KENTUCKY PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

FALL 2010 MEETING PROGRAM

THOMAS MORE COLLEGE
FOURTH FLOOR, SCIENCE BUILDING
333 THOMAS MORE PARKWAY
CRESTVIEW HILLS, KY 41017

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2010, 9 AM-5 PM

8:30-9:00 a.m.	**Registration, Breakfast, Welcome** **Room S-417**	
9:00-10:00 a.m.	**Matthew Pianalto**, Eastern Kentucky University "Integrity and Struggle" **Commentator**: Jennifer Baker, College of Charleston **Room S-417**	**Michael Wiitala**, University of Kentucky "Self-Knowledge and Nietzsche on the Problem of Socrates" **Commentator**: John Min, Saint Louis University **Room S-416**
10:00-11:00 a.m.	**Jeffrey Martin and Julia Clare**, University of KwaZulu-Natal "Fudge or Nudge: The Ethics of Behavior Modification" **Commentator**: Ruth Tallman, Barry University **Room S-417**	**Levis Zerpa**, University of Kentucky "Can a Question Be True or False? Remarks on a Philosophical Application of the Logic of Questions and Answers" **Commentator**: Nancy Hancock, Northern Kentucky University **Room S-416**
11:00-Noon	**John Min**, Saint Louis University "Who's Afraid of Libertarian	**Ruth Tallman**, Barry University "A Comedy Is a Tragedy Is an

	Paternalism?" **Commentators**: Jeffrey Martin and Julia Clare, University of KwaZulu-Natal **Room S-417**	Allegory: A Contextualist Account of Artwork Meaning" **Commentator**: Joshua Anderson, Saint Louis University **Room S-416**
Noon-1:00 p.m.	**Lunch** **Location TBD**	
1:00-1:45 p.m.	**Business Meeting** **Room S-417**	
1:45-2:45 p.m.	**Gina Schouten**, University of Wisconsin-Madison "In Opposition to Moral Luck: An Exercise in Biting Bullets" **Commentator**: Catherine Sherron, Thomas More College **Room S-417**	**Joshua Anderson**, Saint Louis University "Towards an Understanding of Cephalus" **Commentator**: Michael Wiitala, University of Kentucky **Room S-416**
2:45-4:00 p.m.	**Keynote Address** **Jonathan Weinberg**, Indiana University "Humans as Instruments: Or, the Inevitability of Experimental Philosophy" **Room S-417**	
4:00-5:00 p.m.	**Jennifer Baker**, College of Charleston "Operationalizing Virtue" **Commentator**: Jonathan Weinberg, Indiana University **Room S-417**	

ABSTRACTS

"Towards an Understanding of Cephalus"

Joshua Anderson, Saint Louis University

This paper seeks to come to an understanding of the character Cephalus from Plato's *Republic*. To make sense of Cephalus' worldview, an ordinary-language critique of Plato's cave allegory is put forth. The critique of the cave allegory will proceed in the same way that O. K. Bouwsma critiques Descartes' evil genius. After establishing Cephalus' worldview, examples both internal and external to the text are given that establishes Cephalus as just, pious and wise. A more complete view of Cephalus provides some important ways to think about Plato and the *Republic*, and also suggests an interesting alternative to Plato's view of justice.

"Operationalizing Virtue"

Jennifer Baker, College of Charleston

Critics of virtue ethics argue that it cannot be supported empirically. Defenders of virtue ethics have argued, in response, that critics are not taking aim at the proper account of virtue (namely, critics have failed to acknowledge the role of practical rationality in virtue). This paper anticipates the skepticism empirical ethicists will have to even an accurate description of virtue ethics. Can virtue (even if properly described) be operationalized? If it cannot, empirical ethicists will remain unimpressed. But the answer to the question is "not yet." Current methods of testing for ethics are inappropriate to a practical rationality-based virtue ethics. We review the inappropriateness of both the DIT-2 (a widely used method of testing for ethical development) and of observational methods for detecting virtue. We conclude by proposing a means of finding empirical verification for the moral psychology necessary to virtue.

"Fudge or Nudge: The Ethics of Behavior Modification"

Jeffrey Martin and Julia Clare, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Advances in behavioural sciences have altered our understanding of human behaviour, by uncovering inbuilt obstacles to rational decision making. Various projects have been proposed to ameliorate the effects of cognitive biases and heuristics, where these cause "bad" decisions. One such programme is described in Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein's (2008) book *Nudge*. Although

they offer a number of methods for achieving this goal, some of these, here termed "fudges," seek to repurpose biases and heuristics to produce positive outcomes. Rather than improving decision-making ability by bolstering the "reflective system," they seek to make the "automatic system's" response to the environment less harmful to the individual. Using Eric Cave's account of "motive manipulation," this paper will argue that fudges are *prima facie* immoral because they undermine autonomy. Thaler and Sunstein acknowledge this concern and offer three defences of their position, but fail to make their case in all but a very circumscribed set of instances.

"Who's Afraid of Libertarian Paternalism?"

