

Abstracts 2015 EMU UCiP

Rachel McCarthy (EMU)

Abstract: That we project the past onto our predictions of the future is a commonly accepted means of behavior prediction within folk psychology and everyday life. It is also a proposed method of prediction given by Kristen Andrews in her piece, *Do Apes Read Minds?*. By way of considering David Hume's writing on the problem of induction, supplementary pieces on induction and inference, and cognitive psychology as it pertains to memory perception, I will address:

1. Prediction from the past as it pertains to folk psychology, inductive reasoning and cognitive psychology.
2. Hume's "Problem of Induction" and Nelson Goodman's "Riddle of Induction."
3. The practical uses of what appears to be inductive reasoning.
4. Relevant studies within the field of cognitive psychology that pertain to memory perception.
5. The confusion of prediction from the past with prediction from the situation.

I argue that prediction from the past is really just conflation with prediction from the present. There are seemingly practical uses of inductive reasoning, but induction leaves us with obstacles we cannot overcome and to say that we are using induction would imply that we have perfect knowledge of the past when studies pertaining to memory perception might say otherwise.

Evan Murphy (Buffalo)

The philosophy of science has begun to impinge more and more on general philosophical discourse as of late¹, and scientific realism has begun to become one of the most widely influential approaches in the philosophy of science -- so that scientific realism, generally construed, has come to rest at the heart of a very taut web of philosophical problems and This paper attempts to exposit the essential characteristics of scientific realism, the central arguments for it, and the metaphilosophical methods those arguments proceed from -- while at the same time critically examining these three things (or at least the last two of them.) At least one of the critiques of scientific realism is itself critiqued, and a possible route for future criticism of scientific realism is finally suggested.

James Gillespie (Scranton)

Time bifurcates into two philosophical theses: Atheory and Btheory. The former holds that time is an objective feature of reality. The Atheory of time confirms temporal dogma: that time exists, that tensed sentential operators (past, present, future) obtain, and that the now and the flow of time are objective. Btheory, on the other hand, contends that time consists purely of relations, denying any objectivity of time. As such, the Btheorist denies that the now is ontologically distinct from other events. This dichotomy between Atheory and Btheory, I argue, is vacuous. The metaphysics of time is the byproduct of semantics, not genuine philosophical investigation, and, as I show, the Btheory collapses into Atheory upon elucidation.

This paper surveys the contemporary debate between Atheory and Btheory. I outline the arguments Btheorists raise against Atheorists, detailing an argument by

Nicholas J.J. Smith. Following the outlined theories, I present three arguments against Btheory. The first argument analyzes Smith's proposed spacetime diagrams for each formulation of Atheory and Btheory, revealing an inconsistency. The second argument uses the Wittgenstein's second proposition of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* to show that from a physical standpoint (specifically on the quantum level) tensed time must be an objective feature reality. Finally, I show that, under the assumption of Btheory, the resultant ontology reduces to Atheory lest the B-theorist surrender language and empirical science.

Cameron Davis (MacMurray College)

In *The Amoralist*, Joseph Raz considers a character, the amoralist, who "is thought to present a problem for moral philosophy" (369). If one can be an amoralist not out of "ignorance or irrationality," then it seems "the validity of morality is undermined" (369). This is because "the amoralist does not believe in morality"—though the amoralist finds value in various aspects of life, he "denies that persons [qua persons] are valuable" and thus he denies that *all* persons are valuable. The moralist, naturally, is one who accepts these propositions the amoralist characteristically rejects. It is Raz's task in *The Amoralist* to narrow so much as he can the gap between the amoralist and the moralist. He claims to show that "there are activities, pursuits, relationships which though non-moral themselves commit anyone who regards them as valuable to the moralist's principle...that those who accept *all*...that can enrich their own life also accept the moralist principle" (384). If Raz is successful, he has shown that there is no substantial divide between the moralist and the amoralist who, unlike an animal, acts for reasons and recognizes the value of friendship. The goal, in brief, is to show that the amoralist "is on the same plane as all people who accept moral considerations" (379).

Raz's essay is devoted to narrowing the gap between the amoralist and the moralist as much as possible. My goal in this essay is try to reestablish the distance between these two figures and to show that the amoralist position is a tenable one. To meet this goal, I suggest that multiple crucial assumptions Raz makes as part of his argument can be challenged and rejected, and at the end of my paper, I suggest a mark of the moralist which distinguishes him from the amoralist.

