

**55TH ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE ALABAMA PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**



September 29-30, 2017  
Hilton Pensacola Beach Gulf Front  
12 Via Luna Drive  
Pensacola, Florida 32561

**55TH ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE ALABAMA PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

***Keynote Speaker***

Chase Wrenn  
University of Alabama

***President***

Daniel Massey  
Spring Hill College

***Vice President***

Kevin Sharpe  
St. Cloud State University

***Secretary-Treasurer***

Chelsea Haramia  
Spring Hill College

***Web Site***

<http://alphilsoc.org>

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 8:50 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.*****Registration***

The registration fee of \$65 is payable at the registration desk near the Coral Reef room between 8:50 A.M. and 12:00 P.M. The fee is also payable to the Secretary-Treasurer, Chelsea Haramia. The registration fee for undergraduates is \$10.

<i>Session and Time</i>	<i>Emerald 1</i>	<i>Emerald 2</i>	<i>Aquamarine 1</i>	<i>Aquamarine 2</i>
<b>Session 1</b> 8:50 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.	<b><i>Repetition, Boredom and the Sacred</i></b> Drew Chastian Loyola University, New Orleans	<b><i>Antifragility in Ethics Depends on Narratives of Resistance and Resistance to Narratives</i></b> Kristina Grob University of South Carolina Sumter	<b><i>Strawson, Rawls, and the Political Attitude</i></b> Marcus Hunt Tulane University	<b><i>Parsimony, Explanatory Sufficiency, and Semantic Monism</i></b> Adam Podlaskowski Fairmont State University
<b>Session 2</b> 9:40 A.M. – 10:20 A.M.	<b><i>What's Wrong with Moral Deference?</i></b> Jon Matheson University of North Florida	<b><i>When Do Replies to the Evolutionary Debunking Argument Beg the Question?</i></b> Justin Morton University of Texas, Austin	<b><i>Frege and the Normativity of Logic for Thinking</i></b> Tom Lockhart Auburn University	<b><i>Humean Skepticism about Logic</i></b> Kevin Meeker University of South Alabama
<b>Session 3</b> 10:30 A.M. – 11:10 P.M.	<b><i>Rags-to-Riches Worlds: A New Theodicy and Argument for Theism</i></b> Thomas Metcalf Spring Hill College	<b><i>Enactivism and Emotional Expression</i></b> Trip Glazer University of Arkansas	<b><i>Inclusive Nihilism</i></b> Cruz Davis Virginia Tech	<b><i>A Defense of Theory</i></b> Jason Bernsten Xavier University of Louisiana
<b>Session 4</b> 11:20 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.	<b><i>Measuring Well-Being and Valuing Virtue</i></b> Megan Fritts University of Wisconsin	<b><i>Platonic Friendship</i></b> Alexander Jech Notre Dame	<b><i>A Heraclitian Defense of Colors</i></b> Michael Watkins Auburn University	<b><i>When Is a Counterfactual Consequence a Triggering Event?</i></b> Blythe Greene University of California, San Diego

Program for the 55th Annual Meeting of the Alabama Philosophical Society

**Lunch Break**

Friday, September 30th, 12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M. (Participants are on their own.)

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1:30 P.M. – 5 :30P.M.**

<i>Session and Time</i>	<i>Emerald 1</i>	<i>Emerald 2</i>	<i>Aquamarine 1</i>	<i>Aquamarine 2</i>
<b>Session 5</b> 1:30 P.M - 2:10 P.M.	<b><i>Should I Always Do What I Have Most Reason to Do?</i></b> Shane Gronholz University of Colorado, Boulder	<b><i>The Indispensability Argument for Metaphysics</i></b> Joseph Baltimore West Virginia University	<b><i>Skepticism, Autonomy, and the Value of Epistemic Value</i></b> Andrew Cling University of Alabama, Huntsville	<b><i>Does IBE Require a “Mode of Explanation?</i></b> Frank Cabrera University of Wisconsin
<b>Session 6</b> 2:20 P.M - 3:00 P.M.	<b><i>Dispelling the Disjunction Objection to Explanatory Inference</i></b> Kevin McCain University of Alabama Birmingham Ted Poston University of South Alabama	<b><i>Master and Commander: Moral Motivation and Moral Education</i></b> Rob Reed Texas A&M	<b><i>“Ethics is Irrelevant:” Empathy, Identity, and Violence</i></b> Michael Clifford Mississippi State University	<b><i>Confirmation and Psychological Explanation</i></b> Greg Johnson Mississippi State University Meridian
<b>Session 7</b> 3:10 P.M – 3:50 P.M.	<b><i>Divine Love and Omnirationality</i></b> Anne Jeffrey University of South Alabama	<b><i>Foundationalism, the External World, and Berkeleyan Idealism</i></b> David Rodriguez Biola University	<b><i>Wondering about What You Know</i></b> Avery Archer George Washington University	<b><i>Moral Fetishism and Mora Worth</i></b> Jennifer Lockhart Auburn University
<b>Session 8</b> 4:00 P.M – 4:40 P.M.	<b><i>Demon-Computable Universes and the Unity of Science</i></b> Jonathan Kanzelmeyer University of Nevada, Reno	<b><i>Does God Have Moral Obligations to Us?</i></b> Chris Dodsworth Spring Hill College	<b><i>In Praise of ... Engineering??</i></b> John Bickle Mississippi State; University of Mississippi Medical Center	<b><i>The Inconsistency Threat to Inter-level Metaphysics</i></b> Michael Bertrand Auburn University
<b>Session 9</b> 4:50 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.	<b><i>Agency and Actualization</i></b> Nicholas Kozirolek Auburn University	<b><i>Problematic Aesthetics: The Holocaust and Cinema</i></b> Morgan Rempel University of Southern Mississippi	<b><i>‘Saving’ Marx from Locke</i></b> Tal-Hi Bitton George Washington University	<b><i>“The Queen of the Sciences The University, Logic of Inquiry, and Essential Role Philosophy</i></b> Dennis Sansom Samford University

