Eastern Michigan University

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2018 Abstracts

Natalia Anderson: "Is Discovery Necessarily Linguistic?"
This paper introduces J.J. Gibson's work, including his theory of affordances, to disrupt the theories of discovery offered by Karl Popper, William Whewell, and Wilfred Sellars. All three of these philosophers have different views regarding the nature of discovery, but there is a shared assumption that language is required to make discoveries in the form of hypothesis generation and checking. Gibson can be used to prove that the linguistic piece, although important for certain kinds of discoveries, is not necessary for all because of the idea of embodiment and the ability to make discoveries by moving through the world. It will then be discussed whether or not the checking part of discovery is incorrect or if it is only the linguistic part. It will be proposed that the linguistic piece is the problem with the theories because the checking process can take place without language in some instances. It is possible that there are multiple theories of discovery that are correct depending on the situation being discussed.

Sarah Becker: "The Return of Relationality: Aquinas' Account of Intellectual Action and Personhood"
Aquinas' Treatise on Man characterizes man as an independent, self-subsistent entity whose existence is fully sustained by his immaterial soul, yet definitely describes intellectual action as an external movement beyond oneself toward the other. In what way, then, does the outward nature of human rationality, if not constitutive of man's essence, make possible a "more special and perfect way" by which "the particular and the individual are found"? By placing substantiality prior to relationality, Aquinas establishes a foundation for the circularity of intellectual activity. In this way, the actualization of reason endows man with a particular depth of being insofar as self-knowledge distinguishes the person to himself as an agent, which is distinct from his own actions and from the rest of the world. Thus, it increases man's individuality insofar as the person is not merely a substantial being, but a being in its highest form of fullness.

Kishore Chundi: "The Problem of Time in Berkelian Idealism"
Berkeley essentially redefines what it means for real things to exist. Instead of adhering to a traditional notion of existence in an external, real world, Berkeley undercuts the notion by asserting that the real existence of something is its existence as an idea in the mind, as reality solely consists of minds and ideas. However, the epistemological issues with Berkeley's conception of time within this idealist framework point to a larger problem with Berkeley's redefinition of existence and attempt to refute skepticism. Berkeley's redefinition of existence may certainly cast away doubt that the commonplace, everyday things really exist. If he is right, material objects and other "simple" things do really exist. Nevertheless, it opens room for doubt about abstract, yet essential concepts such as time. If time has such shaky epistemological foundations, perhaps our concept of it is merely an illusion. Therefore, the epistemological issues with Berkeley's conception of time point to a perhaps larger issue with Berkeley's project of defeating skepticism by redefining existence in his idealist framework. Berkeley essentially closes one door of skepticism while at the same time opening another one.

Kyle Cornell: "Regarding Brute Luck and Option Luck"
To what extent desert should influence theories of distributive justice is a fraught, longstanding question. Christopher Freiman and Shaun Nichols identify that one of the problems that desert faces is brute luck; Freiman and Nichols suggests that much of what people own "ultimately derives from brute luck." In addition, the view that any benefit gained through brute luck is not deserved is also prevalent; Freiman and Nichols also note that this view is supported by several other philosophers, including John Rawls in particular, whom Freiman and Nichols cite as believing that this view is "one of the fixed points of our considered judgments." This paper will seek to explore each philosopher's attempt at dealing with the brute luck constraint in relation to their respective ends; this paper will also argue that Freiman and Nichols; survey results are not successful at demonstrating that the brute luck constraint is unintuitive because the thought experiments on the survey constitute instances of benefit by option luck where they should constitute instances of benefit by brute luck. Finally, this paper will also discuss how this argument influences desert in theories of justice.