Daniel Flavin (Hope College)

The idea in the causal theory of reference that names hold (largely) the same reference over time seems to be invalid as concepts of scientific kinds have evolved. If science progresses by correcting mistakes of earlier scientists, then it must be possible to translate a different scientific theory's terms from either side of a scientific revolution. If the new theories and those they replace do not mean the same things by the terms they use, it appears as though we cannot straightforwardly say that the latter theory denies what the earlier theory asserts, in which case we cannot say that it represents a correction and improvement upon an earlier theory. Thomas Kuhn holds this view that scientific terms are incommensurable, that they cannot be truly comprehended on either side of a scientific revolution. For Kuhn, incommensurability is itself closely tied with the ideas of translation and interpretation. Kuhn argues that causal theories of

reference merely interpret instead of translate scientific terms, and thus scientific terms on either side of a scientific revolution are incommensurable. If that is so, then this view holds profound consequences for scientific realism.

In the first section of this paper I will discuss how incommensurability functions and how it can be shown that certain ideas within the causal theory of reference—mainly partial reference—translate, not merely interpret, scientific terms; thereby making scientific terms commensurable, and therefore able to hold reference over time. In the second section I will discuss incommensurability's impact on scientific realism.

Natalie Anschuetz (EMU)

This paper will explore the way in which theories from different scientific disciplines corroborate one another. Disciplines such as psychology are often not substantially corroborated by disciplines such as physics or chemistry, giving them the sometimes suggestive title the 'soft' sciences. However, there are linguistic and methodological barriers that prevent the theories of the 'hard' sciences from translating into the contexts of the 'soft' sciences. In this paper I defend the thesis that we ought to seek corroborating evidence for psychological theories in the so-called 'soft' sciences, specifically in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. I will begin by outlining some prominent issues in psychology regarding the way it functions as a science, such as common methods of inquiry and issues with testability and verifiability. Next, I will demonstrate why attempting to explain psychology with only the 'hard' sciences does not sufficiently solve the aforementioned problems. Specifically, I am making an anti-reductionist argument based on the premises that many of the methods and vocabularies of the 'hard' sciences are outside the scope of other disciplines. Finally, I will detail the way in which corroborating evidence from sociology informs and clarifies our psychological theories.

Mandy Mak (EMU)

Outing is the publicizing of an individual's homosexuality against the closeted person's wishes. In "The Case for Outing," Richard Mohr defends outing by appeal to dignity, asserting that conforming to the social convention of the closet is insulting to the dignity of the potential outer and is a reinforcement of homophobic prejudices. Though Mohr's argument is not overtly a consequentialist defense of outing, it may be interpreted as one. In this essay, I will argue that Mohr's consequentialist defense of outing is unsuccessful in framing the instances in which it is morally permissible to out a closeted person. In doing so, I will first provide a brief explanation of a more apparently consequentialist argument for outing, as provided by Noah Michelson. I will then compare it with and explicate Mohr's argument for the moral permissibility of outing. I will then indicate some of the problems with Mohr's argument as a consequentialist defense which hinder its strength, critiquing Mohr's argument from a consequentialist perspective, and not because of the argument's consequentialism. Lastly, I will provide a friendly amendment to Mohr's defense of outing.

Bjørn Ralf Kristensen (Northern Michigan University)

In this paper, I address the negative side effects on face-to-face communication and well-being resulting from our continual use of mobile-mediated technology (MMT). I consider these consequences by drawing on Søren Kierkegaard's deductions on deficient communication, and discuss one remedy he suggests: a closer relationship with nature. However, technology is so ubiquitous in the modern age that the prospect of escaping it, is nearly futile. In response, I offer a solution from the ideology of *friluftsliv*, which views a regular relationship with nature as a way of getting in touch with one's natural human identity and restoring balance in life. I draw parallels between *friluftsliv* and Kierkegaard's ideas on nature and walking for curative purposes. I argue that the answer to our problem is not to shun technology, but to experience a regular relationship with nature as a way of offsetting its harmful effects.

