

ABSTRACTS

RICHARD SWINBURNE'S ANTHROPIC PRINCIPLE DESIGN ARGUMENT

Gilbert E. Fulmer

The anthropic principle design argument has been much debated over the last few years. It holds that the universe shows evidence of design, in that its basic characteristics are too precisely fitted to produce human life to have resulted from pure chance. Instead, there must have been a designer. It is a small step to infer that the designer was God.

Richard Swinburne, in *The Existence of God*, and *Is There A God?*, employs a version of this argument. He envisions a card-shuffling machine that must draw ten aces of hearts from ten decks; otherwise a kidnapped victim will be exploded. Surely the victim could legitimately infer that the shuffling was rigged, Swinburne reasons. And similarly we can infer that the universe was designed.

I argue that Swinburne's analogy is flawed, and that no such inference is licensed.



THE INTIMATE CONNECTION REJECTED

Eric Heidenreich

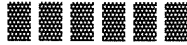
In their paper “Moral Functionalism and Moral Motivation,” Frank Jackson and Philip Pettit attempt to answer two Humean challenges that the cognitivist faces. The first challenge is to explain the cognitive content of evaluative beliefs and the second is to explain *malaise*, or weakness of will. To answer the two challenges, they sketch out a functionalist account of the cognitive content of evaluative beliefs and then describe why such assent generally results (but not necessarily) in the presence of a corresponding desire. Jackson and Pettit claim that the functionalist account of belief, as they formulate it, offers a connection between holding a belief and having the corresponding desire. They claim that the connection is adequately explained through a non-intellectualist mode of forming beliefs and corresponding desires. Through the course of this paper I will argue that Jackson’s and Pettit’s non-intellectualist mode of belief does not explain the connection between belief and desire that adequately defends against the Humean-based challenge they are attempting to defend against.



EUTHANASIA AND THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Glenn C. Joy

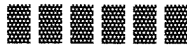
This paper surveys the current practical and legal landscape of euthanasia. It examines the claim that the world is sliding down a slippery slope to killings that are horrific and immoral. By the examination of the situation in the Netherlands, it is shown that the slippery-slope fear is misguided.



A LOOK AT LAURA KIPNIS' AGAINST LOVE: OR IS ADULTERY REALLY THE PATH TO UTOPIA?

Audrey McKinney

Laura Kipnis in a series of articles and a book—“Adultery,” “The Domestic Gulag,” and *Against Love*—presents a spirited polemic excoriating the social institution of marriage and extolling adultery as a subversion of the institution. While there is a playful spirit throughout her writings and Kipnis clearly intends her work at least as much as a provocation as a sustained argument, I shall reconstruct and critically evaluate her views. My aim is not refutation in the classical sense, but a re-positioning—or de-centering—of Kipnis’ depiction of marriage and its transgressive “sister,” adultery.



BENEVOLENT EXTORTION

Eric Roark

In this paper I examine the circumstances in which force may legitimately be used to compel the paying of taxes. That is, when (and under what circumstances, if any) is taxation an enforceable obligation of justice? I argue that taxation is an enforceable obligation only when, 1) the taxpayer voluntarily and directly consents to the tax, and/or 2) the taxpayer is obligated to pay competitive rents on their exclusive use of natural (world) resources. Many right-libertarians would endorse the first condition and reject the second as marking a just condition of taxation. I add the second condition because of my endorsement of left-libertarianism. My claim is that *all* persons, regardless of who first finds natural (world) resources, have a just claim to an equal share of the value conferred by natural (world) resources.

I examine both of the above conditions by considering the case of a hypothetical actor (Sue) who is confronted by a benevolent extortionist (Lenny). I examine a number of cases that attempt to draw an analogy between Lenny’s benevolent, yet clearly morally impermissible, actions with those of a coercive tax scheme. I conclude that when the

government uses force to compel the paying of taxes, in a manner not consistent with either of the conditions noted above, then they are on moral par with extortionists who pursue benevolent ends with their extorted funds.

Some may, of course, suggest that even if coercive taxation is no better than benevolent extortion, that nonetheless it is morally justified because of the great social benefits provided by such extortion. That is, the great consequences of benevolent extortion in the form of coercive taxation justify the otherwise impermissible act of extortion. I argue against such a consequentialist suggestion, and maintain alternatively that if the practice of coercive taxation does indeed make the state little more a practitioner of benevolent extortion, then the moral legitimacy of the state is gravely threatened. Coercive taxation may provide society with immense benefits, but it is a benefit at the expense of moral legitimacy. No benefit, however useful, can be worth such a cost.