Logan Cross: "A Matter of Freedom: A Defense of Sartre's Anthropological Marxism"
Throughout the nineteen-sixties, one of the most ardent supporters of Marxism was the French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre; he wrote to length on the topic, ultimately laying down the groundwork for what he termed "anthropological Marxism," a Marxism based around human freedom. Interestingly, despite Sartre's vast support of Marxism, many of his influential Marxist philosopher contemporaries would reject Sartre; his work was labeled "bourgeoise thought" and thus dismissed. This strange relation poses one obvious question—why this division between Sartre and the other Marxists? The answer to this question seems to lie in Sartre's conception of freedom, which he derived primarily from his Being and Nothingness. Sartre believed that humans are free by their very essence, and could not possibly lose their freedom. This, of course, appears like a contradiction to the traditional Marxist philosophy of freedom, in which a human is free primarily through their relations to the material/social structure of society—on these grounds, Sartre's contemporaries criticized him. We are thus left to wonder; were Sartre's contemporaries right to criticize him? In this essay I will argue that Sartre's contemporaries were wrong to reject Sartre's Marxism—I assert that their criticisms rest on a misunderstanding caused by trying to compare a definition of freedom in an ontological sense with a definition of freedom in socio-political sense; furthermore, I will argue that Sartre's contemporaries actually ought to have embraced Sartre's anthropological Marxism because without Sartre's conception of freedom the Marxist philosophy might fall to a product of determinism.

Landon Fama: "Health, Education, and the Internet?: Inserting the Internet into an International Human Rights Framework"
The objective of this paper will be to caution the United Nations or otherwise, against such a position whereby the Internet is considered to be, or equated to a human right. This piece will largely explore the feasibility of universal Internet access as a human right while weighing it's benefits and burdens. This will take place in three distinct phases. First, I will attempt to explicate a view of human rights that would allow for universal internet access to be discussed, and explain why internet access does not fit into a moral

conception of human rights. Second, I will ground universal Internet rights in justifications for other non-moral human rights. Thirdly, I will conclude by arguing against the true inclusion of universal Internet access as a human right, while weighing the positives associated with having it be a part of the larger discourse. Much of this essay will be dedicated to the hypothetical inclusion of such a right however, I view that argument as only a half-truth.

Eric Garant: "While the Grass Grows: Adjudicating the Debate between Food Security and Food Sovereignty"
This essay is going to explore the debate between food security and food sovereignty. For the purposes of this discussion, we will be using the United Nations World Food Programme's definition of food security: "People are considered food secure when they have availability and adequate access at all times to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life." 1 We will be using the definition of food sovereignty from the Declaration of Nyèlèni: "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems." 2 Briefly, food security seeks to guarantee that all people have both enough food and appropriate food in order to maintain a healthy diet. Food sovereignty seeks that as well, but also seeks for people and communities to have direct power over the production of their food**.**

Christine Kovacs: "An Unexpected Hobbesian Defense of the Black Lives Movement"
Civil disobedience has been a well-known tool for many of the political movements over the past century. Once such movement is called Black Lives Matter (BLM), and its aim is to bring attention to and challenge violence and anti-black racism at a structural and personal level. Like other political movements before them, BLM is often criticized as being immoral when they engage civil disobedience. This is a famously Hobbesian interpretation of morality— that if you break a law, you are immoral. However, this interpretation of Hobbes is oversimplified; in fact, I will argue that, if properly informed, Hobbes would likely support BLM. J. D. C Carmichael, a Canadian philosopher, points out the limits of Hobbes' authoritarian sovereign in his article "Hobbes on Natural Right in Society: The 'Leviathan' Account." Because of our natural right to self-preservation, our obedience to the sovereign is contingent on the sovereign's ability to protect us. If the sovereign punishes violators of a law that harms them, he has done so unjustly. Therefore, any violators of such a law, while still subject to punishment by the sovereign, are not behaving immorally. I argue that BLM fits this criteria: using statistics and testimonials, I will show that BLM members are not currently protected by the sovereign, and therefore they are just in their violation of laws during acts of civil disobedience. I conclude that a properly informed Thomas Hobbes would not condemn the BLM movement as immoral or unjust.

Max Leonov: "Parallels in Value Between Humans and Nature An Exploration on the Idea of Rationality in Relation to the Active Potential and Valuable Future Considerations"
My project here is to explore the value theory between nature and human beings, predicated on the ideas of active potential and a valuable future. I will be exploring the idea of how parallels can be drawn between the value of human beings and nature, predicated on the ideas of active potential and valuable future. To clarify, by nature I mean all living organisms that are not human beings and by human beings I mean of the species Homo sapien. Understandably human beings are part of nature but for our purposes we are setting them aside as a different category. I will show how without the consideration of rationality, the specialness of human beings ceases to exist. Furthermore, I will demonstrate how value, regardless of if we are considering human beings or any other living organism, can be predicated on a valuable future and active potential. I will show how the weight of the active potential is related directly to the rationality of the living organism. I will also show how the rationality of a living organism is related directly to the aggregate impact of an organism's active potential, and thus also to the weight of the active potential. I will prove how the weight of the valuable future is related directly to the idea of preforming natural function. Lastly, I will conclude that both human beings and any other living organism, with the same amount of rationality, can be considered equally as valuable based on the active potential consideration. I will also conclude that both human beings and any other living organism, performing its natural function, can be considered equally as valuable based on the valuable future consideration.

