

**52ND ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE ALABAMA PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**



October 10-11, 2014
Hilton Pensacola Beach Gulf Front
12 Via Luna Drive
Pensacola, Florida 32561

**52ND ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE ALABAMA PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

Keynote Speaker
Eleonore Stump
St. Louis University

President
Aaron Cobb
Auburn University at Montgomery

Vice President
Eric Carter
North Carolina State University

Secretary-Treasurer
C. R. Dodsworth
Spring Hill College

Web Site
<http://alphilsoc.org>

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10TH, 8:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Registration

The registration fee of \$50 is payable at the registration desk near the Coral Reef room between 8:00 A.M. and 12:00 P.M. The fee is also payable to the Secretary-Treasurer, Chris Dodsworth. The registration fee is waived for undergraduates.

<i>Session and Time</i>	<i>Coral Reef</i>	<i>Aquamarine 1</i>	<i>Aquamarine 2</i>
<i>Session 1</i> 8:30 A.M. - 9:10 A.M.	<i>Thinking Animals Without Thinking Brains? Biological Minimalism and the Thinking-Parts Problem</i> Joshua Watson University of Tennessee – Knoxville	<i>On aesthetics as first philosophy</i> Joshua M. Hall Samford University	<i>Ontological parsimony and the erosion of prior ontologies</i> Thomas Metcalf University of Colorado - Boulder
<i>Session 2</i> 9:15 A.M. - 9:55 A.M.	<i>Duns Scotus on the nature of justice</i> Allan Hillman & Tully Borland University of South Alabama and Ouachita Baptist University	<i>Explanationist evidentialism and inferential justification</i> Kevin McCain University of Alabama - Birmingham	<i>Forking and non-forking worlds: A challenge to liberarian accounts of free will</i> Robyn Waller University of Alabama
<i>- 10 minute coffee break -</i>			
<i>Session 3</i> 10:05 A.M. - 10:45 A.M.	<i>How Diagrams Fertilize Discovery</i> Nick Jones University of Alabama - Huntsville	<i>Building character</i> Matt King University of Alabama - Birmingham	<i>Caesar's role in The basic laws of arithmetic</i> Tom Lockhart Auburn University
<i>Session 4</i> 10:50 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.	<i>Legal naturalism is a disjunctivism</i> Roderick Long Auburn University	<i>Autonomy and the non-problem of manipulation</i> Gerald Taylor Georgia State University	<i>Nietzsche on Borgia</i> Luke Phillips Auburn University

Lunch Break

Friday, October 10th, 11:30 A.M.- 12:45 P.M.
Participants are on their own.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10TH, 12:45 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

<i>Session and Time</i>	<i>Coral Reef</i>	<i>Aquamarine 1</i>	<i>Aquamarine 2</i>
<i>Session 5</i> 12:45 P.M - 1:25 P.M.	<i>Making sense of relative truth: A dilemma for MacFarlane</i> Daniel Massey Spring Hill College	<i>Kripkenstein on belief</i> Antonio Capuano Auburn University	<i>The rational relations view of responsibility and the challenge from alexythemia</i> Nate Stout Tulane University
<i>Session 6</i> 1:30 P.M - 2:10 P.M.	<i>Knowledge how and the transmission of knowledge</i> Ted Poston University of South Alabama	<i>Descartes on the atheist geometer's abject failure</i> Brett Copenger Tuskegee University	<i>Against the no-miracle response to indispensability arguments</i> Kenneth Boyce University of Missouri - Columbia
<i>- 10 minute coffee break -</i>			
<i>Session 7</i> 2:20 P.M - 3:00 P.M.	<i>Is God unlucky? A reconstructed free-will defense</i> Dennis Sansom Samford University	<i>Hope in a Hidden God?</i> Aaron Cobb Auburn University at Montgomery	<i>Keeping the audience in mind</i> David Spewak Mississippi State University
<i>Session 8</i> 3:05 P.M - 3:45 P.M.	<i>Reconsidering Theological Voluntarism about the Good</i> Matt Jordan Auburn University at Montgomery	<i>Causes, Desires, and Reasons Why</i> Eric Carter North Carolina State University	<i>A new problem for animalism</i> Kevin Sharpe St. Cloud State Univerisity
<i>- 10 minute coffee break -</i>			
<i>Session 9</i> 3:55 P.M - 5:00 P.M.	KEYNOTE ADDRESS Eleonore Stump St. Louis University		

Reception

Friday, October 10th, 7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.