Charles Dalrymple-Fraser (Toronto)

Recent medical advances in detecting genetic dementia allow individuals diagnosed with prospective dementia to prepare for their futures as dementia. Typically, planning takes form in an advance directive, which allows prospective patients to detail their health care decisions in case of loss of capacity for consent. However, the validity of advance directives for dementia has recently come into question through what is known as the "other person" problem. The "other person" problem claims that advance directives should not be considered binding or valid in situations where the dementia patient seems to be a different person than the author of their advance directive: what right can one's plan for oneself have to guide the care of another individual? Those seeking to defend the validity of an advance directive have mainly sought to establish a robust metaphysical theory of identity which can account for personal identity persistent through dementia onset. In light of the demonstrable failures of these approaches, I argue that there seem to be consistent moral intuitions already held in many applied ethical cases which, when mapped onto the case at hand, suggest that advance directives should be considered valid. In this way, this paper argues that it is a mistake to think that the continuity of personal identity is necessary to establish the validity of advance directives, and seeks to dissolve the "other person" problem.

J.D. Rice (Illinois State University)

In *Death and Posthumous Harms*, Joel Feinberg attempts to answer the question, "Can a person be harmed by their own death?" By first refining the commonsense and oft-argued-for conceptions of death, that is, death being either a) harmful or b) non-harmful for the one who dies, Feinberg thinks it possible to avoid the "inherently indeterminate" nature of these popular, but opposing views. In doing so, Feinberg concludes that death, under certain (and seemingly most) circumstances, is harmful for the ante-mortem person who dies in retrospect. This paper will argue against Feinberg's priorist account, in favor of the Epicurean account, to

demonstrate that while many of us are harmed by the prospect of death, it is a harm that can be overcome, as we are all in fact precluded from any ante-mortem harm of death itself. The focus will center on critiquing three areas of concern; 1) Feinberg's conception of surviving interests, 2) the retrospective conditions of harm, and 3) the distinction of the prospect of death and death itself. It is my aim to convey a sense of optimism regarding death itself in order to relent the shackles of our misguided modes of thinking about death and dying.

Graham Martin-Poteet (St. Mary's College of Maryland)

This paper is based on the argument that an environmentally anthropocentric view is inadequate to fully understand human relations with the natural world. While I do not debate this topic deeply here, in this paper I assume that all of the natural world has intrinsic value and that humans are a part of this community. Here I will compare and contrast two ideologies that value nature intrinsically. The three frameworks that explicitly do this, that I am aware of, are ecofeminism, land ethics, and deep ecology. As I have encountered comparisons between ecofeminism and land ethics, and ecofeminism and deep ecology, I concluded that it would be most fruitful to compare deep ecology and land ethics. There are many similarities between the two frameworks but a few key differences should be noted. Although both are Radical views, I conclude that land ethics tends to run into less conceptual and ethical problems, in comparison to deep ecology. In this way, in looking for an ethical system that values the natural world intrinsically, I have found that I identify more with land ethics rather than deep ecology as the former is more community based and focussed on the loss of a dominative framework while the latter runs into problems of dualism and recognizing specific instances of human domination.

Emily Prychitko (Northern Michigan University)

Heidegger's goal in *Being and Time* is to come to an explicit understanding of Being, or what it is to be at all. Although we already understand Being tacitly (we know that beings are), Heidegger finds our common understanding vague and in need of clarification. He expects that analyzing the ontology of human beings might allow for a discovery of the meaning of Being. However, Heidegger's goal cannot be fulfilled, for merely positing the explicit concept of Being is problematic. Defining Being must always be circular, since Being is always presupposed in what we say. Discussing Being at all is to understand Being as a being, but, as Heidegger says, Being is not a being; the concept of Being is thus contradictory. Formally discussing Being will not clarify our understanding of it, as Heidegger thinks, but will only steep us in circularity and contradiction. We cannot explicitly understand Being.

Alexandra Melnick (Millsaps College)

Humans construct their identity by constantly measuring themselves against and creating themselves around culturally ingrained systems of rules governing the social, political, and perceptions of the physical. I called a system of rules a "syntax." When a syntactical system is broken, a monster is born. Our monsters are the litmus and definition of our selves. Using Michel Foucault's *Abnormal* lectures to

inform my theory of the self as “syntax,” I posit that it is essential to understand the monster in order to exert social change and essential to understand what a monster is in order to understand oneself.

