

KENTUCKY PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2011 MEETING PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
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SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011, 8:30 AM-5:30 PM

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| 8:30-9:00 a.m. | Registration, Breakfast, Welcome Gallery Room | |
| 9:00-10:00 a.m. | Jeremy Killian , University of Louisville "That Deceptive Line: Plato, Linear Perspective and Visual Perception" Commentator: Frank Williams, Eastern Kentucky University Gallery Room | Adam Blincoc , University of Kentucky "The Value of Autonomy: A Kantian Justification of Lying" Commentator: Reshef Agam-Segal, Auburn University Keeneland Room |
| 10:00-11:00 a.m. | David Cheely , University of South Florida "The Role of Memory in the Fineness of Grain of Demonstrative Concepts" Commentator: Ted Parent, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Gallery Room | Reshef Agam-Segal , Auburn University "When Language Gives Out: Conceptualization and Aspects-Seeing" Commentator: Kevin Busch, Brandeis University Keeneland Room |
| 11:00-Noon | Elijah Weber , Bowling Green State University "On the Impossibility of Justified | Kevin Busch , Brandeis University "The Scope of Caring" |

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| | <p>Soft Paternalistic Criminal Drug Prohibitions"</p> <p>Commentator: Yaw Frimpong-Mansoh, Northern Kentucky University</p> <p>Gallery Room</p> | <p>Commentator: Minh Nguyen, Eastern Kentucky University</p> <p>Keeneland Room</p> |
| Noon-12:45 p.m. | <p>Lunch</p> <p>Location TBA</p> | |
| 12:45-1:30 p.m. | <p>Business Meeting: All Are Welcome and Invited!</p> <p>Gallery Room</p> | |
| 1:30-2:30 p.m. | <p>A.J. Snelson, University of British Columbia</p> <p>"An Affront against 'Life': Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity and His Redemption of the World"</p> <p>Commentator: George Wisley, North Georgia College and State University</p> <p>Gallery Room</p> | <p>Brian Besong, Purdue University</p> <p>"Moral Intuitionism and Fundamental Disagreement"</p> <p>Commentator: David Cheely, University of South Florida</p> <p>Keeneland Room</p> |
| 2:30-3:30 p.m. | <p>Winner of the 2011 KPA Student Essay Contest</p> <p>Callie Phillips, University of Kentucky</p> <p>"Possible Worlds Analysis of the Ontological Argument"</p> <p>Commentator: Meg Wallace, University of Kentucky</p> <p>Gallery Room</p> | |
| 3:30-4:30 p.m. | <p>Keynote Address</p> <p>Gary Ebbs, Indiana University</p> <p>"Transparency and Entitlement at the Limits of Doubt"</p> | |

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| | Gallery Room |
| 4:30-5:30 p.m. | George Wrisley , North Georgia College and State University “Why Happiness is Not the Proper End of a Human Life” Commentator: Brian Besong, Purdue University Gallery Room |

ABSTRACTS

Reshef Agam-Segal, Auburn University

“When Language Gives Out: Conceptualization and Aspects-Seeing”

The cognitive ability to perceive aspects—the seeing of something in a new light, as when it dawns on us that Jastrow’s duck-rabbit  is also a duck picture—can help overcome conceptual ambiguities. In aspect-perception, I argue, we bring a concept to an object, but without yet committing ourselves thereby to conceptualizing the object in this way; we thereby only let ourselves feel what it would be like to conceptualize the object in this way. This can be used in the process of conceptualization. When language gives out and we cannot turn to our linguistic norms for help, because there are no clear or useful norms, for instance, or when the norms we have are conflicting, our cognitive ability to see something anew—to infuse something with meaning, with a concept—allows us to capture things in language and thought, and decide what linguistic norms to develop.

Brian Besong, Purdue University

“Moral Intuitionism and Fundamental Disagreement”

In this paper, I will propose the “Equal Weight Conditional,” a modest principle regarding when the disclosure of disagreement results in defeat. After proposing this principle, I will consider a particular case of moral disagreement and argue, by the Equal Weight Conditional, that if standard accounts of moral intuitionism are correct, then widespread fundamental moral disagreement leads to a certain sort of moral skepticism.