Alabama Philosophical Society Suite

Location: TBA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11TH, 8:30 A.M. – 1:05 P.M.

<i>Session and Time</i>	<i>Coral Reef</i>	<i>Aquamarine I</i>	<i>Aquamarine II</i>
<i>Session 10</i> 8:30 A.M. - 9:10 A.M.	<i>Re-examining Max Horkheimer's Critique of Deweyan Instrumentalism: A Defense of Pragmatic Immediacy</i> Matthew Fitzsimmons University of North Alabama	<i>The problem of death in Being and Time</i> Nate Zuckerman Spring Hill College	<i>Frege on propositional unity</i> Silver Bronzo Auburn University
<i>Session 11</i> 9:15 A.M. - 9:55 A.M.	<i>Hume and historical interpretation</i> Kevin Meeker University of South Alabama	<i>Husserlian Reflections on a Fregean Predicament</i> Chad Kidd Auburn University	<i>Thought experiments as a tool for expanding conceptual space</i> Nathan Dahlberg Georgia State University
<i>- 10 minute coffee break -</i>			
<i>Session 12</i> 10:05 A.M. - 10:45 A.M.	<i>Power ≠ Quality</i> William Bauer North Carolina State University	<i>Infinitism, inferentialism, and available reasons</i> Adam Podlaskowski Fairmont State	<i>Why it is wrong to kill merely conscious beings</i> Erich Rieson Northern Illinois University
<i>Session 13</i> 10:50 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.	<i>Dretske on self-knowledge</i> Michael Roche Illinois Wesleyan	<i>The limits on moral dumbfounding</i> Danielle Wylie University of Illinois at Chicago	<i>Materialist and particularist theories of induction</i> Victor Di Fate Spring Hill College
<i>- 10 minute coffee break -</i>			
<i>Session 14</i> 11:40 A.M. - 12:20 P.M.	<i>Powers and the transitivity of causation</i> Joeseph Baltimore West Virginia University	<i>Kant on moral luck</i> Jennifer Lockhart Auburn University	UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY WINNER <i>On Hume's Reconciliation of Liberty and Necessity</i> Matthew Shoemaker Auburn University Montgomery
<i>Session 15</i> 12:25 P.M. – 1:05 P.M.	<i>Why Feldman and Conee are wrong about theses S & M</i> Joshua Smith Central Michigan University	<i>Propositions, representation, and fineness of grain</i> Geof Georgi West Virginia University	<i>Minding Marilyn's Metaphysical Size Gap</i> C. R. Dodsworth Spring Hill College

Business Meeting

Saturday, October 11th, 1:15 P.M.- 2:30 P.M. | Location: Flounders

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Friday, October 10th, 3:55 P.M.- 5:00 P.M.

Location: Coral Reef

Welcome and Introduction

Aaron Cobb

President of the Alabama Philosophical Society

Natural Law, Metaphysics, and Creation

Eleonore Stump

St. Louis University

Abstract

In this paper, I contrast the notion of natural law on a secularist scientific picture with the notion of natural law in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. I show the way in which the highly various metaphysics of the two worldviews give rise to such divergent notions. In this connection, I look at contemporary arguments against reductionism in the sciences and in recent metaphysics. I argue that this new anti-reductionist approach sits more easily with the Thomistic worldview than with the secularist scientific view.

UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY WINNER

Saturday, October 12th, 11:40 A.M. - 12:20 P.M.

Location: Aquamarine 2

On Hume's Reconciliation of Liberty and Necessity

Matthew Shoemaker

Auburn University Montgomery

Abstract

One of Hume's projects was to reconcile free will and determinism. Because Hume believed that the problem was one of definition, his proposed definitions of liberty and necessity are important to understand both individually and how those concepts interact. His definition of liberty is defensible from an empiricist perspective, but does not mean what is typically meant by free will. His definition of necessity is more problematic, leaving the causal connection between motivation and action either too weak for his project, or strong enough to be deterministic. Ultimately his project results in a deterministic view of human action.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Session 1: Friday, 8:30 A.M. – 9:10 A.M.

