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ABSTRACTS

Harriet Baber

Fool's Paradise

Nozick's Experience Machine thought experiment is generally taken to make a compelling, if not conclusive, case against philosophical hedonism. I argue that it does not and, indeed, that regardless of the results, it cannot provide any reason to accept or reject hedonism or any philosophical account of wellbeing since it presupposes preferentism, the desire-satisfaction account of wellbeing. Preferentists cannot take any comfort from the results of such thought experiments because they presuppose preferentism and therefore cannot establish it. Neither can anyone else, since only a preferentist should accept the terms of the experiment.

Andrew Bailey

No Pairing Problem

Many have thought that there is some problem with causal commerce between immaterial souls and material bodies. In his latest book, Jaegwon Kim attempts to say what such a problem might be. Notably, Kim formulates this problem as an argument, not merely a question or mystery for defenders of substance dualism to answer or address. Unfortunately, there are questions and mysteries about Kim's argument; it is not clear what its premises and conclusions are. In this paper, I take up the task of understanding Kim's argument. I offer four reconstructions of it, all of which I shall argue are unsound.

Joshua David Blander

Scotus on Simplicity and Language about God

Scotus's commitment to the univocity of at least some of our language about God is in tension with certain features of the dominant medieval model of divine simplicity. This paper focuses on the approach that Scotus takes for resolving this tension and making sense of the conjunction of univocity and simplicity. I intend to develop briefly his accounts both of univocity and of divine simplicity, and then turn to the primary means by which I believe he can resolve the tension, the formal distinction. In the course of developing an account of the formal distinction, I will also suggest that his account has rather general applicability to philosophical and theological questions involving identity and distinction, such as the problem of material constitution, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the unity of the divine attributes.

Josh Bright

In Defense of Doxastic Voluntarism

Doxastic voluntarism, the idea that persons possess a substantial form of direct control over their beliefs, is unpopular in current analytic philosophy. Many philosophers have suggested that for one reason or another, beliefs are not open to such robust control, that we cannot believe at will. Robert Audi is one prominent opponent of doxastic voluntarism. In his recent essay "Doxastic Voluntarism and the Ethics of Belief," Audi offers a penetrating critique of two forms of doxastic voluntarism. Audi concludes that both types of voluntarism fail and that because of this voluntarism as a whole should be discarded. I briefly outline some of Audi's main critiques, and then offer disagreements with both his arguments and their conclusion. I suggest that while he is correct in his criticism of one form of voluntarism, his argument against the other is flawed, leaving his conclusion unsupported.

Justin Capes

Alternative Possibilities, Ultimate Responsibility, and the Failure of the Direct Argument

I contend that an important class of arguments for the incompatibility of determinism and moral responsibility—the so-called direct arguments—are failures. The direct arguments were supposed to enable the incompatibilist to avoid various controversies about the sort of freedom required for moral responsibility and whether that freedom is incompatible with the determinism. I argue that the direct arguments all implicitly depend on the assumption that a certain controversial variety of freedom—the freedom to do otherwise—is required for moral responsibility and/or the assumption that the sort of freedom required for moral responsibility (whatever it might be) is incompatible with determinism.

Steve Dilley

Why Philosophical Naturalists Ought to Reject Methodological Naturalism

This essay argues that philosophical naturalists ought to reject methodological naturalism in science because, when joined with methodological naturalism, philosophical naturalism opens itself to dogmatism as well as to denigration of scientific evidence. Specifically, methodological naturalism *guarantees* that (i) philosophical naturalism will be scientifically confirmed but never disconfirmed whereas (ii) theistic-based hypotheses, philosophical naturalism's chief rival, can never be scientifically confirmed but can be pragmatically disconfirmed. Second, linked with methodological naturalism, philosophical naturalism renders empirical evidence virtually *irrelevant* to scientific confirmation of philosophical naturalism and to scientific disconfirmation of theism. In sum, when philosophical naturalism accepts methodological naturalism, philosophical naturalism ignores the saliency of scientific evidence while mandating its success and its rival's failure—a dynamic reminiscent of dogmatism. This essay will therefore argue that philosophical naturalists ought to hold methodological naturalism only in private; in public they should adopt a more pluralistic conception of science.