**Reception**

Friday, September 29th, 7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.  
Alabama Philosophical Society Suite, Location: TBA

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 8:30 A.M. – 1:20 P.M.**

<b>Session and Time</b>	<b><i>Emerald 1</i></b>	<b><i>Emerald 2</i></b>	<b><i>Aquamarine 1</i></b>	<b><i>Aquamarine 2</i></b>
<b>Session 10</b> 8:30 A.M. - 9:10 A.M.	<b><i>In Favor of Epistemic Reasons for Action</i></b> Emily McWilliams DePauw University	<b><i>Duns Scotus on the Nature of Justice - Take Two</i></b> Allan Hillman & Tully Borland University of South Alabama	<b><i>Yes, We Are Luminous</i></b> Walker Page St. Louis University	<b><i>Towards a Bayesian Perceptual Epistemology</i></b> Tim Butzer University of Alabama
<b>Session 11</b> 9:20 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.	<b><i>Aristotle on the Metaphysics of Health and Disease</i></b> Samuel Baker University of South Alabama	<b><i>Realizing Race</i></b> Aaron Griffith College of William and Mary	<b><i>Authority, Competence, and Transformation: Arguments about Advance Directives and the Boundaries of Autonomy</i></b> David Merli Franklin & Marshall College	<b><i>Rationality, Universality, Non-Arbitrariness: A Neo-Kantian Foundation of Ethics</i></b> Alonso Villaran Universidad del Pacifico
<b>Session 12</b> 10:10 A.M. – 10:50 A.M.	<b><i>From Disagreement to Epistemic Injustice</i></b> David Spewak Marion Military Institute	<b><i>Plato on Contemplation and Assimilation to God</i></b> Doug Campbell University of Toronto	<b><i>A New Look at Disagreement</i></b> Omar Fakhri University of California, Berkeley	<b><i>Spinozism and Materialism</i></b> Matthew Childers University of Iowa
<b>Session 13</b> 11:00 A.M. – 11:40 A.M.	UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY WINNER <b><i>Facing Job's Sorrows</i></b> Katie Kirk Auburn University	<b><i>Resilience in the face of counter-evidence in Religion and Science</i></b> Ravit Dotan University of California, Berkeley	<b><i>Grounding for Buddhist Reductionism</i></b> Nicholaos Jones University of Alabama, Huntsville	<b><i>Aristotle's Natural Slavery Defense as Foundational to American Slavery Apologetics</i></b> Camilla Cannon University of North Carolina, Charlotte

## Program for the 55th Annual Meeting of the Alabama Philosophical Society

**Session 14**  
11:50 A.M – 1:20  
P.M.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
***Deflationism, Expressivism, and  
the Value of Truth***  
Chase Wrenn  
University of Alabama

***Business Meeting:*** Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 P.M.- 2:45 P.M. | Location: Flounders

Program for the 55th Annual Meeting of the Alabama Philosophical Society

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 11:50 P.M.- 1:20 P.M.

Location: Emerald I

### ***Welcome and Introduction***

President of the Alabama Philosophical Society

Daniel Massey

Spring Hill College

## ***Deflationism, Expressivism, and the Value of Truth***

Chase Wrenn

University of Alabama

### ***Abstract***

Deflationists deny that there is anything nontrivial that truths, as such, have in common. All there is to truth, they say, is what we can get out of trivial equivalences like 'Dogs bark if and only if it is true that dogs bark'. But true propositions seem to be *correct to assert or believe* in a distinctive way, and that makes it seem they have something nontrivial in common after all. That is the "problem of truth's value" for deflationism, and this paper examines a strategy for solving. Deflationists might try appealing to *expressivist* theories of value, which treat evaluative terms as tools for expressing attitudes, rather than describing the world. The expressivist approach, I argue, is prima facie plausible, but it also faces significant obstacles. I distinguish a stronger from a weaker version of the approach. The stronger version is incompatible with the existence of unbelievably true truths, and the weaker version is too weak to give deflationism any new tools for dealing with the problem. I conclude with some remarks on why this is not entirely bad news for deflationism.

## **UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY WINNER**

Saturday, September 30th, 11:00 A.M. – 11:40 A.M.

Location: Emerald 1

### ***Facing Job's Sorrows***

Katie Kirk

University of Alabama

#### ***Abstract***

Both in the "Sorrow" chapter of Sources of Religious Insight and in a separate essay, "The Problem of Job," Josiah Royce addresses the reality of evil, attempting to understand it in a religious context. I understand both of these texts as presenting and subsequently rejecting several unsatisfactory solutions to the Problem of Evil, each piece eventually finding a solution that complements the other.



## PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

### **Session 1: Friday, 8:50 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.**

#### ***“Repetition, Boredom, and the Sacred”*** Emerald 1

Drew Chastain (Loyola University, New Orleans)

Repetition is among the usual suspects charged with making life meaningless, as we find in Camus’ use of the myth of Sisyphus and in two essays by Richard Taylor (1970, 1987). Starting with the opposing conviction that repetition is necessary for meaning in life, I present my diagnosis that the cultivation of a form of boredom involving a loss of a sense of the sacred is responsible for repetition’s bad reputation. I cast suspicion on a taste for the transcendent in aesthetics, philosophy and religion, appealing to a more immanent sense of the sacred highlighted by feminist approaches to spirituality.

