

1) Philip Percival (Nottingham) - Beyond Reality?

No abstract available

2) Robbie Williams (Leeds) - Requirements on Reality

Abstract:

The nominalist sees an advantage in a metaphysics without numbers. The mereological nihilist wants to do without composite things (including tables, chairs). Let's grant, for the sake of argument, that the metaphysics involved is in each case internally coherent, and pro tanto attractive. It may nevertheless be *unreasonable* for us to change our beliefs to endorse the characteristic nominalistic or nihilistic claims. Aren't the beliefs we acquire through general education and common sense ("the number of my hands is two"; "I'm sitting at a table", "the force required to accelerate an object is proportional to its mass") better entrenched than the revisionist's philosophical premises? Isn't it unreasonable to give up educated common sense, rather than the philosophical claims, if the two conflict? This is the "Moorean" challenge to revisionary ontology.

One could respond by ditching radically minimal metaphysics, or questioning the account of reasonable belief-change the Moorean appeals to. But an alternative is to *reconcile* Moorean epistemology and nominalistic/nihilistic metaphysics. To do so, one must make a case that a number/composite object-free ontology does not (as it first appears) conflict with educated common sense. The reconciliationist argues that our ordinary (number and composite-involving) beliefs can be true even if reality contains no numbers or composite things. Quine's use of paraphrase, and Yablo's hermeneutic figurism, are two examples of reconciliation strategies.

Extant reconciliation approaches often involve revisionary syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic claims. However, it's not clear why the reconciliationist must be revisionary in these ways. The most direct form of reconciliation would be to simply state (hopefully in a systematic way) what is required of reality for a given claim to be true---without tying this in any way to contentious syntactic, semantic or doxastic claims. Some contemporary work on truthmakers, and in particular Melia's truthmaking-operator, can be viewed as adopting this direct approach.

After sketching the Moorean challenge and extant reconciliation responses, this paper defends the *prima facie* tenability of the "direct" specification of reality-requirements. It outlines a series of challenges any such account must meet---in particular, to explain what makes a given claim have the "reality-requirements" it does; and why reality-requirements seems to vary, counterfactually, with facts about meaning. A view meeting these explanatory challenges is developed.

3) John Hawthorne (Oxford) - TBC

4) Simon Saunders (Oxford) – Metaphysics of quantum theory

Abstract:

Many-worlds quantum theory is to date the only construal of quantum theory which is (a) realist and (b) conservative – that is, which leaves the mathematical structure of the theory alone. It also provides an answer to the puzzle of objective probability – of specifying precisely what, in terms of categorical properties and relations, objective physical probabilities are. This depends on macroscopic structure: a branching structure, whose branches have weights (amplitudes). But at

the fundamental level, questions of ontology remain open. I shall outline an approach which takes its cue from that other pillar of fundamental physics, general relativity.

5) Roy Sorensen (Washington) - Infinitely Old Names

Abstract:

Aristotle believed that Greek was an infinitely old language. Such a language could have an infinitely old name, say, 'Helios' the Greek name for the sun. The possibility of such a name troubles the causal-historical theorist of names. For these theorists assume that all names are introduced by a dubbing (or, in the case of descriptive names, by an attributive description). They also assume that all chains of reference borrowing are finite. I suggest friendly amendments to the causal-historical theories. Infinitely old names emerge as a goad and guide to a more comprehensive theory of names and natural kinds.

6) Tim Williamson (Oxford)- Is It Contingent What There Is, Or What There Is To Be?

Abstract:

Although the variable-domain Kripke semantics for first-order modal logic invalidates the first-order Barcan schema and its converse, its natural extension to second-order modal logic *validates* the second-order analogues of those schemas, where the second-order quantifiers are interpreted as ranging over intensions, even if the intensions are restricted by a 'serious actualist' constraint. The same semantics validates a strong comprehension principle for the second-order quantifiers, which has instances that are hard to reconcile with the contingency of being implied by the rejection of the first-order Barcan schema and its converse, on any metaphysically plausible view. A defender of the contingency of being may reject the Kripke semantics but still needs some alternative comprehension principle for the second-order quantifiers that avoids the problematic instances. I will show that various salient candidates for such a weakened comprehension principle are in different ways too weak to generate a satisfactory second-order modal logic. Since second-order modal logic, on a legitimate intensional interpretation, requires a comprehension principle that is defensible only if the contingency of being is rejected, we should reject the contingency of being, and accept both first-order and second-order versions of the Barcan schema and its converse.

7) Dean Zimmerman (Rutgers) - Property Dualism and Substance Dualism

Abstract:

People find it easy to believe that there is more to a person than the body; and that life is possible after biological death because this "something more" — the soul or spirit — outlives the body. Philosophical dualists such as Plato, Aquinas, and Descartes — and, in our day, Karl Popper, Richard Swinburne, and William Hasker — disagree about many details. But they all vindicate this much of the popular conception: they believe that, for every person who thinks or has experiences, there is a thing — a soul or spiritual substance — that lacks many or most of the physical properties characteristic of non-thinking material objects like rocks and trees; and that this soul is essential to the person, and in one way or another responsible for the person's mental life.

Nowadays, this doctrine is often called substance dualism, and contrasted with various forms of property dualism—the thesis that the mental properties of persons are significantly independent of, or in some other way distinct from, the physical properties of persons. The distinction between the two kinds of dualism allows for an intermediate view: dualism about at least some mental properties but materialism about the substance that has the properties. Philosophers who deny

substance dualism while advocating a robust form of property dualism are claiming that mental and physical properties are independent in something like the way color and shape are; but that they are attributes of a single object, consisting entirely of ordinary matter.

In philosophy of mind today, although substance dualism is regarded as a non-starter, property dualism remains popular, and indeed seems to be enjoying something of a comeback. In this paper, I argue that property dualism of a certain sort — namely, dualism with respect to the kinds of qualia exemplified in conscious experience — is incompatible with the more commonsensical kinds of materialism (according to which I am identical with a garden-variety macrophysical object, e.g. a living animal body or a brain), leaving substance dualism looking much better than one might have thought.