John Martin Fischer

Molinism

In the last few decades, much has been written about Luis De Molina's views about God's omniscience and also the relationship between God's omniscience and such ideas as God's providential powers and human freedom and moral responsibility. The literature is enormous, and the issues can be complex. In this paper I do not set myself the (daunting) task of fitting my views into an overall framework that captures the broad sweep of the discussions of the various components of Molinism. Rather, I shall focus on what I take to be the kernel set of ideas in Molina's theory of God's omniscience, and I intend to show that, although they can profitably be employed in seeking to understand God's providence over the world, they (contrary to what many philosophers apparently think) cannot be invoked to provide a solution to the problem posed by the relationship between God's omniscience and human freedom. In a nutshell, Molinism does not provide such an answer—it presupposes it. I shall explain why this is so.

Daniel Fogal

In Defense of Divine Conceptualism

As often noted, there is an apparent tension, if not outright inconsistency, between the theses of Platonism and traditional theism. Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey Brower (2006) are the latest in a long line of objectors and seek to demonstrate an inconsistency between the two theses, where *Platonism* is the thesis that (1) a unified account of predication can be provided in terms of exemplifiableness and (2) exemplifiableness are best conceived as abstract properties or universals, and *traditional theism* is taken to include (among other things) the “aseity-dependence” doctrine, according to which God exists entirely from himself (*a se*) and everything distinct from God is dependent on him. Historically, the dominant response to the tension—that of *divine conceptualism*—is to reject (2) and offer a replacement according to which Platonic abstracta (e.g. properties, propositions) are taken to be contents of the divine mind (e.g. divine concepts, thoughts). However, Bergmann and Brower argue that any such maneuver—involving a rejection of (2), but not (1)—would be insufficient to avoid inconsistency. Their argument is distinctive in targeting (1)—the *first* component of Platonism—and alleging that it, too, is inconsistent with traditional theism. In this paper, I critically examine Bergmann and Brower's argument. In particular, I call into question several of their assumptions and argue that their argument faces a damaging dilemma—namely, that it is either unsound or unmotivated—on different interpretations.

Christopher Franklin

Another One Bites the Dust:

Why Buffer Cases Fail to Refute the Principle of Alternative Possibilities

One well-known incompatibilist response to Frankfurt-style counterexamples is the ‘flicker of freedom’ strategy. The flicker theorist maintains that Frankfurt-style counterexamples fail to describe a scenario in which an agent is morally responsible and lacks alternative possibilities. This is because, despite first appearances, the agent possesses robust alternative possibilities. Derk Pereboom and David Hunt have recently constructed a Frankfurt-style counterexample that has been thought to be resilient to the flicker strategy. Their respective cases are known as ‘buffer cases’. After briefly explaining the putative improvements of buffer cases to the traditional type of counterexample, I argue that buffer cases nevertheless fall prey to a modified version of the flicker strategy.

Sergio Gallegos

Conceptual Relativity, Subvaluation and the Problem of the Trinity

In order to solve the Mystery of the Trinity, which consists in explaining consistently how each one of the three Divine Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is the one and only God while being nonetheless all distinct from each other, Christian Trinitarians have developed several proposals. However, these proposals face some serious difficulties that cast doubt on their aptitude to solve satisfactorily the problem. In this paper, I consider two new approaches to the problem that a Trinitarian might be tempted to use—the first one based on Putnam’s notion of conceptual relativity and the second one based on the use of subvaluations. After analyzing them, I conclude that neither proposal offers a satisfactory solution to the Mystery of the Trinity.

David Hunt

Evil and Theistic Minimalism

The classic problem of evil causes little trouble for belief in Zeus, but poses a major difficulty for belief in the theistic God. This illustrates a general presumption, famously associated with Hume but widely accepted by all sides in philosophical discussions of theistic belief, according to which the problem of evil favors minimal over maximal conceptions of deity. The first business of this paper is to develop the argument implicitly supporting this presumption. This argument makes certain assumptions about how the problem of evil is defined, how the magnitude of the problem may be determined, and how changes in the divine attributes affect the problem. The second business of the paper is to cast doubt on two of these assumptions, thereby undermining the argument for theistic minimalism. This is a fortunate result for natural theology, since a maximalist deity (like the One of Plotinus or the *ens perfectissimum* of Anselm) is more suited than a minimalist deity (like Zeus) to filling the role of ultimate explainer.