“Thinking Animals Without Thinking Brains? Biological Minimalism and the Thinking-Parts Problem,” Coral Reef

Joshua Watson (University of Tennessee – Knoxville)

There is a thinking animal in your chair and you are the only thinking thing in your chair. You, therefore, are an animal. So goes the main argument for animalism. But notice that there are other things that might do our thinking: heads, brains, upper-halves, etc. Why favor the animal over the others? I argue that the biological minimalist solution to this problem fails.

“On aesthetics as first philosophy,” Aquamarine I

Joshua M. Hall (Samford University)

In this presentation, I will argue that the most deserving of that title among the current five primary branches of philosophy is aesthetics. First, from a psychological/sociological perspective, art’s attractiveness and/or irksomeness first inspires inquiry and problem-solving. And second, from a logical/conceptual perspective, art’s constructed-analyzability (and the benefits thereof) implies an analogous (and analogously beneficial) analyzability of the world. The most important implication of aesthetics being first philosophy is that aesthetics’ “ghettoization” (with all of that term’s problematic class and racial connotations) must be ended in favor of integration and reconstruction.

“Ontological parsimony and the erosion of prior ontologies,” Aquamarine II

Thomas Metcalf (University of Colorado – Boulder)

I begin by identifying a widely-employed philosophical argument-type: the ockhamistic anti-realist strategy. I show that this strategy depends crucially upon the epistemological principle of positive ontological parsimony, according to which we should *ceteris paribus* prefer smaller ontologies. I argue that this principle commits one to an implausible epistemological claim – the Eroding Ontology Thesis – according to which evidence for the existence of some entity, type, or kind is at least *prima facie* evidence against the existence of all other entities, types, or kinds. I conclude that philosophers have a powerful new reason to question one very common argument-type.

Session 2: Friday, 9:15 A.M. – 9:55 A.M.

“Duns Scotus on the nature of justice,” Coral Reef

Allan Hillman (University of South Alabama) & Tully Borland (Ouachita Baptist University)

This paper is part of a larger project of providing a systematic account of the late medieval philosopher John Duns Scotus' ethics. What we're interested in exploring here is primarily Scotus' metaethical views about justice, namely, what Scotus thinks justice is or amounts to. Unfortunately, Scotus did not produce a treatise on justice (or any substantive ethical treatise for that matter), and thus we find what there is of a theory of justice emerging in a number of contexts. So it will be helpful to provide a bit of framework for thinking about the nature of justice more generally which can be brought to bear on Scotus' texts. In the first two sections, we present two theories of justice which arguably have at least some initial degree of purchase in Scotus' writings – the Anselmian/Platonic Theory and the Divine Command Theory. We then argue that neither theory, by itself, can accommodate Scotus' assertions on the matter. We offer a suggestion: that, for Scotus, justice is a certain relation of the will directed toward the intrinsic goodness of things.

“Explanationist evidentialism and inferential justification,” Aquamarine I

Kevin McCain (University of Alabama – Birmingham)

Keith Lehrer (1974) and Alvin Goldman (2011) have each argued that explanationist theories of epistemic justification cannot account for justified beliefs formed via deductive inferences. Recently, Kevin McCain (2013; 2014) has defended explanationism by including relations of logical consequence as justifiers in his “Explanationist Evidentialism”. I argue that McCain's concession to Lehrer and Goldman is unwarranted because their objections are not genuine problems for explanationism. Additionally, I argue that Explanationist Evidentialism can be modified so that it not only avoids conceding to Lehrer and Goldman, but about the future.

“Forking and non-forking worlds: A challenge to libertarian accounts of free will,” Aquamarine II

Robyn Waller (University of Alabama)

The aim of this paper is to challenge libertarian accounts of free will. It is argued that there is an irreconcilable tension between the way in which philosophers motivate the libertarian ability to do otherwise and the way in which they formally express it. Potential libertarian responses in the face of this tension are canvassed, and it is argued that each response is problematic. It is not claimed that indeterminism is incompatible with free will, but rather that any libertarian account that requires that an agent have (indeterminism-involving) alternative possibilities at the point of a free action fails.