Ryan Shinkel (University of Michigan)

Edmund Burke writes his essay, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), as a refutation against the Jacobin elements of the French Revolution to warn that those elements could culminate at home: he believed that what had happened in France in 1789 could happen in England sometime in the 1790s. Radicals like Dr. Richard Price and Joseph Priestly supported the French Revolution with a fervor Burke believed equivalent to that of the Jacobins: justifying political change with metaphysical doctrines about natural rights abstracted from social context and historical experience of individual societies’ organic growth. Applying such doctrines, without concern for the context of how a society has developed in its working institutions, only erodes the social capital out of which its working institutions are built and concrete ways for reform. The French Revolutionaries, Burke writes, “are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgotten his nature. Without opening one new avenue to the understanding, they have succeeded in stopping up those that lead to the heart.” I discuss what I find to be the motivation for revolution—Ressentiment qua philosopher Roger Scruton—and how Burke prescribes the treatment of it so as to avoid its destructive political and often nihilistic applications. I examine how Burke uses social knowledge and civic trust as a prescription against this application, as seen in the revolutionary movements of recent history.

Olivia Karp (Wittenberg University)

Charitable giving is an accepted route to ethically contribute to society. Both non-profit and for-profit organizations envision a society where the distribution of goods and services will establish social and economic fairness. These companies are attempting to achieve justice while operating within a capitalist system. Therefore, in our economy, charity is no longer a peculiarity of a few giving individuals, it is a basic component of our economy. Giving organizations allow consumers to purchase goods that promote an ethic of welfare. This appeals to the individual’s desire to remedy oppression in society. When consumers donate money or buy a product fair-trade, it releases them from the constriction of only being a consumer. This paper will discuss how giving and charitable organizations, in their acts to justify society, target the altruistic costumers. However, these efforts do not supply justice to the oppressed, but rather sustain the inequalities. Charitable giving aims to cure the improper distribution of goods, but fails to reach this ideal.

Usevalad Auramenka (New School)

This paper connects the concept of hegemony developed by Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci with the concept of reification developed by Hungarian Marxist philosopher György Lukács. It analyzes the usage of both concepts. It argues that both Gramsci and Lukács perceive the working class people as the agent of revolutionary struggle. This is what connects both concepts. It challenges the latter interpreters of Gramsci that try to perceive him as a figure who goes beyond the Marxist Orthodoxy. It argues that Gramsci preserves Orthodoxy in his arguments. This paper argues that both hegemony and reification are concepts that delineate programme for the emancipation for the singular agent of struggle - the working class people.

Taylor Wisneski (Kansas State University)

This paper examines methods provided by both John Dewey and Amy Gutmann. Dewey's method involves categorizing experiences and values amongst individuals. Gutmann's method involves neutrality through equality through information and presentations. My question revolves around how to create a fairer democratic education system that allows individuals to critically analyze every day information. My analysis and conclusion combine the two methods to form a better method and solution. The solution is that values and experiences need to be learned through unbiased neutrality in order for individuals to form unbiased social groups that make up society. This implies that some of our current social groups possibly have a wall of ignorance about them that don't allow for fairness in a democratic education.

Madison Thornton (University of Tennessee)

This is an expanded version of a paper I wrote for my 19th/20th century philosophy class with Dr. Samuel Duncan at the University of Tennessee. The prompt for this paper was basically to identify the four kinds of alienation mentioned by Karl Marx in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, and to defend the presuppositions behind each of the types. In the paper I find all of the presuppositions to be valid except for those regarding man's alienation from nature. Writing this paper, which I can truly say has been a three month process, has involved an interesting process as to what I want the reader's primary take-away from it to be. As an ambitious young philosophy student, the first thing I would like the reader to focus on is the notion of finite, temporal identity. This was, as far as I know, an original idea. As such, I would love for it to be discussed by the philosophy community at large. As great as that would be, I have decided that the main purpose of this paper is to show that there are elements within Karl Marx's writings that still pose a valid argument against capitalism. Capitalism should still feel compelled to answer these claims, as it will give us a more precise opinion of both Marxist, and capitalistic thinking.

