

5th Annual South Dakota Philosophical Conference

November 15th, 2014
University of Sioux Falls

Abstracts

“The Relationship between the Person and a Meaning of Life”

Bill Powers, *Retired*

I will explore some of the complex relationships between a person and a meaning for their life. The first to be explored is the relationship between the person and the question itself. The question is not invited or chosen. It represents a shock, and likely a Kierkegaardian dread. We will explore the terrain of what to do with the question, inviting participation from the likes of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre, and Rorty. Both the suspension of the question and attempts at resolution entail a dialectic. In exploring this dialectic, Kierkegaard will prove useful. Finally, some attempt will be made to evaluate the various responses.

“Belief Disjunctivism”

Dr. Joshua Heter, *Augustana College*

Recently there has been something of a resurgence in the literature concerning disjunctivism in the philosophy of perception. So says the disjunctivist, veridical perceptions and hallucinations are of completely different types. To have a veridical perception is to have one type of experience; to have a hallucination is to have an experience of a completely different type. Veridical perceptions and hallucinations have no "mental core". On most accounts, this entails a rejection of a sense data theory of perception. Sense data would be just the very thing that would count as a shared "mental core" for perceptions and hallucinations. On the disjunctivist account, since there is no mental core, there is no mediating sense data between mind and world. In this essay I explore certain arguments for disjunctivism in regards to perception and attempt to show that for all such arguments, there is a parallel argument that can be made for disjunctivism in regards to belief. On such a view true-beliefs are a mental states of one type while false-beliefs are a mental states of a completely different type. True-beliefs and false-beliefs share no "mental core". What then does the belief-disjunctivist reject as playing a mediating role between mind and world (as sense data was said to play for perception)? Propositions. That is, upon highlighting the parallel between arguments for disjunctivism in regards to perception, and arguments for disjunctivism in regards to the belief, I attempt to lay out what the consequences may be for epistemology. The resultant picture is the rejection of propositional knowledge, in favor of an epistemology that regards all beliefs (and therefore, knowledge) as acquaintance.

"Apex Competitors: Wolves, Evil, and the Moral Imagination"
Dr. Nathaniel Van Yperen, *St. Catherine University*

The wolf occupies a unique niche in the North American imaginary. In particular, the symbol of the wolf hosts intersecting and conflicting narratives of evil that pertain to binary views of nature and culture, wild and domestic. The wolf as the evil Other has a long history. European colonizers brought with them myths about the wolf that carried religious overtones. Later, ranchers and hunters saw the wolf as a demonic, wasteful, and bloodthirsty predator, a threat to a way of life and an economic competitor. Numerous technologies of suffering and death were employed against the wolf—far beyond mere hunting practices of predator control. Purging wolves was a practice that measured of the scope of human modification and it often included vengeful acts of torture. Today, the debate over wolf-hunting in North America represents an assemblage of human constructions of villainy, whether cultural, political, ecological, or even spiritual. This paper aims to establish the moral trajectory of inverting the rhetoric of the evil in ecological politics. As reintroduced and protected wolf populations have gradually grown over recent decades, the adaptive challenges of wolf management have intensified conflicts fraught with competing accounts of responsibility. How we account for human wickedness is intrinsic to this ethical affair.

"Jurisprudence of Attacking Back: Cyber Defense by Citizens"
Ian Malloy, *Malloy Labs, LLC*

Given the 2nd Amendment of the US Constitution, US citizens have both the right to bear arms as well as form well regulated militias and to apply this to the citizen who acts online within their homes, the case for "hacking back" could be made. What would the repercussions be of hacking back? Some consider "proactive defense," a case as established wherein it is both ethical and legal to defend oneself and ones property from theft, extortion, or destruction as feasible. The Second Amendment provides protection for the right to bear arms as well as to assemble and maintain a 'well-regulated militia,' though this begs several questions. What are the provisions required to be considered a 'well regulated' militia? The Fourth Amendment has not extended protection to certain speech online in the cyber world where individuals A) make threats B) actively harass someone or C) commit one of the three types of cybercrime. If someone in the physical, aka the "kinetic," world were to insult you verbally, would you take offense? Would you retort with an insult yourself? What if they were to hit you or threaten your life? What measures would you be willing to take in a kinetic zone to defend yourself and what extensions can be made to the cyber world?

I propose that the Second Amendment offers more protection to civilians when they are in their home and under attack, but the issues of attribution and knowledge of repercussions must be weighed heavily to understand not only the impact against the attacker but what may occur internationally. With the current laws America is losing the cyber war. At risk are civilians, and they are in need defense. Without proper abilities to conduct attribution, and this in conjunction with NATO's new policy to enact a concerted response under Article 5 of the NATO charter, this would not only change the civilian from a person protected in their 'castle' given the 2nd Amendment of the US Constitution if they were US citizens, it would change them into active combatants in what is quickly becoming a war zone.

“Rationality, Self-Interest and the Ethical Implications of Neoclassical Economic Models”
J. Alden Stout, *Morningside College*

Economists traditionally define rationality in terms of satisfying individual preferences or maximizing subjective utility. The use of this assumption is often defended as a modeling heuristic that allows for accurate predictions and is free from value judgments. If neoclassical economic models are free from value judgments, then they cannot legitimately be criticized on the basis of ethical principles. In this paper, I argue this view is still open to ethical objections. Specifically, I claim that neoclassical conceptions of rationality are committed to meta-ethical anti-realism. An important implication of this claim is that policy recommendations from neoclassical economic models are subject to decisive objections from moral realists. These objections are devastating because the metaethical assumptions used preclude any response.