Joseph Longo: "Knowledge as Intuition: An Existential View of Epistemology" My purpose in this paper is to argue for a strain of epistemology that throws out the standard analytic definitions of knowledge and replaces it with knowledge as intuition, or rather, as an experience of the World, notably the theories of Henri Bergson and Jacques Maritain. I will first cover the issue of the nature of truth and how a different use of the term is necessary to understand knowledge as experience. Second, I will discuss how time for the intuitionists, as well as Heidegger, lends itself to the theory. From there, I will cover the nature of intuition and the different theories surrounding both it and the practice of concept-construction. Finally, I will compare the intuitionist's model to the standard JTB model that has been around for much of philosophical history in one form or another, and how the JTB model does not actually account for knowledge or even truth, and argue instead that the intuitionist's model comes to grasp at reality and open up our existence as Being-Possible.

Robert Del Mauro: "*Korematsu v. United States* and Legal Realism"
Legal realism and legal formalism provide two different accounts of law. Realists argue that personal biases and political preferences often influence court judgments while formalists claim that judgments uphold universal and consistent principles, maintaining the law as established by the legislature. Essays by Joseph Beale, who writes in support of legal formalism, and written accounts in support of legal realism by Jerome Frank provide the foundation for both theories. After proving both arguments are valid by showing their premises would result in their respective conclusions should they be true,

an analysis of the holding in *Korematsu v. United States* demonstrates the truth of realism over formalism. The injustice that Japanese Americans faced in light of the Supreme Court's ruling to uphold Korematsu's conviction and allow the government to exclude specific populations from the West Coast is unjustifiable. Jerome Frank's account of realism and how judgments are influenced by personal biases provides a sound explanation of such an erroneous holding.

Nicholas Paradise: "A League of Their Own: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Sport in the U.S"
Sport is something that is often dismissed as trivial in the world of academia, as something base and unintellectual, a distraction for people from their unfulfilling lives. Sports often serve as a reflection of key societal issues and social justice victories. The key role of sports in popular culture combined with the history of sport being traditionally viewed as the arena of masculine competition and the domain of essential masculinity leads me to the conclusion that a feminist examination of topic will shed light on some essentializing notions still held about women in mainstream popular culture which may seem contradictory to the values we now hold in our modern "post-feminist" society. My intention in this essay is to examine the American attitude towards women's participation in sport through the lens of feminist philosophy, and what it reveals about the American attitude towards women in general.

Timothy Petzold: "The Reasonable End of Ethics in Aristotle and Kant"
In the work of Aristotle and Kant, we receive two compelling accounts depicting the nature of morality. Both philosophers found morality in the human being's capacity to reason, but the theories they offer can differ remarkably in their commitments. In this essay, I investigate what it is we are seeking from an ethical theory. I conduct an overview of the approach to ethics in Aristotle and Kant, carrying out a comparative analysis. Exploring the ontological foundations of morality in these theories, I evaluate the proper object of our conduct. Overall, I advocate Aristotelian ethics, largely using the Kantian framework as a scaffold against which I establish the aims which we should be directed by. A concerted focus is granted to the relation between ethics and being. On these grounds, a critique of the normative and rational commitments of the categorical imperative is carefully laid out. I argue that this underpinning of Kantian ethics is dangerously mistaken in its metaphysical approach, as it strips particulars from our moral considerations. In this inquiry, I examine the origin and proper end of moral principles and their relation to us as human beings. Finally, I transition in my handling of these ethical theories from issues of ontology to moral psychology as I argue why Aristotelian ethics makes a better claim on our motivation.