D.K. Johnson

God, Fatalism, and Temporal Ontology

In this work I argue—contrary to the common consensus—that both theological and logical fatalism are sound; i.e., both divine foreknowledge and prior truth are incompatible with free will. Additionally, I argue—again contrary to the common consensus—that logical fatalism is the more severe (i.e., fundamental) of the two dilemmas. To establish this I (a) identify and correct a confusion surrounding theological fatalism (revealing the argument’s soundness) and (b) demonstrate that theological fatalism reduces to logical fatalism. The consequences of my conclusion are threefold: (1) Theists have too readily dismissed theological fatalism and it demands a modification of common beliefs. (2) No one can justifiably ignore logical fatalism as a philosophical threat to free will. And consequently (3) atheists cannot avoid the fatalistic conclusion of theological fatalism by denying the existence of God. I conclude with remarks regarding how to respond to these consequences; I suggest giving up bivalence is the preferable way to avoid a fatalistic conclusion.

Neal Judisch

Determinism, Conservation and the Problem of Evil

The Free Will Defense is widely considered the best available theistic response to the logical argument from evil. But putting aside its technical difficulties, a persistent band of critics have alleged that since this defense presupposes incompatibilism as a requirement on significant freedom (and a corresponding

denigration of compatibilist freedom's value), and since incompatibilism is false, it fails to incorporate a reason sufficiently respectable for God to permit moral evil. In this paper I defend the incompatibilist premise in a way that neither begs the question against compatibilism nor maligns the value of compatibilist freedom. I present three versions of theological determinism modeled upon continuous creation theories of divine conservation, each of which is inconsistent with freedom on plausible, compatibilist-friendly principles, and then argue that what generates the incompatibility is entailed by any version of theological determinism. If my analysis is correct it will be incumbent upon compatibilists to explain why the form of reasoning leading to the incompatibility of freedom with the previous models of theological determinism fails to apply to models of theological determinism which may appear at first glance less problematic.

Jeffrey Koperski

Causal Drainage and the Special Sciences: Some Lessons from Continuum Mechanics

Jaegwon Kim's causal exclusion argument shows that causation among mental properties is undercut by causation between physical properties on which they supervene. Causation at one level makes causation at higher levels redundant. The generalized version of this argument shows similar conflicts between causation in the special sciences and causation in fundamental physics. While several authors have offered solutions to this problem, an area of physics known as *continuum mechanics* points toward a different approach. It suggests that even simple physical systems contain more causal information than the levels-based supervenience view of properties can handle.

Mark Makin

The Exclusion Argument Unmotivated

As Jaegwon Kim's exclusion argument against nonreductive physicalism approaches ten years of meticulous scrutiny, complaints about his preclusion of systematic overdetermination have become endemic. Accordingly, Kim dedicates considerable space to answering these complaints in his most recent work, *Physicalism, Or Something Near Enough*. In this paper, I contend that Kim's exclusion argument is unmotivated.

Timothy Miller

Continuous Creation and the Problem of Secondary Causation

Traditional theism affirms that God is both the creator and the conserver of all contingent beings, and the act of conservation has typically been understood as a continuous act of creation. But continuous creation poses a threat to secondary causation – put roughly, a continuously created world is so saturated with divine causation that there seems to be nothing left for secondary causes to contribute. A few have been willing to accept the occasionalist doctrine that God is the only efficacious causal agent, but occasionalism has never gained broad acceptance. One prominent continuous creationist, Philip Quinn, has attempted to put to an end to this worry, arguing that continuous creation is compatible with any of three contemporary approaches to secondary causation – regularity, counterfactual, and necessitarian. Quinn concludes that continuous creationists have little reason to worry about occasionalism regardless of how contemporary debates over causation turn out. However, in this paper I argue that the regularity and counterfactual approaches to causation are incapable of distinguishing between occasionalist and non-occasionalist worlds; moreover, it seems that any reductionist approach to causation will fail in a similar way. I conclude that reductionist causal theories are of no use to continuous creationists who wish to avoid occasionalism.