#### ***“Antifragility in Ethics Depends on Narratives of Resistance and Resistance to Narratives”*** Emerald 2

Kristina Grob (University of South Carolina, Sumter)

In *Antifragile*, Nicholas Nassim Taleb claims that narrative knowledge is “academia’s sole mechanism outside laboratory and physical science” (Taleb, 214, table 4). Narrative knowledge, moreover, is fragile to the extent that our narratives are taken for direct, accurate representations of reality itself. Reality is not not itself a narrative, and is not narrative in structure. In this paper, I claim that narrative approaches to ethics falsify reality when they depend too heavily on articulable, narrative accounts of moral life. An antifragile ethics must therefore rely on narrative for articulation but also explicitly address and encompass everything that drops out of or otherwise resists narrative expression. An antifragile ethics should also include non-narrative expression.

#### ***“Strawson, Rawls, and the Political Attitude”*** Aquamarine 1

Marcus Hunt (Tulane University)

Strawson contrasts the ‘participant attitude’ with the ‘objective attitude.’ Rawls makes an analogous distinction between a ‘practice’ and a ‘summary’ conception of rules. Drawing from both, I suggest that political life involves a ‘political attitude.’ Strawson and Rawls agree that the particular acts of the participant attitude, or particular instances of punishment, ought to be justified internally rather than with reference to some more ultimate principle, like

utility. I agree, but differ from them by suggesting that the political attitude as a whole does not permit or require external justification. Rather, political life is an end-in-itself.

***“Parsimony, Explanatory Sufficiency, and Semantic Monism”*** Aquamarine 2  
Adam Podlaskowski (Fairmont State University)

Applied to explanations of linguistic meaning, theoretical parsimony recommends we adopt whichever semantic theory posits semantic properties belonging to the same basic kind. As such, all meaningful expressions are to be construed (by a semantic theory) as being in the same basic sort of business, whether this is a matter of representation, reasoning, expressing attitudes, or something else. While this suggests a natural line of support for the sort of monistic commitment widely undertaken by semantic theories, in what follows, that line of support will be resisted. It will be argued that a complementary principle of explanatory sufficiency warns against accepting overly simplified theories, and paves the way for entertaining more pluralistic alternatives.

**Session 2: Friday, 9:40 A.M. – 10:20 A.M.**

***“What’s Wrong with Moral Deference?”*** Emerald 1  
Jon Matheson (University of North Florida)

Recently a great deal of debate has surfaced regarding moral deference. Many have found moral deference to be problematic in a way that other kinds of deference is not. In this paper, I examine several explanations for what is amiss with moral deference and examine whether any of these explanations have it that moral deference is inappropriate.

***“When Do Replies to the Evolutionary Debunking Argument Beg the Question?”*** Emerald 2  
Justin Morton (University of Texas, Austin)

Some philosophers respond to evolutionary debunking arguments against moral realism by assuming some of the very moral beliefs in question. Others reply that these “first-order replies” beg the question. In this paper, I argue that there is indeed something deeply wrong with non-naturalistic first-order replies (though naturalists can give such replies without issue): they entail that our moral beliefs were not selected for their truth. I then explain such selection for truth in probabilistic terms. I conclude that non-naturalists cannot rely on substantive moral claims when replying to debunking arguments, but that naturalists can.

***“Frege and the Normativity of Logic for Thinking”*** Aquamarine I

Tom Lockhart (Auburn University)

Frege insist that we must “separate sharply the psychological from the logical” (1980, x). Accordingly, he installs logic in a ‘third realm’, distinct both from the ordinary world of objects and the realm of human ideas. Nevertheless, Frege insists that “From the laws of truth there follow prescriptions about asserting, thinking, judging, inferring” (1997, 325). The problem is that it is not clear how this third realm—so magnificently isolated from human psychology—can come to have a normative bearing on our processes of thinking. In this paper, I contrast two models for addressing this question: first, the constitutive norm model, and second, the Aristotelian categorical model.

***“Humean Skepticism about Logic”*** Aquamarine 2

Kevin Meeker (University of South Alabama)

Hume’s skeptical regress argument contains at least two important claims: first, “all knowledge degenerates into probability” (T 1.4.1.1, 180) and, second, “all the rules of logic require. . . a total extinction of belief and evidence” (T 1.4.1.6, 183). In this paper, I focus on the surprising ramifications of a relatively neglected argument in support of the first claim. After providing some brief background on I.iv.1, I show how this underappreciated argument helps us to understand the motivation and structure of the reasoning of this section. Then I contend that this argument provides a worrisome skeptical threat to our knowledge in general, and our knowledge of logic in particular.

**Session 3: Friday, 10:30 A.M. – 11:10 A.M.**

***“Rags-to-Riches Worlds: A New Theodicy and Argument for Theism”*** Emerald 1

Thomas Metcalf (Spring Hill College)

I offer a new theodicy in defense of Anselmian theism, one that has several important qualities generally not present in traditional theodicies. This theodicy may also be the basis of a new argument for theism. To make my case, I first identify the value of a positive axiological-trajectory: a forward-in-time increase in net, first-order axiological value. Next, I argue that Anselmian theism is compatible with a world that contains ‘first-order-gratuitous’ evil. The reason is that long-term axiological trajectory contributes goodness to a world, and this sort of goodness would be impossible without the presence of some evils. I answer the most salient objections to this theodicy. Next, I proceed to indicate how this theodicy improves over most traditional theodicies, and constitutes independent, new evidence for the existence of God.