Cullen O'Keefe (University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)

Scholars have devoted considerable time to analyzing the role of occult studies in Scientific Revolution thought. While occult studies like astrology, alchemy, and

natural magic have received the bulk of this scrutiny, another occult science – numerology – has received significantly less scholarship. In this paper, I identify two types of numerology present in Scientific Revolution thought: that which has its roots in the works of the Pythagoreans (Pythagorean numerology), and that which has its roots in the Bible (Biblical numerology). I use this Pythagorean-Biblical paradigm to examine and classify instances of numerology in the works of prominent Scientific Revolution thinkers like John Dee, Robert Fludd, Johannes Kepler, Georg Rheticus, and Isaac Newton. I argue that by understanding these thinkers' respective appeals to Pythagorean and Biblical numerology we can gain insight into their intellectual influences. I further argue that the mixture of Pythagorean and Biblical numerology found in Scientific Revolution works is evidence of an intellectual landscape that was heavily influenced by a combination of Pythagorean-Neoplatonic and Biblical ideas and that transcended even the fiercest ideological barriers of the time, resulting in the presence of numerology in the works of thinkers as diverse as Dee, Kepler, and Newton. I conclude by suggesting that the legacy of Scientific Revolution numerology remains visible in some places, and recommend that future examinations of the role of occult studies in Scientific Revolution thought include numerology alongside the more thoroughly examined fields of astrology, alchemy, and natural magic.

Elliot T. Polsky (The University of St. Thomas)

Prime matter is ordinarily defined as pure potentiality or complete indeterminacy. As the bare substratum underlying all substantial change, it receives form and determinacy, but has no form or determinacy of its own. This definition originates at least as far back as the medieval scholastics. It is debatable whether Aristotle would have accepted the scholastic definition of prime matter. In this paper, the author argues that while prime matter must exist as an ultimate substratum underlying substantial change, prime matter cannot be pure indeterminacy. It has to be partially determinate. The author will present two arguments why the fact that prime matter alone underlies substantial change entails that prime matter has some partial determinacy of its own. The first argument shows that prime matter would have to be nothing without determinacy of its own. Since it cannot be nothing, it must have internal determinacy. The second argument shows that prime matter must have some internal actuality in order to bear the potentiality to receive form. Next the author will respond to two objections to this conclusion. In responding to these objections, the author will employ a theory of reciprocal formal causality by which prime matter and substantial form can both determine each other and be determined by each other. Finally, the author will explain why, even with reciprocal formal causality, the substantial form is more properly called the form and the matter is not. This is intended to show that the author's theory of prime matter does not do away with the ontological preeminence of form.

Thomas Gardiner (University of South Carolina Aiken)

The decision to sell the farm in order to buy the cow is inefficient and seems to stem from a false dilemma. Yet, that's precisely what the industrial agricultural process has convinced consumers to do. The marketing strategies of the meat industry

paired with a lack of knowledge in the general population has led to a cultural stigma that typecasts vegetarians as awkward, frail, and ecologically centric creatures. This cultural stigma causes human beings to ignore the red flag signs from the planet and endangers the ultimate survival of the human race. Through examinations of both sides of common arguments for and against vegetarianism, this treatise speaks to those who were previously not listening while simultaneously empowering those whose voices have yet to be heard. In the struggle for our environment, our world, and our lives, we can spare neither time nor effort. The language in this piece is direct and is meant to stir feelings, inspire movement, and appeal to the internal voice of reason within the reader. By reducing these arguments to their ridiculous and invalid base, the reader can see the weakness of the industry and the mass consumers that refuse to move from their comfortable perches in absurdity. The vegetarian movement is a migration in support of humanity, community, and self-sustainability and is the antithesis to the profit driven, capitalist market goals that are the slave drivers of the industrial agricultural machine.

Marianne Hamilton (St. Mary's College of Maryland)

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are a topic of much debate. Jonathan Rauch advocates that by not including them in food production, we are stopping starving people from gaining a much needed food supply. He argues that GMOs have the potential to significantly increase food production; however, Mae-Won Ho argues that GMOs are much more dangerous than the public is aware of, and we need to find alternatives to feeding starving people. I argue that Rauch is too ambitious in his desire to immediately use GMOs to feed people. We need to research beforehand what the ramifications GMOs may have on our health, and the public also should be up-to-date on scientific advancements and knowledgeable about which foods already contain GMOs. In the meantime, we should follow Engel's logic that all people believe we have an obligation to each other and help raise money, as well as change our dietary habits, so we can feed the starving population.