DO WE KNOW THAT THEY KNOW?

Paul Wilson

The field of comparative psychology is an exciting enterprise insofar as its research has provided some evidence that the mental states of non-human animals (hereafter, “animals”) are similar to those of humans. The Mirror Self-Recognition (MSR) tests that began with Gallup in the early 1970s tried to measure the self-concept of various primates, including chimps, monkeys, and gorillas. Variations of the test have also been tried on bottlenose dolphins. Proponents of the MSR tests regard certain phenomena as evidence that primates and dolphins possess a mind. If the animal can recognize itself in a mirror (usually demonstrated by noticing some mark on a region of the body and touching it or pointing to it while looking in the mirror), MSR proponents infer that the animal is self-aware. Similar tests have been performed using shadow recognition and video image recognition. In some cases, the video image recognition was simulcast, in others it was a playback of a videotaped image.

The MSR tests are conclusive only if the tests are indicating what they claim to be—namely, that recognition of a mirror image is an indication that the animal is self-aware. But comparative psychology as a discipline has one disadvantage that is somewhat intractable—the language barrier. The subjects of these tests are unable to communicate directly with researchers, which may encourage guesswork about the true implications of these tests. For example, a primate may engage in behavior that can be taken as either one of two things—using associative learning or using a mental representation to impel its “choice”—and without verbal communication with their subjects, a researcher may be disposed to speculative conclusions.

With the language barrier being only an initial concern (perhaps there are others), MSR theorists may be inferring too much from their research. But since drawing wrong

conclusions is a concern in any science, another important issue specifically related to MSR research is the possibility that the research is experiment-driven, rather than theory-driven. Are the researchers in these areas only continuing with their respective methodology because it has, in a very profound way, fixed the outcomes? Does the tail wag the dog, so to speak? In this essay, I argue that the methodologies of the MSR tests are questionable and that the research has become driven by the tests themselves, not by the theory the tests claim to be measuring. This argument will be based on the claim that the results of the MSR tests are inconclusive—and that multiple models of explanation can be used to explain the same phenomena.

CONTRIBUTORS

David Beisecker is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research focus is primarily on the philosophy of mind and language.

Gilbert Fulmer is Professor of Philosophy at Texas State University. His specializations are philosophy of religion, ethics, and evolutionary metaphysics.

Lynne Fulmer did her graduate work at Rice University. She has recently retired from Texas State University where she pursued her interests in ethics, critical thinking, Wittgenstein, Whitehead, and linguistic philosophy.

John "Jack" Haddox was honored in 2007 for 50 years of service to The University of Texas at El Paso and to the El Paso community. Dr. Haddox's education includes a BA, MA, and PhD from the University of Notre Dame. His specializations are Latin American philosophy, American philosophy, applied ethics, aesthetics, American Indian values, and social philosophy. He began his career at UTEP, formerly Texas Western College, in 1957. Dr. Haddox has published several chapters in books and many articles in academic journals. He has published three books, including *Vasconcelos of Mexico: Philosopher and Prophet* and *Antonio Caso: Philosopher of Mexico*. In addition he has lectured in Brasilia, Brazil, at the National University of Mexico, at both Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, as well as all over the United States from California to Florida.

Craig Hanks, a fifth-generation Texan, is Professor of Philosophy at Texas State University. His work focuses on American pragmatism, critical theory, and philosophy of technology.

Eric Heidenreich earned an advanced degree in philosophy from the University of Missouri and is now a Research Coordinator for the Freedom Initiative for Network Development for the Advanced Academic Programs department at the Institute of Humane Studies at George Mason University.

Glenn Joy is Professor of Philosophy at Texas State University. He likes philosophy of science, logic, ethics, philosophy of religion, Lewis Carroll studies, and mechanical puzzles.

Audrey McKinney is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Texas State University. Her research interests include modal logic, environmental ethics, and feminist theory.

Eric Roark, with specialties in social and political thought as well as ethics, teaches philosophy courses and the university freshman seminar course at Millikin University, where he is an Assistant Professor. His interests are in applied ethics, especially business ethics, environmental ethics, and biomedical ethics.

Danny Scoccia is Associate Professor of Philosophy at New Mexico State University. His main research interests lie in applied ethics and social/political philosophy.

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Dan R. Stiver is the Cook-Derrick Professor of Theology at Logsdon School of Theology, Hardin-Simmons University, in Abilene, Texas. He has written *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol, Story, Theology after Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology*, and *Life Together in the way of Jesus Christ: An Introduction to Christian Theology*.

Hal Thorsrud is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. He specializes in ancient Greek philosophy, especially the ethics and epistemology of the Hellenistic period.