Daniel Proske: "Everett on Sainsbury on Thinking About Fictional Things"
In his "Sainsbury on Thinking about Fictional Things," Everett raises two problems for Sainsbury's "master argument": (1) "it doesn't force the fictional realist to abandon her ontology of fictional objects" and so "cannot serve as an argument against realism;" and (2) "there are intuitively true V-sentences whose truth would commit us to the existence

of fictional objects," and that denying their truth undermines the master argument in various ways. Everett's proposed solution is to interpret every fictional V-sentence as "within the scope of the presupposition that there are fictional objects." In this paper I argue that Everett's proposed V-sentences do not cause problems for Sainsbury: he can accept that they are genuinely true without committing himself to the existence of fictional objects, and he can deny that they are genuinely true without undermining his master argument. Then I argue that Everett's proposed solution to overcome the problems with the master argument fails.

Katelyn Pyles: "Confrontations With Death: A Zhuangzian Approach to Mortality"
The subject of this project is the Daoist conception of death. The goal is to generate one potential picture of how Daoism can quell some of our deepest concerns regarding death and manage the existential dread it produces. This paper will be divided into three focal points related to our feelings about death: 1) how do we manage the death of a loved one, 2) how do we cope with our own mortality and, 3) how do we grapple with the reality of suicide and suicidal ideation. I will address these respectively, using relevant examples from the Inner Chapters of the Zhuangzi translated by Brook Ziporyn, "The Concept of Zhen in the Zhuangzi" by Kim-chong Chong, "Emotions the Do Not Move: Zhuangzi and Stoics on Self-Emerging Feelings" by David Machek, and passages from the Dao De Jing, to contrast common Western perspectives of death and life.

Alexander Sell: *"A Stranger to Oneself: Ricoeurian Narrative Identity and Camus' The Stranger"*
The following analysis will demonstrate how Ricoeur presents his brand of narrative identity, rather than those espoused by thinkers such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, David Carr, and others. Part I consists of an analysis of how Ricoeur situates this model of identity within existing thinkers and epistemic concepts. In part II, attestation is explained as a kind of initiating point that leads to narrative identity, of which a detailed analysis is given in part III. In order to apply Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity, part IV draws from the salient points of part III to analyze Albert Camus *The Stranger*. The object of this analysis is the question: does Meursault – the protagonist – have a narrative identity? This analysis will demonstrate how and in what ways narrative identity can, or cannot, be applied to or used by a person – fictional, but plausibly real. In its totality, this essay hopes to provide a better understanding of the way in which one actually subscribes to the model of narrative identity and applies it to self-understanding.

Kevin Smith: "Anselm's Theory of Free Will"
Throughout the course of this paper I discuss in detail Anselm of Canterbury's theory of free will and how it could be used to help formulate a solution to an argument against the existence of God known as the logical problem of moral evil. For Anselm free will is "the capacity for preserving rectitude of the will for the sake of rectitude itself." I explain what this means and some of the unique elements in his theory. Free will is so strong for Anselm that not even God can force a person to will a particular way without their consent. This kind of libertarian free will can and has been used by some philosophers as a way of keeping the responsibility for moral evil on the humans who committed the evils and away from God. I argue that with Anselm's theory of free will this can be done with

some success. I, however, also admit that some of the assumptions Anselm makes require far more evidence to support them than Anselm or I have provided here. In the end I conclude that as long as you are willing to take some of the same assumptions Anselm did, his theory can be used as a valuable solution to the logical problem of moral evil.

Kellie Tinskey: "The Aims of Political Justice: Problems and Possibilities of Distributive Justice, Democratic Equality, and Ethics of Care"
My purposes in writing this paper are to demonstrate the difference in views on the purposes of political justice between John Rawls, Elizabeth Anderson, and Virginia Held. While Rawls sees justice as a matter of distribution, Anderson and Held view justice in different lights. In this paper, I am going to examine the question: is justice a matter of distribution? First, I will consider the perspective of distributive justice theories. A lot of the prominent theories of 19th-21st century politics focus on the distribution of goods as the primary subject matter of political justice. For purposes of condensation, I will focus on Rawls's conception of justice in A Theory of Justice as the distributive justice theory perspective in this paper. Next, I will consider the perspectives of people who offer different conceptions of what political justice is, or should be. I will use Anderson's "What Is the Point of Equality?" to explore her arguments that distributive justice theories are misguided and should be replaced by a theory of democratic equality. I will then turn to Held's "Non-contractual Society: A Feminist View" to consider her arguments for care ethics and concerns on the limitations of distributive justice theories, and contractual thinking in general. After complicating the question of what the focus of political justice is or should be on, I will offer my opinion and defense of a view.