Michael S. Dauber (Fordham University)

Kwame Anthony Appiah argues for a system of cosmopolitan coexistence that largely rests on establishing a system of universal, cross-cultural values. His search for universal values forces him into conflict with relativism/positivism. Appiah's mischaracterization of relativism enables him to disarm it easily; in reality, the relativist position, while shying away from universal norms, nevertheless fosters cosmopolitan tolerance.

Anna Allred (American University in Washington, D.C.)

Democratic governments are often praised for their dedication to human rights issues and for championing equal rights for all. But when we look more closely at the democratic governments of today's world we see crimes against humanity and human rights violations left and right. Many of the key works on international human rights have shown that the effort to help our fellow man goes beyond government and that man helping our fellow man is an effort that must not rely on those governing us. There are many scholars who disagree with this point and feel wholeheartedly that democracy is the system of government that best upholds human rights. After exhaustive research I have been able to determine that democracy is not, in fact, the most conducive system to uphold human rights.

Jaryth Webber (University of Texas - Arlington)

In section 1 of "PDP Mental Modeling and the Generative Theory of Western Tonal Art Music" I survey some conclusions that RAAM networks provide for theories of musical experience, to include matters of variant melody, novel melody, and rhythmic structures. The section ends with a pragmatic argument concluding that one may wish to stop short of an unqualified endorsement of the Lerdahl and Jackendoff account of musical understanding in all of its details. Section 2 covers Zbikowski's philosophy of musical categories and musical metaphor, contrasting it with the Generative Theory. Section 3 presents an argument against some of Zbikowski's conclusions. The essay concludes with some metaphilosophical reflections on the matter of making unqualified endorsements when seriously attempting to philosophize.

Katelyn Pyles (EMU)

Simone de Beauvoir presents an important idea about the nature of childhood and its lasting emotional and existential consequences. A child must have their world structured and built for them by somebody else; when they become old enough to address the problems faced in daily life, they begin to realize the amount of responsibility they actually have as a being in this world and the weight of the decisions they must make. This awareness causes a crisis and creates either a man who perpetuates his own irresponsibility, or a man who accepts the new role he must fulfill in his life but longs for the time when he did not have such responsibility. This paper examines the various possibilities opened up to De Beauvoir's interpretation of childhood by the current integration of technology into our culture at such a young age. The fundamental result remains the same: a population divided into those who do, and those who do only to escape. What has changed now is the mechanism of escape and the tools available to improve oneself should the decision be made to access them for a positive use. Technology and media are important functions in everyday life that have changed our relationship with ourselves and others by working to eliminate our metaphysical privilege, without replacing the importance of individual experience and decision-making.

Minji Jang (Carleton College)

This paper addresses two challenges to the Theory of Recollection in *Phaedo*. First, it raises the concern of comparative perception, which claims that a newborn infant must possess the ability to comparatively perceive the object in order for the process of recollection to work, and proposes a limited solution for the concern. Second, it examines the compatibility between the two seemingly contradictory claims concerning the role of sense perception in acquiring true knowledge in *Phaedo*, in which Socrates claims both that we can never acquire true knowledge by relying on our physical senses and that the only way for us to retrieve Forms is through our sense-perception. How can we make sense of this argument? I further propose two possible solutions to the second challenge, based on my interpretation of *Timaeus* and *Republic V*.

Avery Wilson (Wooster)

In this paper, I argue that Hume's concept of justice as an artificial virtue is not arbitrary as it serves a specific purpose and is not subject to the will of the individual. This specific purpose is to maintain society, which is advantageous for all people. To argue for a non-arbitrary nature of justice, I show that the scarcity of resources creates a natural selfishness in humans. This scarcity of resources and consequential natural selfishness of humans means that people are unable to fulfill all of the desires they may have, except through cooperation in society. In other words, there is a disproportion between the wants people have and the means by which they can fulfill them. But society allows people to fulfill more desires than would be possible in isolation by allowing for mutual sharing of resources and specialization. Yet, the natural selfishness of humans still exists, and this necessarily creates a combat of passions between acting selfishly and acting in a way that will maintain society and the advantages it brings. The Humean concept of justice, as I show, serves to resolve this combat of passions in favor of society by acting as a sieve through which only passions that allow society to be maintained can pass. In this, justice has a specific purpose that serves all people, and is therefore not arbitrary.