John Min, Saint Louis University

Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein argue that people generally do not make good choices and because of that it is sometimes permissible to consciously shape those choices. While some philosophers have objected to libertarian paternalism's attempt to shape choices, I argue that they need not fear libertarian paternalism. More specifically, I argue that without certain shaping of choices, there is no token preference change. In this essay, I explicate libertarian paternalism and motivate an argument that libertarian paternalism ultimately diminishes people's long-term choice-making capacities. Subsequently, I substantiate my argument by employing J. D. Trout's unique reply to the objection that attempts to tilt the scale towards the libertarian paternalist's side.

"Integrity and Struggle"

Matthew Pianalto, Eastern Kentucky University

In most if not all human life, there is some struggle. Sometimes we struggle against, or to change, our external circumstances. Sometimes we struggle against, or within, ourselves. A particular understanding of integrity, as the manifestation of a whole, undivided self, suggests that in a life of full integrity, inner struggles have necessarily come to an end. This is because it seems natural to suppose, on this conception, that the person of integrity simply isn't tempted toward self-compromise (or moral compromise) and doesn't experience oneself as otherwise "divided" or conflicted. I suggest there are reasons to question whether integrity necessarily depends upon the kind of wholeness which would, by definition, rule out the possibility of such inner struggles.

"In Opposition to Moral Luck: An Exercise in Biting Bullets"

Gina Schouten, University of Wisconsin-Madison

In this paper, I defend the control condition for moral responsibility against a set of intuitions that appear to challenge it. The control condition holds that factors beyond an agent's control can play no role in determining whether and how much that agent is blameworthy. Essentially, the control condition denies that luck can play a role in moral responsibility. Opponents of the control condition—defenders of moral luck—rely heavily on intuitions in cases wherein two agents *seem* unequally blameworthy in spite of being the same with regard to all factors over which they exercise control. I give an explanation of these intuitions that accounts for their prevalence but is nonetheless consistent with them being unreliable guides to blameworthiness. In doing so, I hope to undercut the force of the proponent of moral luck's appeal to intuition.

"A Comedy Is a Tragedy Is an Allegory: A Contextualist Account of Artwork Meaning"

Ruth Tallman, Barry University

This paper employs William Alston's theory of language meaning to understand the way artworks are imbued with meaning. I argue that artworks, as physical objects, do not have inherent meaning; their meaning is determined by the relational properties between the work and those who interact with it. This understanding of meaning is applicable to all kinds of physical objects: mundane items such as chairs and rocks, and language, as well as art. As it is widely applicable, this shows that the theory has simplicity in its favor, and provides a coherent means of maintaining a simple ontology through the physical object hypothesis without sacrificing the concept of meaning in artworks.

"Humans as Instruments: Or, the Inevitability of Experimental Philosophy"

Jonathan Weinberg, Indiana University

It is likely that there are some philosophical facts that we can only begin to get a grasp of via the powers of human insight; and that these powers are fallible; and that a large part of how we theorize based on those insights is by means of adductive modes of inference. Given those premises, I argue that progress in philosophy will depend substantially on experimental philosophy: the scientific investigation of our capacity for such insight, including its competences and, importantly, its foibles.

"Self-Knowledge and Nietzsche on the Problem of Socrates"

Michael Wiitala, University of Kentucky

Nietzsche once said, "Socrates, to confess it simply, stands so close to me, that I am almost always fighting a battle with him." Focusing primarily on "The Problem of Socrates," from *Twilight of the Idols*, I argue that Nietzsche was unable to solve the Problem of Socrates to his satisfaction because he was haunted by the possibility that Socrates, and the philosophical tradition that Socrates fathered, might be right. By claiming in "The Problem of Socrates" that "the value of life cannot be estimated," Nietzsche acknowledged his own ignorance and called into question the definitiveness of his judgments about Socrates and about the tradition as a whole.

"Can a Question Be True or False? Remarks on a Philosophical Application of the Logic of Questions and Answers"

Levis Zerpa, University of Kentucky

In this paper I challenge the traditional doctrine according to which questions cannot be conceived as having truth-value, that is, questions cannot be considered true or false in a literal sense. This doctrine is implicitly or explicitly accepted in most textbooks and courses on both formal and informal logic. There are two implicit inferences often drawn from this doctrine: logic is wholly devoid of interest in questions, and logic cannot provide formal and/or conceptual tools that allow a fruitful analysis of questions. Based on Åqvist's definition of the notion of *presupposition* of a question, I show that there is a very natural and intuitive sense in which a question can be conceived as having truth-value: a question can be considered false when its strongest presupposition is false and a question can be considered true otherwise. Additionally, an application of this thesis to the philosophy of mind is considered.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

For directions, please visit http://www.thomasmore.edu/direction/index.cfm. For parking, please visit http://www.thomasmore.edu/PDFs/campus_map.pdf. You may park in any A Lot (Guest and Visitors Parking).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to the following for their contributions to the program:
- All the presenters and commentators, especially our keynote speaker Dr. Jonathan Weinberg.
- All the referees, especially Drs. Ron Messerich and Frank Williams.
- Dr. Catherine Sherron and the Faculty of Philosophy at Thomas More College.
- Dr. Nancy Hancock, KPA Secretary-Treasurer.
- Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Mansoh, Immediate Past KPA President.