Daniel Murphy

An Attempted Refutation of Middle Knowledge

Molinism holds that logically prior to God's creative decrees and creation of the world He knows via middle knowledge (MK) true propositions stating counterfactuals of libertarian freedom (CLF; plural: CsLF) of the form "If person *P* were in circumstance *C*, then *P* would libertarianly choose *X*." In this paper I argue that Molinism faces an insoluble dilemma, specifically with respect to the nature of the circumstances in the antecedents of CsLF. The dilemma in brief form is that on one view of *C* MK becomes useless as a source of foreknowledge of future libertarian choices and that on any other view of

C the very notion of MK of CsLF is incoherent. This argument is an internal critique concerning the coherence of the fully operational Molinist scheme, granting for the sake of argument controversial theses such as libertarian agency, the existence of truth-valued CsLF, and the possibility of God's knowing them via MK; if sound, therefore, the argument cannot be deflected by external considerations such as the supposed demerits of alternatives to Molinism, as it seems some objections have been (such as the "grounding objection").

Gordon Pettit

**The Coherency Dilemma and the Identity View:
Responding to a Contemporary Euthyphro Problem**

Let O be the proposition that the fundamental principles of morality are objective. Let G be the proposition that God is the ultimate ontological source of the fundamental principles of morality. The received view is that affirming both O and G is incoherent or maybe (with some additional assumptions) inconsistent. The problem in affirming both O and G may be presented as a dilemma. If the principles of morality are objective, then they are not dependent on individuals, cultures, the gods or any individual God, since those things may vary. So God could not provide the grounding of objective principles of morality. So if O is true, then G is false. But if God is the ultimate ontological source of moral principles, then morality is relative and variable according to whatever God prefers or commands. Even if God had declared that moral principles are invariable, it is possible that God might vary those principles in the future. So if G is true, then O is false. O and G cannot both be true, though of course they could both be false. Others may not claim that O and G are contraries but only because G is insufficiently explicit, so it is unclear how it may be related to O. To affirm both O and G is to hold an incoherent position—one that does not overtly flaunt logical principles, but merely because G lacks detailed content. If G is developed with a substantive theoretical framework, inconsistencies will become apparent either within G itself or with the conjunction. We can use 'coherency dilemma' as a broad label to cover both objections. The coherency dilemma is the claim that affirming both O and G is either inconsistent or incoherent. This paper provides a response to the coherency dilemma, defending the consistency and coherency of affirming both O and G.

Bradley Rettler

The Possibility of an Omniscient and Timeless God Given the A-Theory of Time

Christian philosophers and theologians have traditionally held that God is both timeless and omniscient, and the compossibility of these beliefs was never questioned. However, recent developments in the philosophy of time have differentiated between the A- and B-Theories, and philosophers have begun to wonder if God can be both timeless and omniscient given an A-Theory of time. In this paper, I offer an argument which takes as premises that the A-Theory is correct and that God is omniscient and concludes that God is temporal. I do this by discussing and then adopting Dean Zimmerman's definition of the A-Theory, and then arguing that on that definition, if God is to be omniscient, he must be temporal.

Michael Robinson

Doing Otherwise in New Frankfurt-Style Counterexamples

A great deal of attention has been paid recently to the claim that Frankfurt-style counterexamples are guilty of begging the question against incompatibilists. In particular, it is argued that traditional Frankfurt cases—cases which fundamentally involve the presence of a counterfactual intervener to guarantee that an agent will act in a certain way—depend for their success on there being a reliable indicator (or *prior sign*) of what an agent will freely do if left to act on his own. Such indicators, however, presuppose a deterministic relation between an agent's free action and the causal antecedents leading up to it—a relation incompatibilists flatly deny. Objections of this sort have given rise to considerable efforts to construct alternative Frankfurt-style counterexamples that do not rely on prior signs, and so do not presuppose determinism in a way that incompatibilists would find objectionable. In this paper I shall argue that even if these new cases successfully manage to sidestep worries about the question begging nature of prior signs, there is a further objection to which they are not immune. My contention, roughly, is that the actions than which agents could not have done otherwise in newly modified Frankfurt scenarios are not the same actions for which they are morally responsible. The upshot is that these cases fail to constitute genuine counterexamples to the principle of alternative possibilities.