***“Enactivism and Emotional Expression”*** Emerald 2

Trip Glazer (University of Arkansas)

Dan Shargel and Jesse Prinz (2017) propose an enactivist theory of emotion, according to which emotions create new possibilities for action by altering the physiology of the body. I argue that their proposal conflicts with some recent experimental findings, but that the proposal can be modified to cohere with them. Whereas Shargel and Prinz identify emotional expressions with the physiological changes that constitute emotions, I suggest that emotions are constituted by physiological changes that make it easier or harder to perform certain emotional expressions, and that these expressions, whether honest or dishonest, open up new social possibilities.

***“Inclusive Nihilism”*** Aquamarine 1

Cruz Davis (Virginia Tech)

Mereological nihilists hold that no objects compose further objects. It is generally assumed that the nihilist is committed to a picture of the world where the only objects are the most fundamental microphysical objects with objects at no other levels or layers of reality. I provide some models of material reality where no objects compose further ones, but there are objects that aren't the most fundamental microphysical objects and these objects are hierarchically ordered. These pictures of reality are nihilistic, but don't come with the standard baggage. I compare the merits of these theories with competing theories.

***“A Defense of Theory”*** Aquamarine 2

Jason Bernsten (Xavier University of Louisiana)

In a recent exchange in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, the question of whether moral theory should be taught in applied ethics classes has been debated. This paper argues that theory should be taught in applied ethics classes and demonstrates why. Using research published by the Hastings Center, we identify the five goals of teaching applied ethics. We then demonstrate that teaching moral theory fosters the accomplishment of each goal. We acknowledge some important objections to this view, but argue that in the end it would be unwise to eliminate the teaching of moral theory.

**Session 4: Friday, 11:20 A.M. – 12:00 A.M.*****“Measuring Well-Being and Valuing Virtue”*** Emerald 1

Megan Fritts (University of Wisconsin)

In Daniel Hausman’s book *Valuing Health: Well-Being, Freedom, and Suffering*, he argues that activities that I prioritize and orient my life around may become objectively valuable for me, allowing me to rank various health-states for myself by how much they help or hinder these activities. In this paper, I argue that Hausman’s framework incorrectly identifies some harmful states as being valuable for flourishing. I contend that the behavioral norms of morality place limits on the personal values we are able to generate from passionate dedication—just as other norms of biological functioning do.

***“Platonic Friendship”*** Emerald 2

Alexander Jech (Notre Dame)

We often speak of Platonic love, but Aristotelian friendship. However, the *Alcibiades*—written by Plato or a very early Platonist—provides an account of love and friendship that complements Aristotle’s, and which is more crucial to us: a form of friendship that exists not for the sake of exercising virtue, but for the sake of becoming virtuous. I explore the significance of the idea that such relationships depend upon the mirroring of ourselves in the friend and raise a thus far unresolved problem regarding how to respond to the vulnerability of such friendships.

***“A Heraclitian Defense of Colors”*** Aquamarine 1

Michael Watkins (Auburn University)

Objects that match under certain lighting conditions or to certain observers, might not match under other conditions or to other observers. Objects that are physically alike might appear radically different under different lighting conditions or against different backgrounds. And so which observers and conditions to favor. I argue that if begin not with “what color is it?” but instead with “what is it for two objects to have the same color?”, then the solution is simple. The conditions and observers we should appeal to in answering the second question is all of them (but no one in particular).

***“When Is a Counterfactual Consequence a Triggering Event?”*** Aquamarine 2

Blythe Greene (University of California, San Diego)

A difficulty in analyzing responsibility for omission arises when asking whether responsibility

for omissions requires that the omitted event could have occurred had the agent acted differently. Responsibility for omissions is generally thought to require that the agent could have brought about the omitted event, but Frankfurt-style cases relating to omissions suggest otherwise. Fischer and Ravizza suggest that we distinguish between these cases by designating certain events triggers and holding them inactive in counterfactuals. I reject this account, on the grounds that the concept of an untriggered event is vague and difficult to distinguish from a legitimate consequence.

**Session 5: Friday, 1:30 P.M. – 2:10 P.M.**

***“Should I Always Do What I Have Most Reason to Do?”*** Emerald 1

Shane Gronholz (University of Colorado, Boulder)

When we engage in moral reasoning – deciding what to do – we appeal to practical reasons. In doing this, we seem to assume that once we know what we have most reason to do, we will know what we ought to do. My aim in this paper is to show that this assumption is correct and to respond to some objections that it is not. I will be defending the claim that we ought always to do whatever we have most reason to do.

***“The Indispensability Argument for Metaphysics”*** Emerald 2

Joseph Baltimore (West Virginia University)

The value of metaphysics is often questioned. One common strategy for vindicating metaphysics piggybacks its value on the value of science, with the idea being that metaphysical investigations can earn their keep in usefully systematizing scientific posits or theories in a kind of post-hoc way. Here we argue that such strategies of vindication of metaphysics fail to properly characterize the relationship between the two disciplines. Metaphysics is not posterior to science; rather, there is no science without metaphysics. Here we present and defend this new ‘indispensability’ argument for metaphysics.

***“Skepticism, Autonomy, and the Value of Epistemic Value”*** Aquamarine 1

Andrew Cling (University of Alabama, Huntsville)

The problem of the criterion assumes that a proposition is justified for us only if a criterion of truth—a principle for identifying true propositions—gives us a reason for believing it. This seems false. I argue, however, that it is true of the kind of justification required by truth-directed cognitive autonomy. Autonomy requires that we endorse the means to our goals and, therefore, requires that we believe a criterion of truth, if our goal is to believe what is true. Whether this kind of justification is genuinely good depends on the broadly ethical value of truth-directed

cognitive autonomy.