Adam Blincoe, University of Kentucky

“The Value of Autonomy: A Kantian Justification of Lying”

This study presents a solution to the classic murderer-at-the-door dilemma. After introducing the first two formulations of Kant’s categorical imperative, I present

the dilemma. I then outline Korsgaard's solution, giving particular attention to her "double-level" interpretation of Kantian moral theory. Specifically, Korsgaard argues that in non-ideal circumstances the Kantian formula of humanity should operate only as an ideal to be pursued, not as a hard constraint. In this way one can disrespect the murderer's humanity in order to preserve one's own humanity (i.e., in order to avoid being used as a mere means by the murderer). Despite its strengths this solution has the unfortunate consequence of opposing the humanity of the murderer to the humanity of oneself. For this reason I propose another solution, involving the Kantian value of autonomy, which allows the lying party to deceive the murderer out of a genuine respect for the *murderer's own* humanity.

Kevin Busch, Brandeis University

"The Scope of Caring"

In light of Frankfurt's analysis of higher-order desires in *The Reasons of Love* (2004), two formal aspects of care need to be clarified: first, the relation of care to its own object, that is, to its corresponding first-order desire; second, the relation of care to the object of its object, that is, to the object of its corresponding first-order desire. Accordingly, in this paper I argue that we read Frankfurt's "care" as relating loosely to its object, first-order desire. A consequence of this reading is that the object of first-order desire, or the object of the object of care, cannot fall within the scope of the corresponding care: if one desires x, then x cannot fall within the scope of the desire to desire x.

David Cheely, University of South Florida

"The Role of Memory in the Fineness of Grain of Demonstrative Concepts"

Since the publication of John McDowell's *Mind and World*, there has been much debate within epistemology regarding the ability of demonstrative utterances to capture the fineness of grain of perceptual experience. McDowell's claim that human beings must have a recognitional capacity to distinguish the fineness of grain of perceptual experience in order to rightly be considered concept users supports a content-conceptualist position. Content non-conceptualists claim that the fineness of grain of perceptual experience is not captured by demonstrative utterances through an appeal to the empirical data supplied by cognitive psychology experiments. In short, content non-conceptualists argue that the empirical data has proven that human beings do not possess the recognitional capacity required by McDowell's demonstrative utterances, thus perceptual experience must be, at least partially, non-conceptual. In this paper, I present McDowell's position on demonstrative utterances along with Gareth Evans' fineness of grain objection. I then present Sean Kelly's re-identification condition and defend McDowell's conceptualism against non-conceptualists

like Michael Tye, Chris Peacocke, and Kelly. I argue that the empirical data appealed to by content non-conceptualists is derived from work with iconic memory—a form of ‘memory’ which can best be understood as content/less, as opposed to the content of short-term and long-term memory. McDowell’s temporally short-lived recognitional capacity should be empirically sought in work with short-term and long-term memory. The fact that a recognitional capacity does not exist for iconic memory is no strike against content conceptualism, thus content non-conceptualists who employ iconic memory data to support their argument that McDowell’s recognitional capacity (required for demonstrative utterances) cannot meet Kelly’s re-identification condition are barking up the wrong ‘memory tree’.

Gary Ebbs, Indiana University ♦Keynote Address♦

“Transparence and Entitlement at the Limits of Doubt”

When we inquire, I assume, we aim to believe in accord with the truth. This aim is sometimes portrayed metaphorically, as, for instance, the aim of believing in a way that is “responsive to how things are”. My goal in this paper is to try to apply this metaphor to beliefs that we cannot coherently suppose to be false, where the “cannot” comes to this: if we try to specify a way in which such a belief may be false, we find we are unable to do so. Consider, for instance, my belief that no sentence of the form ‘S and not S’ is true. Although I have tried to make sense of challenges to this belief, I find I am so far unable to specify a way in which it may be false. In what sense, if any, is this belief, and others like it, “responsive to how things are”? I motivate and clarify one version of this question, raised from a first-person, deliberative point of view, explain why this question seems so difficult to answer, investigate a few tempting but unsuccessful answers to it, and offer my own.

Jeremy Killian, University of Louisville

“That Deceptive Line: Plato, Linear Perspective and Visual Perception”

In this essay, I make the assumption that the Greeks utilized linear perspective in painting, and I will tease out a Platonic response to this technique in the visual arts. I will begin by offering reasons to think that one of Plato’s concerns with painting is that it relies on a singular line of sight that is inherently problematic. This embedded objection appears in *Republic X*, and it may be an objection present in other Platonic discourses on art. I argue that Plato worries that linear perspective does not allow the viewer to visually cross-examine the image, and that the line of sight itself may be a more compelling feature of a painting than the images it depicts.