Mark Taylor (Taylor University)

In this paper I reexamine the Euthyphro dilemma to determine the principles underlying its critique of divine command theory. From this analysis, I claim that the Euthyphro dilemma can be fruitfully applied to any system of ethics. As an example, I examine the Utility Principle which undergirds Utilitarianism. I argue that the Utility Principle is metaethically insufficient as the basis for our moral duties because it is good neither necessarily nor independently. The result is that Utilitarianism must be rejected as the definition of morality, though we may retain it as one of the good's criteria.

Andrew Kaster (EMU)

Athletic sports are often denied the same aesthetic significance of the traditionally defined "fine arts" (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, etc.) by virtue of the fact that there exists major conceptual differences between the two that seemingly negate explicit meaningfulness in athletic sports. In this paper, I explore ways in which we can find the same qualities that define the fine arts in athletic sports. I do so by arguing for the return to the body as a primary tool of knowing and suggesting that all perception and aesthetic experience arises out of our bodies sensitivity to (or rather, an affinity for) kinetic energies.

There is a point in which immersion occurs between the audience and the work of art being contemplated/experienced. The audience becomes occupied by the content simultaneously as it experiences it. This immersion occurs alongside a state of bodily disinterestedness, which is the result of our particularly weak sense of bodily awareness and is primarily experiential in nature. The stratified senses as we perceive them become unstratified as we enter this state of contemplation. For both the athletic performer and the audience, this is achieved through what I identify as kinesthetic synesthesia - a synthesis of the senses through the experience of kinetic energies. We become absorbed in the articulation of the body as a conduit of kinetic energy, just as we are absorbed in our contemplations of (for example) a Jackson Pollack or a Monet painting. Just as the vibrancy of these artist's works evoke an emotional-aesthetic experience, I believe that (through the correct perspective) athletic sports can be shown to possess the same essential qualities that give works of fine art a universal appeal.

Zakary Drabczyk (Grand Valley State University)

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate the potential for new forms of resistance to cultural hegemonies (e.g. consumerism, sexism, racism) through a Daoist ontology of "stillness". First, the historical significance of the primary Daoist classics, the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi, are explained, and an interpretation of the classics as "self-care" is offered in contrast to other Western interpretations. Following this reasoning, the classics themselves are consulted alongside recent scholarship to develop the thesis and provide reasoning for the claim that Daoist ontology represents a substantive form of resistance to contemporary social hegemonies. This extrapolation includes a discussion of the metaphysical Dao as well as the significance of "naturalness" in opposition to "design". "Naturalness" becomes a common theme as the ontological argument develops and eventually is defined as the "unchanging principle" of a Daoist subject. This "unchanging principle" is contrasted to the universal logic of control and domination which presupposes a hierarchal system of meaning, upsetting the natural harmony of the Dao. The natural harmony with the Dao, I argue, is nothing more than the most authentic form of existence as characterized by a trueness to the self and freedom of the subject. According to this understanding, "naturalness", harmony with the Dao, is the unpoliticized kernel of liberation intrinsic to every form of cultural resistance. I conclude by arguing this reconceptualization of counter-hegemony through Daoist ontology is both unique and preferable in comparison to the alternatives of politicized and professional activism.

Joshua Lyon (EMU)

How can members of modern society draw value from an aesthetic interpretation of life? Can notions like beauty, creativity, and sensory experience be used in both the philosopher's mind and the workaday life? In order to confirm this possibility, the thoughts of two thinkers, John Dewey and Zhuangzi, are compared and synthesized to yield insight to this question. Both thinkers lived in ages of social change and breakdown. Dewey, from modern America, and Zhuangzi, in the Warring States era of ancient China, both saw answers in the creative potential of ordinary human life.