***“Does IBE Require a ‘Model’ of Explanation?”*** Aquamarine 2  
Frank Cabrera (University of Wisconsin)

In this paper, I consider an important challenge to the popular theory of scientific inference, commonly known as “Inference to the Best Explanation” (IBE), one which has received scant attention. The problem is that there exists a wide array of rival models of explanation, thus leaving IBE objectionably indeterminate. First, I briefly introduce IBE. Next, I explain in depth why the existence of various competing accounts of explanation poses a problem. Then, I attempt to solve the problem by showing why IBE does not require a model of explanation and by giving an account of what “explanation” means in the context of IBE. Finally, I offer some concluding remarks.

**Session 6: Friday, 2:20 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

***“Dispelling the Disjunction Objection to Explanatory Inference”*** Emerald 1

Kevin McCain (University of Alabama, Birmingham) & Ted Poston (University of South Alabama)

Although inference to the best explanation (IBE) is ubiquitous in science and our everyday lives, there are numerous objections to the viability of IBE. At least one such objection to IBE has not received adequate treatment. We term this objection the “Disjunction Objection”. This objection challenges IBE on the grounds that it seems that even if H is the best explanation, it could be that the disjunction of its rivals is more likely to be true. As a result, IBE appears to license unacceptable inferences. Despite these initial appearances, we argue that the Disjunction Objection fails to impugn IBE.

***“Master and Commander: Moral Motivation and Moral Education”*** Emerald 2

Rob Reed (Texas A&M)

Silverstein argues that normative reasoning is higher-order reasoning about how practical reasoning should unfold. Although Silverstein takes the issue to be whether or not normative reasoning is identical to practical reasoning, this is inadequate. Normative reasoning concerns standards and may be put to work in both practical and theoretical gears. In the practical gear, moral motivation is internal. In the theoretical gear, motivation is external. This account fits a virtue theory which sees moral education as a movement from acting on external representations of a standard towards acting from within the standard as the formal structure of one’s practical reasoning.

**“*Ethics is Irrelevant: Empathy, Identity, and Violence*”** Aquamarine 1  
Michael Clifford (Mississippi State University)

This paper examines whether the best way to approach the problem of violence is through the fostering of empathy, of being made to understand what it is to be a victim of violence. Violence is never random or “irrational.” To both commit violence and to be its victim is to be caught up in a complex process in which the violence makes perfect sense. An ethics of violence based on the fostering of empathy would be one in which the identify of the victim is recognized as an extension of one’s own identity, and, thus, that the violence one commits against another is, always and inevitably, against oneself.

**“*Confirmation and Psychological Explanation*”** Aquamarine 2  
Greg Johnson (Mississippi State University, Meridian)

Shapiro (2016) argues that we have equal warrant for (1) confirming psychological explanations indirectly—that is, by using the hypothetico-deductive method or Bayes’ rule—and (2) verifying those explanations by examining the underlying neurobiological processes. I point out that directly inspecting how a process operates will provide a greater degree of confirmation than the indirect methods can provide. That gives us a reason to, as a general standard, seek to verify psychological explanations by inspecting the relevant neurobiology.

**Session 7: Friday, 3:10 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

**“*Divine Love and Omnipotence*”** Emerald 1  
Anne Jeffrey (University of South Alabama)

In this paper I offer arguments against the strong omnipotence thesis as a thesis that gets to the most fundamental explanation of God’s action. The strong omnipotence thesis states that God performs every action for all the unexcluded, good reasons for that action. But both revelation and reflection suggest that the more fundamental truths underlying God’s action have to do with divine love. I sketch a series of arguments for adopting a weaker thesis compatible with the view that at least some of God’s actions are reasonless but performed out of love.

**“*Foundationalism, the External World, and Berkeleyan Idealism*”** Emerald 2  
David Rodriguez (Biola University)



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BonJour's project in "Foundationalism and the External World" is to show us how basic beliefs are justified and how we can infer the existence of an external physical world. I will explain BonJour's account of this, and then I will present his abductive argument for the existence of an external physical world. He concludes that the best explanation of our sensory experience is a 3-D physical world that causes our experience. However, I will argue that if one has a prior commitment to theism, there exists an alternative explanation—Berkeleyan idealism—that is (i) consistent with BonJour's account of sensory experience and (ii) theoretically simpler than BonJour's view.

***"Wondering about What You Know"*** Aquamarine 1

Avery Archer (George Washington University)

According to Jane Friedman, attitudes like wondering, inquiring, and suspending judgement are question-directed. Call such attitudes interrogative attitudes (IAs). Friedman insists that all IAs are governed by an Ignorance Norm: Necessarily, if one knows Q at t, then one ought not have an IA towards Q at t. However, I argue that a central premise Friedman relies on in her argument actually undermines (rather than supports) the claim that IAs are not governed by the Ignorance Norm. I conclude that Friedman's conception of IAs should be rejected.

***"Moral Fetishism and Moral Worth"*** Aquamarine 2

Jennifer Lockhart (Auburn University)

In this paper I consider the moral fetishism objection against Paulina Sliwa's Rightness Condition on morally worthy action. Moral fetishism has largely been discussed in the literature on externalism about motivation. I consider four externalist responses to the problem of moral fetishism and argue that none of them can be successfully deployed in a defense of the Rightness Condition.