Paul Wilson is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Texas State University. His interests are in the areas of philosophy of mind and ethics (and particularly how these fields apply to animal cognition and animal welfare), as well as philosophy of mathematics, and the epistemologies of Hume and Kant. He holds graduate degrees in sociology (Texas State University) and philosophy (Texas A&M University).

NEW MEXICO-WEST TEXAS PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

56th Annual Meeting

Sunland Park Holiday Inn, El Paso, Texas

April 15-16, 2005

Friday, April 15

7:30-10:00 p.m. Registration and Social Hour

Saturday, April 16

Session 1A: Gary Cesarz (Southeast Missouri State University), Chair

8:00-8:35 David Beisecker (University of Nevada-LasVegas), Intentionality without Evolution

8:35-9:10 Paul Wilson (Texas State), Do We Know That They Know

9:10-9:45 Timothy Cleveland (NMSU), Philosophers as Storytellers: The Legacy of Richard Rorty

Session 1B: Glenn Joy (Texas State University), Chair

8:00-8:35 Jack Weir (Morehead State University), A Very Short History of Virtue Ethics

8:35-9:10 Alan Tomhave (University of Missouri), Obligations with Respect to Future Generations
in Left Libertarianism

9:10-9:45 Hal Thorsrud (New Mexico State University), Virtue Ethics and the Analogy between
Physical and Psychological Health

Coffee Break 9:45-10:00 a.m.

Session 2A: Lee Stauffer (New Mexico Highlands University), Chair

10:00-10:35 Glenn Joy (Texas State University), Euthanasia and the Slippery Slope

10:35-11:10 Eric Roark (University of Missouri), Benevolent Extortion: Taxation as an Enforceable
Obligation

11:10-11:45 Danny Scoccia (New Mexico State University), Conservatism, Invisible Hands and
the Presumptions Against Radical Social Reform

Session 2B: Jack Weir (Morehead State University), Chair

10:00-10:35 Dan Stiver (Hardin-Simmons University), Derrida on Forgiveness: Notes from a
Wittgensteinian Therapist

10:35-11:10 Gilbert Fulmer (Texas State University), Richard Swinburne's Anthropic Principle
Design Argument

11:10-11:45 Peter Hutcheson (Texas State University), Best of All Possible Worlds Revisited

Noon Recess 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Session 3A: William Springer (University of Texas at El Paso), Chair

1:00-1:35 Audrey McKinney (Texas State University), A Look at Laura Kipnis' Against Love: or is
Adultery Really the Path to Utopia?

1:35-2:10 Kenneth Smith, Kulturekampf: Substance & Subjectivity in Hegel

2:10-2:45 Julius Simon (University of Texas at El Paso), Remembering Sontag, with Beauvoir &
Schutte as Friends of Feminism

Session 3B: Robert Ferrell (El Paso Community College), Chair

1:00-1:35 Jean-Paul Vessey (NMSU), What Objective Consequentialism Must Be Like

1:35-2:10 C. Lynne Fulmer (Texas State University), Deception of the Lambs: Morality and the Police
2:10-2:45 J. Adam Carter (University of Missouri), Two Deadly Sins

Coffee Break 2:45-3:00 p.m.

Session 4A: Hal Thorsrud (New Mexico State University), Chair

3:00-3:35 Eric Heidenreich (University of Missouri), The Intimate Connection Rejected
3:35-4:10 John Haddox (University of Texas at El Paso), Jose Vasconcelos: the Teaching of Art & the Art of Teaching
4:10-4:45 Robert Ferrell (El Paso Community College), Dakini: the Femininity Principle in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism

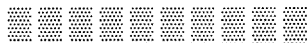
Session 4B: Panel Discussion: Gilbert Fulmer (Texas State University) Chair

3:00-3:35 John Symons (University of Texas at El Paso), Emergence as a Research Program
3:35-4:10 William Springer (University of Texas at El Paso), Emergence: Can We Do Without It?
4:10-4:45 Peter Robinson (University of Texas El Paso), Commentary on John Symons: Emergence and Reflexive Downward Causation



Business Meeting: 5:00-5:30 pm

Craig Hanks (Texas State University), President
Danny Scoccia (New Mexico State University) Vice President
Gary Cesarz (Southeast Missouri State University), Secretary/Treasurer



6:30 pm

New Mexico-West Texas Philosophical Society Banquet & Presidential Address
Urban Form, Human Identity, and Political Possibilities
Craig Hanks (Texas State University)



End of Conference

Special Thanks to Our Host Institution:
University of Texas at El Paso