Key ideas in the philosophies of both thinkers were ideas like process and movement, as well as synthesis of self with environment. With a reduction between the distinctions drawn between oneself and what is observed, one will reduce projections placed outward upon those objects and the barriers they create. Engagement in activity and the process itself generates the most fulfilling aspect of life, and this demands use of the senses and emotions rather than mere submission of them to the rational mind. Dewey instructs us to grow through the experience and Zhuangzi speaks of effortless activity through wu-wei. Both pragmatically demonstrate aesthetic values of creativity and vibrancy as ideals for daily life as we sail through changing conditions and find the extraordinary within the ordinary.

Melanie Stankus (Central Washington University)

Rene Descartes gives an ontological argument for the existence of God in his Fifth Meditation. He claims to have a vivid and clear idea of God, and a vivid and clear idea of God having the property of perfection. Perfection entails the property of existence, because in order for something to be perfect, it has to actually exist. Therefore, God has the property of existence, that is, God exists. Descartes' argument relies on his vivid and clear perceptions. Earlier in his Meditations, he argued that a vivid and clear perception is unquestionable, or self-evident. I argue that Descartes' ontological argument for the existence of God does not prove the existence of God because Descartes could not have vividly and clearly perceived God to have the property of perfection. My argument is this: P1) A vivid and clear perception is unquestionable. P2) If a perception is questionable, it was not provided by a vivid and clear perception (from 1). P3) Descartes' perception of God having the property of perfection is questionable. Therefore, C4) Descartes' perception of God having the property of perfection was not provided by a vivid and clear perception. The goal of my paper is to show that God's property of perfection is inseparable from God's property of infinity, God's property of infinity is questionable, and thus God's property of perfection is questionable. Since God's property of perfection is questionable, it could not have been provided by a vivid and clear perception.

Miranda Young (Connecticut College)

This paper presents an argument that applies John H Beatty's Contingency Thesis to social conceptions of sexuality and gender. The argument negates the existence of biological laws that govern sexual identity, gender identification, sexual practices,

and sexual desire. Aspects of sexuality, such as desire and gender identification are a result of random accidents and mutations, and according to the theory of contingency, could have very easily turned out differently. The application Beatty's philosophical biological theory to sexuality and gender is not only a philosophical theory but also engages in dialogue with social and political issues concerning sexuality and gender. In this paper, I will not only argue for a radical understanding of sexual identity through philosophical scientific theory, but also through the lens of our social understanding of sexual identity. Findings in the scientific world, especially those that pertain to the "natural" tendencies of humans have always held influence over the cultural and social climate that we interact in.

Preston Carter (Weber State)

With a reading of the major ethical theorists and the book *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* by Michael Rosen, I intend to evaluate the concept of dignity utilizing the main ethical theories as well as elements from Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and Nietzsche's historical critiques of morality. I will specifically target Rosen's interpretation of Kant and Kantian ethical theory finally working towards deriving my own conception of dignity, which integrates individual theories, though subtracting the idea of intrinsic value in things and instead placing that value in the interplay between the person and the things that they value. This argument for dignity will finally solve the major problem posed by Rosen in his book about valuing non-ends through a Kantian framework, a problem which he found devastating and spent a large amount of time discussing. I will then spend some time discussing potential objections to this view. All of this is to demonstrate a conception of dignity devoid of intrinsic value, resultant from valuation, is a much more flexible, worthwhile, and sensible position to take on dignity, and perhaps morality as a whole.

Nick Bergstrom (Loyola University Chicago)

The binary system used as a tool of power is a significant piece of our society today. It has been being established by those on the positive side of the binary spectrum, the privileged, since the dawning of modern human society in order to benefit the creators of the system. This then leaves those on the negative side of the binary spectrum, the oppressed, with the not-so-good byproducts of a society based on winners and losers. Winners and losers alike can be found within the binary concepts of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion. Within each of these concepts there will arise at least two ideas and with them their place in society. One is likely to be viewed as good and will be widely accepted and the other is likely to be viewed as bad and will not be widely accepted. But if there are more than just two ideas that have risen out of list of binary concepts then will they be positive or negative or simply be ignored in their entirety due to societal laziness. The privileged and oppressed are both present, but should they be? Should discrimination based on binary facts be allowed to continue? Or should a fundamental change be made in order provide equal opportunity without bias? As of right now, it appears that equal opportunity is not given, thusly there must be

limitations placed in our world that will restrict and bind those afflicted with oppression.