**Session 8: Friday, 4:00 P.M. – 4:40 P.M.**

***"Demon-Computable Universes and the Unity of Science"*** Emerald 1

Jonathan Kanzelmeyer (University of Nevada, Reno)

Laplace's demon gives an articulation of not only determinism, but also of the reductive unification of science under physics. The demon postulate states that the universe is "demon-computable" if, and only if, it is deterministic, reducible, and transparent. Some philosophers object that certain systemic properties—such as context sensitivity and multiple realizability—render complex systems irreducible. If this objection is true, then the universe is not demon-computable and Laplace's conception of unified science fails. In this paper, I examine the concepts associated with the study of phenotype

expression in population genetics, a phenomenon that is highly context sensitive in many cases, in order to show that systems exhibiting context sensitivity are reducible in a robust Laplacean sense. I argue that the demon-metaphor continues to have value for metatheoretical discussions of science, despite the fact that contemporary physics has abandoned many of the assumptions of Laplace's classical mechanics.

***“Does God Have Moral Obligations to Us?”*** Emerald 2

Chris Dodsworth (Spring Hill College)

Marilyn McCord Adams (in)famously holds the view that *God does not have obligations to us*. While she has often made that claim, nowhere in print has she ever developed an argument for it in detail, and the medieval philosopher theologians whom she likes to cite are often equally vague. Making things more problematic is the fact that there are a variety of common-sense reasons why we might think that God *does* have obligations to us. Here, I discuss approximately 3.5 arguments (really, argument-types) for the claim that God does not have obligations to us. One is by Bill Alston; another is Marilyn's, with a bonus contribution by Duns Scotus; and the third is a Thomistic-style argument by Edward Feser. I'll argue that none of these is up to snuff and then suggest a way of thinking that God does have moral obligations to us that (hopefully) pays respect to some of Marilyn's intuitions. In short: Marilyn *is* wrong about something, but not *very* wrong.

***“In Praise of ... Engineering??”*** Aquamarine 1

John Bickle (Mississippi State; University of Mississippi Medical Center)

Tool development in contemporary neurobiology extends an argument of Ian Hacking's, concluding that experiment has a “life of its own” independent of theory. Previously I showed this using the development of gene targeting and optogenetics/DREADDs techniques. Here I show it using another case of a tool whose development revolutionized neurobiology, the metal microelectrode. David Hubel's writings (its principal developer) reveal the same contra-theory attitude about science I showed previously, and even better bring out an “engineering-first” attitude I only dimly noted before. I close by suggesting another case, the development of the patch clamp, which also reveals this pattern.

***“The Inconsistency Threat to Inter-level Metaphysics”*** Aquamarine 2

Michael Bertrand (Auburn University)

Martin Lipman argues that some inter-level metaphysicians are threatened with inconsistency across ontological levels: namely, those committed to fundamentality based antirealism. I show that this threat generalizes to all of inter-level metaphysics. Finally, I argue that the inconsistency

threat is merely apparent by offering two strategies by which the argument can be blocked. Each is generally available, suggesting that no inter-level metaphysician need face the inconsistency threat.

**Session 9: Friday, 4:50 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.**

***“Agency and Actualization”*** Emerald 1

Nicholas Koziolok (Auburn University)

In the literature on doxastic agency, there has been some disagreement as to whether belief is a state or, instead, some kind of activity. I argue that, as it stands, this debate is hampered by a conflation of three different notions of an activity: (i) an exercise of rational agency, (ii) a durative atelic event (what I call an activity in the temporal-metaphysical sense), and (iii) an actualization of rational capacities. I distinguish these three notions, identify their role in the extant literature, and formulate some important questions that arise as a result.

***“Problematic Aesthetics: The Holocaust and Cinema”*** Emerald 2

Morgan Rempel (University of Southern Mississippi)

Considerable controversy surrounds the topic of the representation of the Holocaust in fictional cinema. According to Elie Wiesel: “Auschwitz cannot be explained nor can it be visualized”. Manohla Dargis similarly concludes: “It isn’t just that there’s something unsettling about a film that aestheticizes a crematorium, it’s that there’s something trivializing about the very effort...The crimes committed at Auschwitz ... were beyond what cinema entertainment can show us”. Leon Wieseltier presents the problem thusly: “It’s our moral responsibility to try to comprehend and imagine this hell, but there’s something obscene about the attempt to reconstruct it.”

With respect to the opposing side of this debate, my paper focuses on two films representing different philosophies concerning how the Holocaust can and should be depicted in fictional cinema; Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* and Tim Blake Nelson’s *The Grey Zone*. These dissimilar works are examined both with respect to each other, and within the larger debate concerning the very possibility of appropriate filmic representations of the Holocaust. While this debate is certainly not settled in my paper, I endeavor to delineate and illustrate, with reference to specific films and specific scenes, several key themes within two very different schools of thought regarding the Holocaust and cinema.

***“Saving’ Marx from Locke”*** Aquamarine 1

Tal-Hi Bitton (George Washington University)

Adam Mossoff argues that Locke’s theory of value has been mischaracterized as only being concerned with economic value. Against this view, Mossoff reconstructs Locke’s

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moral theory of value that grounds the possibility of economic value—similar to Marx’s use-value and value. While Mossoff ‘saves’ Locke from Marx insofar as making distinct their two positions, Mossoff examines only briefly Marx’s unique conceptualizations. I seek to advance Mossoff’s insights on the proximities and distances of Locke and Marx through a detailed analysis of Marxian values. I suggest that Marx’s account is at once more historically sensitive and logically consistent than Locke’s.