Session 3: Friday, 10:05 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

“How Diagrams Fertilize Discovery,” Coral Reef

Nick Jones (University of Alabama – Huntsville)

Exploratory analysis of “big data” in biology relies heavily upon computer algorithms for processing data and automatically generating analytical results for specific queries about hidden patterns. Curiously, automated tools for analyzing big data typically provide visualizations of the input data. My question is: why might biologists prefer to have visualizations of networks rather than, or in addition to, sentential representations of network data and algorithm outputs about that data? My answer is: visuals are more cognitively fertile than (sentential) algorithm outputs, enhanced cognitive fertility enables more fruitful exploration, and more fruitful exploration is cognitively beneficial.

“Building character,” Aquamarine I

Matt King (University of Alabama – Birmingham)

In this paper I seek to vindicate the idea that responsible action is expressive of character. But I do so by turning the usual understanding of the relation on its head. Instead of holding that character motivates and causes the action we are responsible for, I argue that character is to be “built” out of those things we are responsible for. One’s character is downstream of action.

“Caesar's role in The basic laws of arithmetic,” Aquamarine II

Tom Lockhardt (Auburn University)

In *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, Frege presents the Caesar Problem (CP) as an insuperable obstacle to the possibility of using Hume’s Principle as a contextual definition of number. Instead, he adopts an explicit definition of number in terms of value-ranges. In *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, Frege argues that his fundamental law concerning value-ranges – Basic Law V – is itself subject to CP. But Frege thinks that he can resolve CP as it concerns value ranges. I argue that this shows that Basic Law V was not, for Frege, a contextual definition of *Value-Range*, but a basic truth of logic.

Session 4: Friday, 10:50 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

“Legal naturalism is a disjunctivism,” Coral Reef

Roderick Long (Auburn University)

Legal naturalism is the doctrine that a rule’s status as law depends on its moral content; or, in its strongest form, that “an unjust law is not a law.” By drawing an analogy between legal naturalism and perceptual disjunctivism, I argue that this doctrine is more defensible than is generally thought, and in particular that it entails no conflict with ordinary usage.

“Autonomy and the non-problem of manipulation,” Aquamarine I
Gerald Taylor (Georgia State University)

Historical accounts of autonomy have been criticized as being susceptible to the problem of manipulation, which arises when we consider the possibility that an agent acquired the ability to self-govern illegitimately. Here, I argue that the problem of manipulation is not a serious threat to historical accounts. Proponents of the manipulation argument are faced with a dilemma. Either manipulation cases involve what I call effective background agency, and can thus be rejected as non-starters; or they don't involve effective background agency, and are thus not threatening in the way originally intended. Either way, historical accounts of autonomy do not find an insuperable foe in the manipulation argument.

“Nietzsche on Borgia,” Aquamarine II
Luke Phillips (Auburn University)

To highlight the truly immoralist nature of Nietzsche's work and to show how his demand for sublimation, unlike Freud's, is perfectly compatible with other-directed “evil” and socially unacceptable acts, I examine Nietzsche's attitude toward one of history's most famous villains, Cesare Borgia.

Session 5: Friday, 12:45 P.M. – 1:25 P.M.

“Making sense of relative truth: A dilemma for MacFarlane,” Coral Reef
Daniel Massey (Spring Hill College)

I articulate a challenge to the influential form of relativism offered up by John MacFarlane in his earlier works. My aim is not to show that relativism is suitable or unsuitable for this or that topic but instead that the form of relativism at issue either collapses into a more conservative form (with its attendant problems) or fails to render relativism intelligible at all. My claim is simply that MacFarlane has failed to make sense of relative truth.

“Kripkenstein on belief,” Aquamarine I
Antonio Capuano (Auburn University)

In this paper, I compare Kripke's “A Puzzle about Belief” and his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. My main claim is that one can read “A Puzzle about Belief” as formulating a skeptical paradox about belief of a kind analogous to the skeptical paradox on rule following that, on Kripke's reading, Wittgenstein is formulating in his *Philosophical Investigations*. At the end of the paper, I also suggest a skeptical solution to the challenge Kripke formulated on belief analogous to the skeptical solution Wittgenstein offered to his skeptical paradox.

