn cases. For Miracchi, IVE is unable to explain why we fail to know in certain Gettier cases.

In this paper, I argue that John Greco’s version of IVE has the resources to (1) explain away our intuition about Kelp’s epistemic Frankfurt case while preserving the intuition about Fake Barns; and (2) explain why one fails to know in Miracchi’s Gettier cases. Hence, there is at least one brand of IVE that can withstand Kelp’s and Miracchi’s objections.

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16. Can Infinitists Handle the Finite Mind Objection and the Distinction Objection?: A Dilemma for Infinitism

ABSTRACT: Abstract: In this paper, I examine Klein's response to the finite mind objection and the distinction objection (i.e., it is hard for infinitists to make a distinction between S's merely having available a justification for a proposition and the proposition's being justified for S) to infinitism. I argue that infinitists are not able to handle these objections when taken together. First, I criticize Klein's response to the distinction objection and put forward a more plausible response which is on the side of infinitism. I then argue that this response is incompatible with Klein's own response to the finite mind objection. Second, I examine some possible replies and argue that these replies either leave the finite mind objection unsolved or advocate a problematic view of justification.

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17. How Good Was Bayes' Response to Hume?

ABSTRACT: Abstract. In this paper, we evaluate Bayes' posthumously-published "Essay Towards Solving a Problem in the Doctrine of Chances" as an attempt at answering Hume's inductive skepticism. We claim that Bayes required three substantive philosophical assumptions in order to provide an answer to Hume. We show that Hume accepted Bayes' assumptions; however, Hume accepted one of the assumptions as a consequence of his skeptical solution. Hence, we argue that Hume should have accepted Bayes' result as a precisification of his own skeptical solution but rejected it as a non-skeptical solution.

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18. Moral Twin Earth Meets the Real World: A Cautionary Tale

ABSTRACT: About 25 years ago, Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons published a now-popular article combining Hilary Putnam's twin earth scenario with G.E. Moore's open question argument in an effort to show that moral naturalism—the view that moral facts are at bottom ordinary, natural facts of some sort—is probably false. Responses to Horgan and Timmons's "revised open question argument" have been legion, but surprisingly, no one has attempted to test the core assumption upon which the argument is based; namely, that competent language users univocally treat natural kind-terms as rigid designators. Here, I present evidence that the intuitions of competent English speakers are not as univocal as Horgan and Timmons need them to be to ground their argument against moral naturalism. I also briefly sketch a way that the moral naturalist respond even if competent language speakers treat natural-kind terms in the way that Horgan and Timmons contend.

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STUDENT ESSAY AWARD WINNER:

19. Non Sensitivity to Character Flaws: Not a Threat to the Traditional Account Right Action

ABSTRACT: Virtue ethic's traditional account of right action (VR) is often described as follows: an action is right in a circumstance if and only if a fully virtuous agent would characteristically do that action in the circumstance.¹ This research addresses whether or not Frans Svennson's "Sensitivity to character flaw" objection to VR is effective. This objection and ones like it can more widely be characterized as objections that involve agents who are not fully virtuous and who seemingly ought to act against VR's prescription because of what I call deep flaws in character. According Svensson, agents with deep character flaws seemingly ought not to do as VR suggests that a right action in a given circumstance is to actually not what a fully virtuous agent would do, acting in character, but rather for the agent to act in another way. I argue that, in such scenarios, it is completely reasonable to say that it isn't right to not act as a fully virtuous agent would characteristically do in a circumstance, and that these sets of scenarios simply suggests that there is not be a right action to be done.

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