Blake Trinske: "Returning to our Genuine Nature"
In this paper, I will explain how the Daoist texts of Laozi and Zhuangzi teach us to be true, genuine, or authentic humans (zhen ren 真人). I will tie the notion of being genuine to a natural state of being, and thus explain how the genuine human is in fact the natural human. I will focus on a character from the Zhuangzi named Huzi in order to highlight the characteristic traits of an ideal Daoist practitioner, i.e, a genuine human. Using his character as an example, I will then flesh out how one can return to a natural state of being. The method I will focus on is a way of exemplifying virtuosity (de 德) by wandering (yóu 遊) in order to reach a state of non-action (wu wei 無爲).

Spencer Upton: "Understanding Qualia as Process"
 The aim of this paper is threefold: First (e.g., part A), I will provide an argument for the tenability of accepting a process metaphysics as the primary structural configuration to that of a substance metaphysics (the "received view") by challenging the notion that reality contains 'substances' as the substance metaphysician would claim. Here, I take this argument to be the headwaters, for it is the source from which all else flows. Then (e.g., part B), I apply this conclusion to the 'qualia' debates seen in the philosophy of mind literature and argue that the position of extended machine functionalism is the most satisfactory due to its process framework. Here, I take it that each metaphysical explanation provided is the result of having adopted some fundamental meta-metaphysical framework. That is, each explanation provided is a tributary from which beginning headwaters are made possible. However, as I will show, having adopted the

wrong meta-metaphysical framework (e.g., substance metaphysics) for understanding reality results in intractable problems when explaining reality's constituents (e.g., qualia). Finally (e.g., part C), I propose a positive account of qualia when understood as a process, and thus as it correctly should be.

Lauren Williams: "The Ethical Order of *Antigone"*
In this essay, I will argue that Sophocles' *Antigone* exemplifies an inherent conflict within the two spheres of Hegel's ethical order, as depicted in The Phenomenology of Spirit. First, I will explain the two spheres: family and community. Then, I will analyze the relationship between the spheres. Finally, I will draw on examples from Antigone to demonstrate that the two spheres of Hegel's ethical order are in constant conflict because they are inherently at odds with one another.

Melanie Zens: "Free Willy Isn't Free and Neither are You"
The position I take in the free will debate is impossibilism, which Kadri Vihvelin succinctly defines as the belief, "that it is metaphysically impossible for us to have free will, either because… our concept of free will is incoherent or because… free will is incompatible with some necessarily true proposition." I will be arguing against libertarian accounts of free will by showing that the key criteria of free will, on libertarian accounts, are contradictory. Specifically, I will be considering event-causal and agent-causal libertarian accounts. Then I will address compatibilism, arguing that the criterion it tries to eliminate is necessary for freedom. Libertarianism posits that an agent is free if she could have acted other than she did – I equate this with a "compulsion-free" criterion. Event-causal theories posit that an action is free if the result of at least some "agent-involving events," and agent-causal theories posit that an action is free if caused by an agent. Compatibilists maintain that free will is compatible with our actions being determined (compelled) by prior events.

Sarah Zuniga: "The Unhappiest Jean-Jacques?"
Few comparisons have been made between Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, yet there are a plethora of reasons why a comparison should be made. Both experienced ridicule, in one way or another, by society, and were often looked upon as outcasts. Both kept diaries or journals of some sort. Both were, at the mere surface level, very unhappy. It should serve as no surprise, then, to know that both wrote on happiness, or perhaps lack of it. In Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, Part I, an address entitled "The Unhappiest One" takes the reader on an exploration of who is truly the unhappiest person. When reading the text, there are similarities that are strikingly similar to how Rousseau details his reveries in The Reveries of the Solitary Walker. An analysis of Rousseau can be made when taking into consideration what Kierkegaard defines as criteria to be happy or unhappy, and we can perhaps determine whether Rousseau was truly happy or unhappy.