“The rational relations view of responsibility and the challenge from alexythemia,” Aquamarine II
Nate Stout (Tulane University)

Recently, Angela Smith has developed and defended a view of moral responsibility, the Rational Relations view, which places primary importance on the notion that responsibility is a matter of an agent’s actions or attitudes being connected in the appropriate way with her evaluative judgments. However, David Shoemaker, in a recent paper, has challenged this conception of responsibility in an important and compelling way. The aim of this paper is to show that Shoemaker’s objection can be extended in a way that is much more devastating for the Rational Relations view by appealing to some suggestive empirical facts regarding a particular amalgamation of psychological features known as the alexithymia construct.

Session 6: Friday, 1:30 P.M. – 2:10 P.M.

“Knowledge how and the transmission of knowledge,” Coral Reef
Ted Poston (University of South Alabama)

Intellectualism about knowledge how is the view that know how implies know that. I argue that this view is undermined by a difference in properties with respect to knowledge how and run of the mill propositional knowledge. More specifically, I argue that knowledge that and know-wh can be easily transmitted via testimony while knowledge how is not easily transmitted via testimony. This points to more crucial difference in states of knowledge, differences that linguists are not especially trained to detect. My argument provides further grounds that know how stands apart from other instances of knowledge.

“Descartes on the atheist geometer’s abject failure,” Aquamarine I
Brett Copenger (Tuskegee University)

Descartes denies that the atheist geometer has knowledge in the case of clear and distinct perception of mathematical truths. In light of this, some might worry that when Descartes contends that the atheist geometer has certainty regarding some items of knowledge, such as the cogito, but not of others, like the Pythagorean theorem, Descartes seems to be wedded to an inconsistency. The project of this paper is to sketch and defend three theses. The first thesis is that Descartes’ response to the atheist geometer is correct, given his Cartesian framework. The second thesis is that knowledge for Descartes should be understood as a technical term, albeit one that does not indicate the highest epistemic state. The third thesis is that on Descartes’ technical conception of knowledge, God, strictly speaking, does not know anything.

“Against the no-miracle response to indispensability arguments,” Aquamarine II
Kenneth Boyce (University of Missouri – Columbia)

Proponents of indispensability arguments claim that the pervasiveness of mathematics in our best scientific theories, and its apparent indispensability for the purposes of adequately formulating those theories, afford us with strong empirical grounds for believing in mathematical entities. One response to these arguments, which I refer to as “the no-miracle response,” involves maintaining that since mathematical entities (if they exist) are causally inert, we need not postulate their existence in order to explain the empirical success of our best scientific theories. I argue that this response either fails or turns out to be superfluous.

Session 7: Friday, 2:20 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

“Is God unlucky? A reconstructed free-will defense,” Coral Reef

Dennis Sansom (Samford University)

David Lewis shows an inconsistency in the Free-Will Defense. Either God is an unlucky gambler because God gave significant freedom to humanity and they misused it to do evil or God is sovereign and omniscient and does not take risks. I consider this issue of whether God is unlucky. I conclude that to be consistent and perhaps compelling the Free-Will Defense should claim that God is unlucky, not as a gambler but a builder. I make this claim based on certain notions of 1) significant freedom, 2) God’s foreknowledge, and 3) God’s responsibility for evil, borrowing from St. Anselm to make this argument.

“Hope in a Hidden God?,” Aquamarine I

Aaron Cobb (Auburn University at Montgomery)

Hope is a deep human need and central to human flourishing. For this reason, the death or loss of hope is an event of a significant moral concern. I contend that the experience of divine hiddenness is problematic, in part, because it can trigger a death or loss of hope. The silence of God in circumstances of profound suffering can induce despair, undermining the agent’s ability to act in ways conducive to her own good. In this paper, I develop this challenge and consider several lines of response available to the Christian theist.

“Keeping the audience in mind,” Aquamarine II

David Spewak (Mississippi State University)

When speakers communicate they use background information and assumptions in choosing their words to best communicate what they intend. I argue that by ignoring speakers’ audience focused intentions regarding word choice, semantic theorists have ignored a range of intuitions regarding the substitution of co-referring terms in propositional attitude ascriptions. Consequently, these considerations reveal that intuitions regarding the substitution of co-referring terms in propositional attitude ascriptions are interest relative and thus an unreliable guide to their truth-value. As a further result, hesitations to substitute co-referring terms in belief attributions neither speak for nor against Descriptivism over Millianism.