Callie Phillips, University of Kentucky ♦2011 KPA Student Essay Contest Winner♦

“Possible Worlds Analysis of the Ontological Argument”

Some have argued that using a possible worlds framework gets rid of the traditional problems that undermine Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of god. I will argue that a possible worlds analysis of the ontological argument fails to get rid of two central problems. I will do this by assessing how David Lewis' possible worlds rendering of the argument fares with respect to them. Ultimately, the problem of making sense of “existence in the understanding,” which is integral to the argument, is replaced with the problem of making sense of non-existent objects. Likewise, the problem of treating existence as an additive property (Kant's objection) is replaced by the problem of treating actuality as an additive property.

A.J. Snelson, University of British Columbia

“An Affront against ‘Life’: Nietzsche’s Critique of Christianity and His Redemption of the World”

In this paper I provide an interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of “life” according to his evaluative lens *vis-à-vis* the will to power. Elucidating both its use as a normative injunction and as descriptive fact about organisms in the world, “life” is assessed with an eye towards its relevance to Nietzsche's philosophy of religion and the world redemptive message that lies at the heart of his project of revaluation. Throughout the paper I argue that Nietzsche's critique of Christianity according to “life” should enjoy a privileged standing in his assessments of religion and I show how this leads to surprising anti-atheistic sentiments on behalf of one of history's most notorious critics of religion.

Elijah Weber, Bowling Green State University

“On the Impossibility of Justified Soft Paternalistic Criminal Drug Prohibitions”

Proponents of soft paternalistic criminal drug laws often cite the protection or preservation of an agent's values as justification for interfering with her choices. I argue that this soft paternalistic justification makes justified soft paternalistic criminal drug prohibitions impossible. Criminal drug laws typically prescribe punishment for individuals who violate them, but the soft paternalistic justification for criminal drug laws makes justified punishment impossible. I begin by discussing punishment's communicative function, in order to demonstrate that moral responsibility is a necessary condition for justified punishment. Then, I argue that moral responsibility for an action requires that the action is motivated by the agent's own values. It is precisely this connection that is denied by the soft paternalist. The justification for soft paternalistic criminal drug laws therefore undermines the justification for punishing violators of these same laws. I conclude by suggesting that this problem generalizes to all soft paternalistic criminal laws.

George Wrisley, North Georgia College and State University

“Why Happiness is Not the Proper End of a Human Life”

Americans (Westerners? Humans?) are obsessed with happiness. Americans (at least) tend to believe themselves entitled to it. The human love affair, its depths, varieties, and extent, are well chronicled in recent popular scholarly books such as Darrin M. McMahon's *Happiness: A History* and Sissela Bok's *Exploring Happiness: From Aristotle to Brain Science*, and V.J. McGill's explicitly philosophical *The Idea of Happiness*. There are countless “guides” to happiness to be found in bookstores and online. However, aside from the occasional dissenter, it is never questioned whether happiness is the *proper* end of a human life. This paper argues that happiness is not *the* (only) proper end of a human life. I will dislodge happiness from its pedestal by arguing that happiness is inconsistent with profound suffering, doing the right thing is consistent with profound suffering, and there are times when doing the right thing results in profound suffering.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

For directions and parking, please see the companion document.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

The University Inn is close to the UK campus and pretty affordable: <http://www.uinn.biz/>. Another nice place (but pricier) is the Gratz Park Inn, <http://www.gratzparkinn.com/>.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to the following for their contributions to the program:

- ✚ All the speakers and commentators, especially Dr. Gary Ebbs.
- ✚ All the referees, especially the Faculty of Philosophy at Eastern Kentucky University.
- ✚ The judges of the 2011 KPA Student Essay Contest, Drs. Robert Sandmeyer and Meg Wallace.
- ✚ The Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Kentucky.
- ✚ Dr. Nancy Hancock, KPA Secretary-Treasurer.
- ✚ Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Mansoh, Immediate Past KPA President.
- ✚ Above all, Dr. Robert Sandmeyer for making all the local arrangements.