**“*The Queen of the Sciences*” *The University, Logic of Inquiry, and Essential Role of Philosophy*” Aquamarine 2  
Dennis Sansom (Samford University)**

I argue that a systematic philosophy course should be a required course for all college students, even the professional schools. I base this on the following premises: first, even though modern universities and college are complex institutions, their essential social role is to teach intellectual inquiry; second, I rely upon John Dewey’s understanding of inquiry—the transformation of indeterminate understandings of diverse experiences into a unified whole, in particular exemplified in Aristotle and Hegel’s philosophical systems; third, the intellectual structure of a university is shaped by three kinds of concentric circles of questions—how, who, and why, with the latter providing justification for learning; and fourth, a systematic philosophy course would expose students to the importance of the “why” questions in attempting to create and further intellectual inquiry.

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

**“*In Favor of Epistemic Reasons for Action*” Emerald 1  
Emily McWilliams (DePauw University)**

I will challenge the standard view that epistemic reasons are reasons for belief and practical reasons are reasons for action by arguing that there can also be epistemic reasons for action. In particular, I will challenge Conee and Feldman’s evidentialist argument for the standard view. They take evidentialism to imply that epistemic reasons can only license three moves: belief, disbelief, and suspension of judgment. I will argue that given their motivations, they should also think epistemic reasons license a fourth move; namely, *inquiry*. Finally, I will argue that if epistemic reasons can thus license cognitive actions like *thinking about how different parts of my evidence bear on one another*, then they can also license bodily actions like *going to the library to seek more information*.

**“*Duns Scotus on the Nature of Justice - Take Two*” Emerald 2  
Allan Hillman & Tully Borland (University of South Alabama)**

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In an earlier effort (“Scotus on the Nature of Justice”), we attempted to clarify John Duns Scotus’s account of justice, particularly as it exists in both creatures and God. Here, in the sequel to that paper, we backtrack in order to consider in more depth Scotus’s views on the ontological status of virtue, taken as a species of Habit falling under the Aristotelian category Quality. We argue that Scotus’s fairly well-known arguments for the relative independence of each individual virtue from one another - i.e., he denies the Thomistic view that the virtues are necessarily connected - actually follows not from any specific moral psychological commitment but instead from his position on the individuation, and nature, of accidents taken generally.

**“Yes, We Are Luminous”** Aquamarine 1

Walker Page (St. Louis University)

Williamson (2000) argues that no conditions are luminous; that is, no condition R is such that, if one is in R, one is in a position to know that R obtains. If successful, this argument undermines a central internalist commitment. Srinivasan (2013) defends a controversial margin-for-error premise in Williamson’s Anti-Luminosity argument by appealing to a safety condition on knowledge and “a plausible empirical hypothesis about the kind of creatures we are.” I argue that Srinivasan’s defense of the argument fails. Her empirical hypothesis is false for what I call ‘non-gradable conditions’ and implausible for some ‘gradable conditions’. Some conditions are luminous after all.

**“Towards a Bayesian Perceptual Epistemology”** Aquamarine 2

Tim Butzer (University of Alabama)

I offer a novel account of perceptual warrant according to which one’s basic perceptual beliefs are immediately and defeasibly warranted if they are formed on the basis of experiences produced by a competent perceptual system. I develop my account of perceptual warrant in the context of an empirically informed Bayesian theory of perceptual processing. I claim that sub-personal features of one’s perceptual systems can render one competent to perceptually represent a particular environment. When these conditions are met, one is warranted in forming beliefs on the basis of one’s perceptual experiences.

**Session 11: Saturday, 9:20 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.**

**“Aristotle on the Metaphysics of Health and Disease”** Emerald 1

Samuel Baker (University of South Alabama)

Aristotle frequently says that the end of the medical art is health (e.g. NE I 1,

1094a8). But what is health? According to Aristotle, the central case of health is a certain “virtue of the body” (Rhetoric I 5, 1361b3) and consequently a certain quality, state and perfection of the body. Disease is the contrary of health and its privation. Thus, it is a certain quality, state, and corruption of the body. Several interesting consequences follow from this account. For example, speaking strictly, while the body is potentially healthy, it is not potentially diseased.

***“Realizing Race”*** Emerald 2

Aaron Griffith (College of William and Mary)

A prominent way of explaining how race is socially constructed appeals to social structures and social positions. On this account, the construction of a person’s race is understood in terms of the person occupying a certain social position in a social structure. The aim of this paper is to give a metaphysically perspicuous account of this form of race construction. Working on an analogy with functionalism about mental states, I develop an account of a ‘race structure’ in which various races (Black, White, Asian, etc.) are functionally defined social positions. Individual persons occupy these social positions by ‘playing the role’ characteristic of those positions. The properties and relations by which a person ‘plays’ a race role, are the *realizers* for one’s race. I characterize the social construction of a person’s race in terms of a realization relation that satisfies a ‘subset’ condition on the social powers of raced persons. Races, on this view, are functionally defined, multiply realizable social kinds.

***“Authority, Competence, and Transformation: Arguments about Advance Directives and the Boundaries of Autonomy”***

Aquamarine 1

David Merli (Franklin & Marshall College)

Advance directives allow a currently competent patient to make choices about the medical care of her future incompetent self. This raises a question about authority: how can past values and preferences bind a patient who has been significantly altered by, e.g., dementia or other cognitive impairment, particularly when those values seem contrary to the patient’s current interests?

Here I offer two arguments for skepticism about ADs in these cases. The first draws on recent work on “transformative experiences” to cast doubt on the past self’s authority. The second suggests, against Dworkin and McMahan, that demented selves can have the sort of moral standing that cannot be bound by the past self’s preferences.