Session 8: Friday, 3:05 P.M. – 3:45 P.M.

“Reconsidering Theological Voluntarism about the Good,” Coral Reef

Matt Jordan (Auburn University at Montgomery)

It is widely assumed, even by philosophers who affirm theistic accounts of the nature of morality, that theological voluntarism cannot be correct as an explanation of axiological facts. I argue that the implausibility of theological voluntarism is overstated and that an account grounded in divine intentions provides the theist’s best hope for explaining the nature of moral normativity.

“Causes, Desires, and Reasons Why,” Friday, Aquamarine I, Session 8, 3:05 – 3:45 P.M.

Eric Carter (North Carolina State University)

In contemporary semantic studies, there are two common ways to think about linguistic expressions of explanation. One view is that an explanative expression's interpretation in context is an unambiguous causal or resultative content. The alternative view is that an explanative's interpretation in context is lexically ambiguous: there is a cause-specific disambiguated interpretation, but there is also a cause-neutral disambiguated interpretation. The latter content is desire-specific. The motivation for a causal approach is the apparent unity of explanative meaning, while the motivation for an ambiguity approach is the apparent plurality of explanative meanings. Although unity and plurality are often thought to push in different directions, I defend an alternative view that is compatible with both motivations.

“A new problem for animalism,” Aquamarine II
Kevin Sharpe (St. Cloud State University)

In this paper I present a new problem for animalism, the view that human persons are numerically identical to human animals. In brief, the problem is that animalism is inconsistent with the conjunction of an independently attractive account of the metaphysical nature of organisms and the empirical possibility of extreme cases of locked in syndrome (cases involving complete paralysis and inability to maintain basic vital functions while retaining full consciousness). I argue given the possibility of such cases, it follows that either animalism or some element of the metaphysics of organisms is false. The trouble for animalism is that the metaphysical account of organisms I draw on is attractive, independently plausible, and widely accepted. I conclude by discussing some options animalists may pursue, none of which are entirely satisfactory.

Session 9: Friday, 3:55 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Session 10: Saturday, 8:30 A.M. – 9:10 A.M.

“Re-examining Max Horkheimer's Critique of Deweyan Instrumentalism: A Defense of Pragmatic Immediacy,” Coral Reef
Matthew Fitzsimmons (University of North Alabama)

In *The Eclipse of Reason* Max Horkheimer argues that classical American pragmatism, and in particular John Dewey, totalizes instrumental reason and leaves behind immediacy. According to Horkheimer, such an approach promotes a form of value relativism that excludes objective reason in favor of thoroughgoing subjectivity that perverts the critical capacity of reason. In response to this charge, I defend Dewey's position by arguing that his instrumentalism is not as totalizing as Horkheimer suggests. Rather, immediacy, while not knowledge in the Deweyan sense, is of fundamental importance to his theory of experience. Events and actions often have a dual nature: they are both immediate and transitive; that is, these experiences are valued in themselves while simultaneously being valued as ends-in-view.

“The problem of death in *Being and Time*,” Aquamarine I
Nate Zuckerman (Spring Hill College)

In this paper, I use Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle on rational capacities to explain how the four most prominent readings of death in *Being and Time* hang together systematically, insofar as they identify not death itself (for they fail to account for its absolute scope) but rather the more local forms of breakdown through which the threat of death may show up to us throughout our worldly existence.

“Frege on propositional unity,” Aquamarine II
Silver Bronzo (Auburn University)

This paper identifies a tension in Frege’s philosophy and offers a diagnosis of its origins. Frege’s Context Principle can be used to dissolve the problem of propositional unity. However, Frege’s official response to the problem does not invoke the Context Principle, but the distinction between “saturated” and “unsaturated” propositional constituents. I argue that such a response involves assumptions that clash with Frege’s Context Principle. I suggest, however, that this tension is not generated by deep-seated philosophical commitments, but by Frege’s occasional attempt to take a dubious shortcut in the justification of his conception of propositional structure.