Thomas Talbot

The Best of All Feasible Worlds

Some theistic philosophers have supposed that, for any feasible world God might choose to actualize, a better one would have been available to him, and the argument often given is one of simple addition: No matter how much good a given possible world may contain, another possible world will have the same quantity of good plus one additional good item. I argue, however, that this argument from simple addition, as I call it, is quite fallacious, and that theists should reject the idea that God confronts an infinite array of increasingly better feasible worlds.

Kevin Timpe

Heaven's No; Don't Take My Freedom: Incompatibilism, Sin, and Free Will in Heaven

A number of philosophers have argued that there is a tension, if not outright incompatibility, among the following set of claims:

- (i) incompatibilism is true,
- (ii) the redeemed in heaven have free will, and
- (iii) the redeemed are incapable of sinning.

According to these authors, at least one of these claims is false and should be abandoned, but doing so either contradicts traditional Christian doctrine or has untoward consequences for the problem of evil. In the present article, we argue that possession of free will by the redeemed leads neither to compatibilism nor to the possibility of sin in heaven. We conclude by sketching some ways our account of heavenly freedom is related to the Christian doctrine of Purgatory.

Patrick Toner

Person and Substance

Lockean accounts of personhood are prevalent in contemporary philosophy. On Lockean accounts, roughly speaking, things count as person in virtue of what they can do. Boethius's classic account of personhood—that a person is an individual substance of a rational nature—takes a rather different approach, focusing not on what persons can do, but on what they are. In this paper, I argue that the Boethian account is superior to any Lockean account. I briefly show that Christological considerations render Lockean theories untenable. Then I argue that even on strictly philosophical grounds, there are reasons to prefer the Boethian account.

James Van Slyke

Religion and Cognitive Science: Cognitive Constraints and Top-down Causation

The field of cognitive science has virtually exploded in the last two decades, as scientists study the mechanisms of the brain and specific areas of cognition such as language, concept formation, and emotion. Due to the empirical success of cognitive science, many philosophers, scientists, and anthropologists have begun to apply the insights of cognitive science to how religious concepts and experiences are developed and transmitted to others. In fact, many scientists are now arguing that the development and transmission of religious beliefs is a natural process dependent upon implicit cognitive systems which are the product of evolution. Thus, understanding religion through research in cognitive science allows for a detailed empirical investigation of religious phenomena. The goal of this paper is to provide a critique of the reductionistic aspects of current studies in the cognitive science of religion and to argue in favor of the addition of 'top-down' causation to the 'bottom-up' accounts provided by cognitive science.

Manuel Vargas

Satan's Good Works

The title speaks for itself.

Rico Vitz

Descartes and the Question of Direct Doxastic Voluntarism

One issue that has received a fair amount of attention from philosophers interested in the ethics of belief is the question of whether (or the extent to which) people have direct voluntary control over their beliefs—that is, the question of *direct doxastic voluntarism*. Happily, so it might seem, this is one issue on which contemporary philosophers appear to have reached a consensus: namely, that people cannot voluntarily control their *occurrent beliefs*, or judgments, directly. In this paper, I elucidate Descartes’s strikingly different answer to the question and explain its implications for the current consensus. More specifically, I argue that on Descartes’s account, people can have direct voluntary control over their judgments, and I contend that a careful look at what he actually says suggests that contemporary philosophers have failed to make a compelling case against his position and, hence, that the current consensus is unsubstantiated.

Eric Yang

Foreknowledge and Backtracking Counterfactuals: A Rejection of the Fixed Past Constraint

At the heart of theological fatalism is a dilemma between essential omniscience and temporal modality. Although we have strong intuitions regarding a so-called Necessity of the Past, I argue that our intuitions do not justify the principle of the Fixed Past Constraint (FPC), which leaves the past counterfactually closed. Several solutions to the dilemma seem to assert the denial of FPC by merely positing the existence of a divine foreknower; however, one can also stipulate FPC in order to deny the possibility of a divine foreknower. Thus, we seem to be at a “dialectical stalemate”. I hope to break this stalemate by once again taking a close look at the overly-exhausted Newcomb’s Problem, which is in a similar stalemate. By examining the intuitions behind each position, I attempt to show that our intuitions of the past do not justify the stringent restrictions of FPC. Lastly, I make 1) an ontological consideration and 2) an epistemological one: 1) that the problematic temporal modal arrow may rest on the causal arrow, and 2) that one is unable to know which facts are counterfactually dependent or independent.