***“Rationality, Universality, Non-Arbitrariness: A Neo-Kantian Foundation of Ethics”*** Aquamarine 2

Alonso Contavalli (La Universidad de Pacifico)

Is it possible to ground ethics on the idea of “values”? If not, why? How should we ground ethics instead? This paper addresses these questions by introducing and defending the unique contributions of neo-Kantian Peruvian philosopher Francisco Miró Quesada (Lima, 1918)—a remarkably prolific and respected scholar in the Spanish-speaking world. In this paper, I present and review specifically the originality of the “first half” of Miró Quesada’s neo-Kantian ethics as found in one of his main works: “Objetivismo y Subjetivismo en la Filosofía de los Valores” [Objectivism and Subjectivism in the Philosophy of Values] (1994). To do so, I will translate, for the first time, sections of it. I begin by considering Miró Quesada’s criticism of any attempt to found ethics materially or with any resource to “values”. I then move into an interpretative outline of Miró Quesada’s proposal, one that, following Kant’s path, grounds ethics in rationality, universality and non-arbitrariness (the necessary condition of morality), and that rejects searching for its sufficient condition. In the conclusion, I briefly revisit Miró Quesada’s proposals and signal the “second half” of his moral theory.

**Session 12: Saturday, 10:10 A.M. – 10:50 A.M.**

***“From Disagreement to Epistemic Injustice”*** Emerald 1

David Spewak (Marion Military Institute)

Philosophical discussions on disagreement focus on disagreement between epistemic peers. I propose that we take insights from peer disagreement and look at disagreements between non-peers. Specifically, I argue that a non-cooperative conversational participant can exploit conversational assumptions regarding epistemic peer-hood and cooperation, causing epistemic injustices.

***“Plato on Contemplation and Assimilation to God”*** Emerald 2

Doug Campbell (University of Toronto)

I argue that assimilation to God, which appears throughout Plato’s corpus (in Rep X, Laws IV, and the Theaetetus, for example), should be understood as the final end for human beings, and that this end is achieved exclusively through contemplation of the Forms, with the virtues making contemplation possible.

***“A New Look at Disagreement”*** Aquamarine 1

Omar Fakhri (University of California, Berkeley)

ABSTRACT: TBA

***“Spinozism and Materialism”*** Aquamarine 2

Matthew Childers (University of Iowa)

Many philosophers past and present have interpreted Spinozism as being a “materialist” doctrine. While Spinoza makes many claims throughout his Ethics which seem to equally suggest and repudiate the doctrine, I present a “master argument” against any such interpretations of Spinozism. I first show how Spinoza is explicit in demonstrating that (contra Descartes) every substance—properly defined—does not necessarily manifest one singular (essential) attribute, but can manifest an “infinite” number of them (§2). A fortiori, I show that Spinoza's claim that “God is Nature” (“Deus sive Natura”) also fails to imply materialism (§3). In conjunction, these contentions thus demonstrate against any subsequent claim made by Spinoza (inter alia) which may suggest or imply that Spinozism is a form of materialism.

**Session 13: Saturday, 11:00 A.M. – 11:40 A.M.**

UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY WINNER

***“Facing Job's Sorrows”*** Emerald 1

Katie Kirk (University of Alabama)

Both in the "Sorrow" chapter of Sources of Religious Insight and in a separate essay, "The Problem of Job," Josiah Royce addresses the reality of evil, attempting to understand it in a religious context. I understand both of these texts as presenting and subsequently rejecting several unsatisfactory solutions to the Problem of Evil, each piece eventually finding a solution that complements the other.

***“Resilience in the face of counter-evidence in Religion and Science”*** Emerald 2

Ravit Dotan (University of California, Berkeley)

It has been argued that resilience in the face of counter-evidence is an important component of faith (for example: Buchak (2017), Howard-Snyder (2013), Pace (MS), and Wolterstorff (1990)). I will defend this view by demonstrating how resilience may take place and I will argue that similar resilience takes place in science. However, it seems important that sometimes agents won't be resilient. This gives rise to a puzzle: how can agents be both resilient in the face of and sensitive to counter-evidence? I respond to this puzzle using Buchak's risky commitment account of faith, and argue that the cost of using this account is that agents' beliefs, whether scientific or religious, are inherently shaped by pragmatic and subjective considerations.



**“Grounding for Buddhist Reductionism”** Aquamarine 1

Nicholaos Jones (University of Alabama, Huntsville)

Nāgasena endorses reductionism about persons. Siderits, following Buddhist tradition, understands this as the view that “persons exist” is conventionally but not ultimately true, and that persons exist as fictions. I recommend appropriating conceptual resources from contemporary analytic metaphysics in order to understand reductionism about persons as the view that persons are only proper-partially grounded in their non-person-presupposing parts. I also recommend interpreting Nāgasena as endorsing persons being emergent existents that track socially salient groupings of skandhas. Emergents, like fictions, are only proper-partially grounded in their constituents. But emergents, unlike fictions, exist in nature rather than as pretenses of language-speakers.

**“Aristotle’s Natural Slavery Defense as Foundational to American Slavery Apologetics”** Aquamarine 2

Camilla Cannon (University of North Carolina, Charlotte)

In this paper, I argue that Aristotle’s discussion of natural slavery in the Politics offered an explicitly racialized justification of slavery which would eventually serve as the foundation for American slavery apologetics. In order to justify this argument, I first demonstrate that the “natural slaves” of which Aristotle spoke in the Politics belonged to a definite non-Hellenic ethnic group. Next, I examine the influence of the natural slavery defense on European Enlightenment conceptions of racial difference. Finally, I show that the distinctly paternalistic and essentialist nature of American slavery apologetics is firmly rooted in Aristotle’s depiction of slavery as “friendship.”