Session 11: Saturday, 9:15 A.M. – 9:55 A.M.

“Hume and historical interpretation,” Coral Reef
Kevin Meeker (University of South Alabama)

This paper critically discusses the so-called “principle of charity” and, in particular, how historians use this principle to understand the philosophy of David Hume.

“Husserlian Reflections on a Fregean Predicament,” Aquamarine I
Chad Kidd (Auburn University)

This paper attempts to elucidate and motivate Husserl’s conception of the relation between the logical and the psychological articulated in the *Logical Investigations*. It presents a certain predicament that arises for the Fregean view of this relation. The Fregean predicament is the inability for the Fregean to account for the normative bearing of the logical on the psychological. And it shows how this predicament inexorably arises out of the Fregean idea that Thoughts – or propositional senses – are objects of thinking. It then shows how Husserl’s conception of propositional senses as universals that are instanced in acts of thinking and judging avoids the Fregean predicament.

“Thought experiments as a tool for expanding conceptual space,” Aquamarine II
Nathan Dahlberg (Georgia State University)

Philosophers have taken a recent interest in characterizing the nature of thought experiments. Some think that thought experiments are just arguments in disguise. Others have replied that thought experiments can't be just arguments: There are paradigm cases of thought experiments that have proven persuasive where, it seems, an argumentative reconstruction of the thought experiment would have been unconvincing. In this paper, I propose one extra-argumentative feature of thought experiments: Thought experiments make us aware of live metaphysical possibilities. I argue that this feature of thought experiments plays an important role in our philosophical and scientific theorizing.

Session 12: Saturday, 10:05 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

“Power ≠ Quality,” Coral Reef
William Bauer (North Carolina State University)

The question of whether properties are powers, qualities, or both plays an important role in a number of debates in metaphysics and philosophy of science. This paper discusses and critiques the Identity Thesis, the claim that properties are simultaneously both powerful and qualitative. After clarifying the Identity Thesis and discussing the causal profile of powers, the paper argues that a token power can retain its identity over a period of time, while the quality (or qualities) grounding that power change identity over the same time period.

“Infinetism, inferentialism, and available reasons,” Aquamarine I
Adam Podlaskowski (Fairmont State)

Since antiquity, infinitism has struck many as untenable. The case recently made by Podlaskowski and Smith (Podlaskowski and Smith, 2011, 2014, Smith and Podlaskowski, 2013) has helped to secure that view against recent defenses of infinitism. In this article, a new defense from their charge is provided. This defense turns on rejecting an assumption which has gone largely undiscussed in the literature: namely, that the way in which propositions serve as mental contents and how they serve as reasons are, in an important respect, independent of one another.

“Why it is wrong to kill merely conscious beings,” Aquamarine II
Erich Rieson (Northern Illinois University)

There is a prima facie inconsistency in our ethical beliefs about the killing of animals and the killing of human beings. Even Peter Singer holds that painlessly killing a merely conscious animal is not morally wrong if that animal is immediately replaced by another who will lead an equally pleasant life. I believe that Singer is mistaken. In this paper, I first develop an account of wrongful harm from the point of view of preference utilitarianism, Singer's favored theory. Next, I analyze the prior existence and total views of preference utilitarianism and argue for a mixed approach that combines the best aspects of each view. On this basis, I argue that death often seriously harms conscious animals and, contrary to Singer, that painlessly killing a merely conscious animal is often morally wrong even if the animal is immediately replaced by another with an equally pleasant life.

Session 13: Saturday, 10:50 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

“Dretske on self-knowledge,” Coral Reef

Michael Roche (Illinois Wesleyan)

Over the past decade or so, Fred Dretske has advanced an interesting, but quite peculiar, theory of self-knowledge. He claims that a subject cannot know by introspection that she has a mind, and thus that she cannot know by introspection that, e.g., she believes that P, desires that Q, etc. Nevertheless, he maintains that a subject is authoritative about the contents of her mental states. Our first goal is to explain how Dretske’s theory relates to the rest of his philosophy – focusing in particular on his conclusive reasons account of knowledge, his information-theoretic treatment of conclusive reasons, and his lesser-known work on contrastive statements. Although Dretske has repeatedly argued for his theory of self-knowledge, he has never precisely articulated just how that theory relates to his larger body of work. Our doing so thus promises to clarify both his theory and its genesis. Our second goal is to show that a significant component of his theory is mistaken, even if it contains an important kernel of truth regarding self-knowledge.

“The limits on moral dumbfounding,” Aquamarine I

Danielle Wylie (University of Illinois at Chicago)

In moral psychology, “Psychological Rationalism” is understood as the view that moral judgments are caused by a process of reasoning. Jonathan Haidt has claimed provide evidence against such a view by showing that people succumb to “moral dumbfounding,” a phenomenon in which people cannot adequately provide their reasoning after forming a moral judgment. I show that this evidence serves as a strike against the view only if Psychological Rationalism is committed to the “Consciousness Claim,” the claim that moral reasoning is conscious reasoning (and indeed, Haidt assumes that it is). I also suggest that a number of plausible variants of the view reject the Consciousness Claim, thus limiting the efficacy of the objection. Ultimately, although some have taken dumbfounding to be a strike against Psychological Rationalism, its real impact is limited to only variants that embrace the Consciousness Claim.

“Materialist and particularist theories of induction,” Aquamarine II

Victor Di Fate (Spring Hill College)

On the traditional view, citing inductive rules in scientific argument does something analogous to what citing deductive rules does in a deductive proof: it authorizes inferences. In what follows, I critique a position contrary to this traditional view, and propose one of my own, also contrary to the traditional view. The position critiqued is John Norton’s Material Theory of Induction, according to which inductive rules do literally nothing. The position I shall put in its place I will call “Methodological Particularism.”

Session 14: Saturday, 11:40 A.M. – 12:20 P.M.

“Powers and the transitivity of causation,” Coral Reef

Joseph Baltimore (West Virginia University)

In their recent book, *Getting Causes from Powers*, Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum advance a detailed account of causation based on a powers view of properties. With the view that properties just are powers, Mumford and Anjum clearly have a nice basis for explaining causation. Still, as Mumford and Anjum show, there are many issues to be settled when drawing out the details of such an account of causation. One such issue is the transitivity of causation. In this paper, I critically examine Mumford and Anjum’s treatment of the transitivity of causation.

“Kant on moral luck,” Aquamarine I

Jennifer Lockhart (Auburn University)

Kant is widely viewed as the ‘most rigorous exponent’ of a conception of morality that is free from luck. This paper identifies three theses that are typically attributed to Kant with respect to moral luck and makes the case that all three theses are incorrectly ascribed to Kant. The traditional narrative surrounding Kant on moral luck fails to take into account his views regarding the complete good and the necessary relationship between happiness and virtue.

UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY WINNER

“On Hume's Reconciliation of Liberty and Necessity,” Aquamarine II

Matthew Shoemaker (Auburn University at Montgomery)

Session 15: Saturday, 12:25 P.M. – 1:05 P.M.

“Why Feldman and Conee are wrong about theses S & M,” Coral Reef

Joshua Smith (Central Michigan University)

Richard Feldman and Earl Conee defend internalism about epistemic justification. They characterize internalism as being committed to two theses. The first, thesis S, is a thesis about that on which epistemic justification supervenes. The second, thesis M, is a thesis about the epistemic status of mental duplicates. The aim of this paper is to illustrate that theses S and M are false.

“Propositions, representation, and fineness of grain,” Aquamarine I
Geof Georgi (West Virginia University)

Circumstantialism about propositions takes propositions to be sets of truth-supporting circumstances, where these sets are or represent truth conditions. Recent versions of circumstantialism purport to deliver propositions that are as fine-grained as they are on Russellian views of propositions as structured information-encoding entities. In this paper, I argue that the circumstantialist approach to fineness of grain is fundamentally misguided, because whereas distinct Russellian propositions can represent the world as being the same way, there cannot be distinct circumstantialist propositions that represent the world the same way. I illustrate the problem by presenting a dilemma for ascriptions of truth to propositions.

“Minding Marilyn’s metaphysical size-gap,” Aquamarine II
C. R. Dodsworth (Spring Hill College)

Marilyn Adams is wrong about something. I explain why.